



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1135
Vienna, 2 March 2017**

EU Statement on the case of Saparmamed Nepeskuliev

We take positive note of the statement of the RFOM who welcomed the release of Mr. K. Allashov, and her hope that criminal charges against him will be dropped.

In this context, the European Union calls on Turkmenistan to immediately release Saparmamed Nepeskuliev, a freelance journalist working for Radio Azatlyq, and to drop all charges against him. Mr Nepeskuliev was arrested in the summer of 2015 on spurious charges and sentenced to three years in prison. For several months during his imprisonment, no information was available on his whereabouts, and information later obtained has showed Mr Nepeskuliev to be suffering from several life threatening conditions. The case of Mr Nepeskuliev is the cause of grave concern and requires urgent action.

We call on Turkmenistan to fully implement its OSCE commitments and other international obligations related to freedom of expression and its corollary media freedom. An important step in this regard would be to put an end to the criminalization of persons expressing dissenting opinions.

Turkmenistan is a key partner country of the EU in Central Asia. The EU stands ready to continue its dialogue with Turkmenistan, including on human rights related 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 countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE align themselves with this statement.

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