HDP Congress, Ankara

23/2/2020

Hello Congress,

May I tell you that I feel very, very much at home, here today in this great meeting?

May I tell you that you are a great inspiration to me and all my colleagues of the European Left, who support your courageous efforts to have the rule of law, human rights and democracy respected again here in Turkey?

May I tell you that everything you are doing over here is well known to us of the European Left and that we are on your side?

Your struggle is our struggle - we truly believe in the strength of international solidarity!

May I promise you that I will convey your clear message to our friends in the rest of Europe that you will not give up your principled positions and brave efforts, in spite of all the harsh pressure that is put upon you!

And may I send my warm greetings to your former co-chairs Figen and Selahattin, who should have been here today with us instead of in a Turkish prison? As all your imprisoned members should have been here today with us?

I call upon Turkish authorities: release all political prisoners, and release them immediately!

And may I, as Chair of the European Left in the Council of Europe, end with a clear message to President Erdogan and the Turkish authorities:

membership of the Council of Europe is not for free! If you want your country to stay in Europe’s oldest and broadest human rights treaty organization, then stick to your obligations as a member State! Listen to your citizens, your politicians, your human rights organizations, your trade unions, listen to the international community: solve your problems in a democratic way, restore the rule of law and pay full respect to the human rights of each and every citizen!

Once again, I am honoured to be here with you, and I promise that we from the European Left will maintain our solidarity with you!

Tiny Kox

Chairperson UEL Group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Senator SP Netherlands