

27 July 2016

Statement of the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union on the Situation in Turkey

The Network of the Presidents is deeply concerned arising from reports of the recent removal from office of over 2,700 members of the Judiciary and prosecutors in Turkey, and of orders for the arrest of many Judges and Prosecutors.

Immediately following the attempted coup the Turkish Republic has suspended, dismissed and/or arrested thousands of people, including many Judges. Among those are judges of the Council of State and the Court of Cassation of Turkey. The number of citizens involved, and the announcement by the President of the Republic of Turkey of the possible restoration of the death penalty, also raise serious concerns.

We wish to recall that the independence of the Judiciary is not a privilege for judges, but a guarantee of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which allows every person to have confidence in the Justice system, the Law and the State.

The Network views the current events, in particular the dismissal or arrest of thousands of Judges as an attack on the independence of the Judiciary in Turkey, as well as a systemic threat to the Rule of Law in this Member State of the Council of Europe. The Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union urges respect for the Rule of Law and human rights.

The Network joins the expression of caution expressed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and calls for the implementation of existing monitoring mechanisms in terms of respect for human rights, both at the level of the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Note on the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union:

The Network of Presidents is an organisation comprising the Presidents of the Supreme Courts of the European Union. Its members meet to discuss matters of common interest and concern, exchange ideas and information. The Network provides a forum through which European institutions may request the opinions of the Presidents of the Supreme Courts of the European Union.

The Hon. Mrs Justice Susan Denham, Chief Justice of Ireland, is the current President of the Network.