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English only

Ninth session


Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 13–17 December 2021

Conference room paper submitted by the European Union*

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EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN VIENNA

The Head of Delegation

Vienna, 16 November 2021

Excellency,

I am writing on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We have taken note with great concern of the letter dated 28 September 2021, in which H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Muhtar Gün registered Turkey's objection to the participation of the following eight non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the 9th Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), to be held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, from 13-17 December:

- Integrity Initiatives International
- Central Asian Research Institute on Corruption and Money Laundering
- Alliance on Civic Initiatives Promotion
- Transparency International Georgia
- Expert Forum (EFOR)
- Access Info Europe
- The Good Lobby Italia
- Eurothink-Center for European Strategies

As you are aware, support to civil society is key for the European Union. A dynamic civil society is one where citizens can freely associate and engage in civic action. This way they can help shape government policy and make sure that the voices of people are heard. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are key actors in expressing the demands and needs of citizens and encouraging active citizenship; they can stimulate and expand the space for dialogue and cooperation on matters of public interest.

Therefore, we have always supported the widest participation of relevant CSOs and NGOs in the Conferences of the States Parties to the UNCAC. We are deeply concerned that the objections raised by Turkey to a considerable number of NGOs will seriously impede these efforts.

I wish to stress that any Government has a legitimate right and responsibility to fight terrorism, however such efforts need to be undertaken in accordance with the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Any measures taken to counter terrorism must comply with States' other obligations under international law whilst the proportionality principle should be observed

in practice. In this context, we have serious concerns in relation to Turkey's listing without substantiated evidence of NGOs, including EU-based ones, and members of these NGOs, as entities and/or individuals supportive of terrorism. Such listing would have serious consequences on their activities and participation in relevant fora, such as this Conference, and may also put individuals working for these NGOs at risk.

In light of the above, we would encourage Turkey to reconsider its objections as regards the participation of these NGOs in the 9th Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and remove these NGOs from any black listing similar to the above-mentioned one.

Your Excellency, we take this opportunity to renew the assurances of our highest consideration,

Yours sincerely,



Stephan Klement
Ambassador

H.E. Dr. Harib Al Amimi
President of the Conference of the States Parties
UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

cc: H.E. Mohamed Hamdy El Molla, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of
Egypt to the International Organizations in Vienna, incoming President of the Conference