



GROUP OF THE UNIFIED EUROPEAN LEFT (UEL)
PARLEMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

25/08/2017

**To the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey,
Mr Ismail Kahraman,**

Subject: Call for the rights of elected Members of Parliament to be respected

Dear President Kahraman,

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe already has urged several times to respect the rights of elected Members of the Parliament of the Republic of Turkey. The Assembly has made it clear that lifting the parliamentary immunity of a large number of MPs, especially the members of the opposition parties HDP and CHP, followed by the prolonged detention of some of these Members of Parliament, are in direct violation of the respect accredited to the elected parliamentarians of the Member States of the Council of Europe.

One of the most prominent Members of the Parliament of Turkey whose immunity has been lifted and who has been in detention since early November 2016 awaiting for a possible trial against him is the co-chair of the HDP, Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş. Recently, the procedure started against him has been delayed and it is still unclear whether at all and when in this case, Mr. Demirtaş will appear before the court. In the meanwhile, conditions are created which make it impossible for him to communicate with the HDP Group – Turkey's third party – which elected him as their chairman.

Earlier this week, in your capacity as the president of Parliament of Turkey, you have denied Mr. Demirtaş the right to communicate from prison with his Group peers through the SEGBIS audio visual information system.

This decision astonishes us, since Mr. Demirtaş, although his parliamentary immunity has been lifted and he has been held in captivity, still is a member of your Parliament which should not unnecessarily obstruct for the purpose in maintaining contacts with his Group peers and to perform his parliamentary duties.

Furthermore, we urge you to protest against the fact that during every transport which Mr. Demirtaş has to undergo in the context of the procedure against him, his hands are handcuffed, totally an unnecessary and insulting practice.

Moreover, we do believe that in your capacity as the president of the Parliament of Turkey, you should do everything that is possible to protect the immunity of your Members and to protest against them being held in detention. Currently, there are 10 HDP and 1 CHP deputies in prison,

along with the co-presidents of HDP. The mandate of Nursel Aydođan, Faysal Sariyıldız and Tuđba Hezer were dropped together with the mandate of Figen Yůksekdađ.

Elected Parliamentarians belong in parliament, and not in prison. We call once again on you to demand with us for the immediate release of all the Members of your Parliament who are currently held in detention.

As the Member of the Council of Europe, Turkey has taken the obligation upon itself to protect the rule of law, to respect human rights and to foster democracy. We appeal to you as the President of the Parliament of Turkey to strictly fulfill these commitments.

We also count on your support to foster the visit of the PACE presidency to the co-presidents in prison, as previously requested.

A copy of this call is sent to the chairman of the delegation of the Parliament of Turkey in the Parliamentary Assembly in the Council of Europe. We intend to take up this matter shortly once again during the meetings of our Assembly.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Group of the Unified European Left in Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,



Tiny Kox, Chairman UEL.