



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1129 Vienna, 26 January 2017

EU statement on enforced disappearances in Turkmenistan

The European Union is concerned about reports that Mr. Turkish Tyrmyev, former Head of the State Border Service of Turkmenistan, died in prison on 13 January 2017. Mr. Tyrmyev was one of the first victims of enforced disappearances about whom we learnt of in Turkmenistan and one of its most prominent victims. According to reports by the campaign “Prove They Are Alive!”, he had been subjected to complete isolation, torture and ill-treatment during his 15 years of imprisonment. We therefore call on the Turkmen government to thoroughly investigate the circumstances of Mr. Tyrmyev’s death and the accusations of torture in Turkmen prisons.

Reports by non-governmental organisations indicate that the case of Mr. Tuymyev is one grave example in a broader pattern. The Prove They Are Alive! campaign has documented 88 cases of enforced disappearances in Turkmenistan’s prisons from the early 2000s and is investigating over a dozen more from the same period, signalling a long-standing serious and systemic violation of international standards and commitments. In the past 13 months alone, the campaign has documented the deaths of four of those disappeared persons in the Turkmen prison system.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the Turkmen Government gave permission to diplomatic missions and representations of multilateral organisations such as the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat to visit two prisons in 2015 and 2016. We expect the announced visit to Dashoguz women’s prison in the very near future. We furthermore call on the government of Turkmenistan to also allow

representatives of the ICRC to visit prisons in which the so-called disappeared persons are being held.

The European Union reiterates its strong call on Turkmenistan, also made during its 8th Human Rights dialogue with Turkmenistan on 17 May last year and at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in 2016, to immediately and effectively address and eradicate the problem of enforced disappearances. The European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to the prevention of enforced disappearances, which constitutes a serious violation of human rights that guarantee, inter alia, the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The European Union has repeatedly urged all participating States, including Turkmenistan, to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to take practical steps to combat enforced disappearances.

The European Union stands ready to continue dialogue with Turkmenistan, including on human rights issues.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.