

**STATEMENT ON THE NEED TO IMMEDIATELY RELEASE MR SELAHATTIN
DEMIRTAS**

8 June 2018, Strasbourg

On June 24, 2018 Turkey will have early presidential and parliamentary elections. In the presidential elections, six candidates will run.

However, one of the presidential candidates, Mr Selahattin Demirtaş, Member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for HDP (Democratic Party of the Peoples) is not able to participate in the campaign.

This is due to the fact that Mr Demirtaş has been in pre-trial detention since November 2016, after his immunity was lifted despite the opinion No. 858 / 2016 of 14 October 2016 by the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law "the Venice Commission" where it considers that the inviolability of the Members of Parliament whose immunity was lifted should be restored.

This dire unbalance in campaigning opportunities goes against the principle of free and fair elections, to which Turkey has committed itself as Member State of the Council of Europe.

I appreciate that several other candidates have called, for that reason, for the release from pre-trial detention of Mr Demirtaş.

I hereby call on the relevant Turkish authorities to immediately release Mr Demirtaş, in order to give him at least a chance to participate during the last days before 24 June in the electoral campaign.

Stella Kyriakides, MP, Cyprus

Chair of the E.P.P. (Group of the European People's Party in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE))

On behalf of the E.P.P. group in PACE

Frank Schwabe, MP, Germany

President of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

On behalf of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group in PACE

Sen. Rik Daems, Belgium

President of the ALDE group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

On behalf of the ALDE group in PACE

Sen. Tiny Kox, The Netherlands

President of the UEL Group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

On behalf of the UEL Group in PACE

Adele Gambaro, Italy

Chair of the Free Democrats Group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)