



## EUROPEAN UNION LOCAL STRATEGY TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN TURKEY

This local strategy to support and defend Human Rights Defenders (HRDs<sup>1</sup>) has been agreed by the EU diplomatic missions accredited to Turkey and drafted with input from Turkish HRDs. It provides operational guidelines for EU Missions to implement the EU's Guidelines for Human Rights Defenders, notably with regard to the provision of effective support to HRDs as well as the monitoring of the situation of HRDs in Turkey.

### 1. Exchange of information and coordination between EU Missions<sup>2</sup>

EU Missions in Turkey will whenever relevant place human rights issues including HRDs on the agenda of monthly meetings at Head and Deputy Head of Mission level, in order to discuss the promotion and protection of HRDs and their activities. Incidences of pressure exerted on HRDs brought to the attention of the EU HRD Liaison Officer or any Member State will be immediately circulated to the human rights contact points in all EU missions in order to facilitate discussion of relevant follow up action. Reports on incidents will be distributed to facilitate discussion.

Timeline for implementation: *immediate*

### 2. Follow up of the situation of Human Rights Defenders

Apart from the regular meetings of EU Missions mentioned above, the EU Liaison officer will invite, on an at minimum annual basis, HRDs and NGOs to meet with all EU Missions active in the country in order to discuss the situation of HRDs, latest developments and the role the EU can play in promoting and ensuring the protection of HRDs. Such meetings may take place in Ankara or in regions where HRDs are most present.

In cases of specific violations of human rights, and after due consultation between HRDs and the EU HRD Liaison Officer, an ad hoc meeting of HRDs may be organised with the Liaison Officer and HR contact points of the EU missions to discuss appropriate follow up.

Timeline for implementation: *immediate*

### 3. Possible actions for raising issues regarding Human Rights Defenders with the authorities

In advance of relevant EU/Turkey bilateral meetings (e.g. political criteria meetings, sub-committee meetings, and bilateral EU Member State/Turkey dialogue) the EU side will solicit information from HRDs on latest developments in order to prepare its position.

---

<sup>1</sup> the definition of HRDs include individuals as well as organisations

<sup>2</sup> EU Missions covers both the EU Delegation and EU Member States' Embassies

The EU will evaluate reports of the hindrance of activities of HRDs including women HRDs and - where HRD activity is found to be unduly impeded - undertake appropriate action including demarches (public or private) and/or issue statements with the aim of promoting the rapid and complete removal of obstacles to such activity.

Timeline for implementation: *immediate*

#### 4. Recognition and visibility for Human Rights Defenders

EU Missions engage to work actively to recognise the work of HRDs and raise their visibility. In addition to regular/annual meetings with HRDs, meetings in advance of EU/ Turkey and EU MS/Turkey bilateral dialogue and visits to the premises of and events organised by HRDs, the EU side will attend trials of HRDs and visit HRDs under arrest, where relevant.

The EU and its Member States will where appropriate and possible organise meetings of HRDs with visiting missions.

In Turkey, the EU already actively promotes human rights and freedom of expression, including by HRDs, via its bilateral pre-accession assistance. Specific practical support to organisations active on human rights promotion and protection is provided by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) as well as by EU Missions' bilateral support programmes.

Timeline for implementation: *immediate (already ongoing for pre-accession/EIDHR assistance)*

#### 5. Support for special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council, including the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders

In the context of political dialogue between the EU and its Member States and Turkey, the EU side will promote in-country visits by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders. It will also promote the use of UN thematic mechanisms by Turkish HRDs.

Timeline for implementation: *immediate*

#### 6. Assistance to Human Rights Defenders in danger

The EU Missions have designated to take on the role of EU Liaison Officer for HRDs. HRDs will be able to make contact with the EU Liaison Officer at short notice in order to secure assistance when needed.

**EU Liaison Officer: Mrs. Elena Sanchez**

**Backup Officer : Mr. Michael Miller**

#### **Contact Details**

Tel: 0312 459 87 00 or [Delegation-turkey-hr-defenders@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Delegation-turkey-hr-defenders@eeas.europa.eu)

In line with their specific legal obligations and practices, EU Member State embassies re-confirm their readiness to examine punctually/rapidly all cases of violations of HRDs' human rights that might necessitate the provision of protection and/or emergency visas. Please see below for contact details of the relevant officers for the EU embassies:

Timeline for implementation: *immediate*

7. Dissemination of relevant human rights information to Human Rights Defenders and civil society

The EU Guidelines on HRDs are on the EU Delegation home page together with other relevant information on the EIDHR. The EU Guidelines will also be put on the pages of the EU Member States' embassies.

The EU side will continue to inform HRDs of the nature of relevant discussions in the context of EU/Turkey and EU Member State/Turkey dialogue.

The EU will also continue publicising possibilities of financial support for HRDs via calls for proposals.

The annual progress report will be published on the website of the EU Delegation and disseminated to both HRDs and civil society.

Timeline for implementation: *immediate*