

H E President Erdoğan
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi
06560 Beştepe, Ankara
Turkey

Brussels, July 18th 2018

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,

We urge your Government to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. We therefore welcome the expected end of the state of emergency, which for the past two years has meant certain rights guaranteed by the European Convention of Human Rights were suspended. Yet we are concerned that even after the state of emergency is lifted, Presidential decree will allow the suspension of rights.

In general, we are alarmed by what the European Commission has called “serious backsliding” on human rights. In a decree issued earlier this month, you ordered more than 18,000 civil servants be fired. This number is added to the 130,000 people already fired from government jobs.

Furthermore, thousands of people have been illegitimately detained, including human rights defenders, writers, and social media users.

The withdrawal of press cards, as well as the closure of numerous media outlets or the assertion of government control remain deeply troubling and are incompatible with Turkey’s commitments to human rights and freedoms.

The Government continues to use its authorities to block online content on a wide range of grounds. The global encyclopedia Wikipedia remains blocked in Turkey for more than a year, denying people access to information on topics ranging from medicine, to history, to current events.

As President, we look to you to take immediate and irreversible steps to demonstrate a commitment to people’s rights under this new government.

We call for the release of all unjustly detained, and for an end to censorship and silencing of journalists.

In particular, the immediate release of Osman Kavala, Ahmet Sik, and Selehattin Demirtas would help indicate that there is commitment to international standards concerning freedom of expression and fair trial.

Sincerely,

Marietje Schaake

Rebecca Harms (Greens/EFA)

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (EPP)

Alessia Mosca (S&D)

Bodil Valero (Greens/EFA)

Matthijs van Miltenburg (ALDE)

Joachim Starbatty (ECR)

Bernd Kölmel (ECR)

Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL)

Renate Sommer (EPP)

Sven Giegold (Greens/EFA)

Jean Lambert (Greens/EFA)

Brando Benifei (S&D)

Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)

Jiří Pospíšil (EPP)

Hans-Olaf Henkel (ECR)

Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL)

Eva Kaili (S&D)

Michal Boni (EPP)

Julie Ward (S&D)

Pavel Telicka (ALDE)

Sophie in 't Veld (ALDE)

Ana Gomes (S&D)

Franz Obermayr (ENF)

Margot Parker (EFDD)

Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE/NGL)

Jordi Solé (Greens/EFA)

Tunne Kelam (EPP)

Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)

Eleonora Forenza (GUE/NGL)

William Dartmouth (EFDD)

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Helga Stevens (ECR)

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