



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1260 Vienna, 27 February 2020

EU Statement on the re-arrest of Osman Kavala

The European Union continues to follow closely the case of Osman Kavala, a businessman and human rights defender and Chairman of Anadolu Kültür. We have raised our concerns regarding his case several times in the Permanent Council.

On 18 February 2020, the Istanbul Chief Prosecutor issued a new detention order against Osman Kavala on allegedly new charges only a few hours after a court decided on his acquittal and ordered his release. We recall that in its judgement of 10 December 2019, the European Court of Human Rights found that Kavala's arrest and detention were in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights and called for his immediate release.

The European Union shares the concerns expressed by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights in her statement and report of 19 February 2020. Osman Kavala's re-arrest and continuing detention raise concerns regarding the adherence of Turkey's judiciary to international and European standards.

The Turkish authorities need to ensure that every person's right to a fair trial is respected, and to uphold the principles of the presumption of innocence and judicial independence, as agreed in the Copenhagen Document of 1990. These are critical safeguards not only for the citizens of Turkey, but also for the functioning of an impartial and independent Turkish judiciary. Judicial proceedings must not be used as a means of silencing critical voices.

We call upon the Turkish authorities to take measures, in line with the Commissioner's recommendations, to restore judicial independence and stop the practice of restrictions, detentions, imprisonments, and other measures targeting journalists, academics, members of political parties, including parliamentarians, human rights defenders, social media users, and others exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms.

The EU will continue to closely monitor this case, as well as ongoing trials of journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers and academics with the highest level of scrutiny.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and SERBIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ARMENIA and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.