



The Managing Director

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Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen und
Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt e.V.
Att. Thomas Schmidt, Generalsekretär
thomas.schmidt@eldh.eu

Dear Mr Schmidt,

Thank you for your letters addressed to the High Representative/Vice-President concerning the indictment seeking dissolution of the Turkish opposition party, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), an issue followed very closely by the European Union.

The continuing pressure against the HDP and its members, the arrests, the replacement of elected mayors, and the attempt of lifting parliamentary immunities of Members of the Grand National Assembly is of major concern. Closing the second largest opposition party would violate the rights of millions of voters in Turkey and would be against EU values. It is a huge step backwards in fundamental rights in Turkey and undermines the credibility of the Turkish authorities' stated commitment to reforms.

The EU has clearly expressed its discontent about the decision to strip Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu of his parliamentary seat and parliamentary immunity and his imminent incarceration as well as the lawsuit initiated by the Court of Cassation's prosecutor requesting the HDP closure.

These developments build upon Turkey's non-implementation of the ECtHR's ruling on the release of Mr Selahattin Demirtaş as well as the detention of hundreds of local politicians, elected office holders and of members of the HDP on terrorism-related charges.

Any alleged wrongdoing or crime needs to be subject to due process and the presumption of innocence must be safeguarded.

As an EU candidate country and a longstanding member of the Council of Europe, Turkey must urgently uphold its core democratic obligations. The EU leaders expressed in their joint statement on 25 March 2021, that rule of law, and fundamental rights in Turkey remain major preoccupation and that dialogue on such issues is an integral part of the EU-Turkey relationship.

The European Union has also made specific recommendations in the Commission's annual reports on Turkey to address credibly all relevant shortcomings in the rule of law and fundamental rights as a matter of priority.

You may rest assured that the European Union continues to closely monitoring the situation in Turkey and will keep on raising the issue of backsliding in fundamental rights and democratic standards all levels with its bilateral contacts with Turkish interlocutors.

Yours sincerely,

Angelina Eichhorst
(*e-signed*)