

Kadri Gürsel

Cumhuriyet

c/o Silivri Prison, Istanbul

Brussels, 23 May 2016

Dear Kadri,

Soon you will mark the seventh month spent in pre-trial detention. You were arrested together with nine of your colleagues from Cumhuriyet - one of the most respected Turkish newspapers. Arrested on the basis of absurd and fabricated charges.

You, who have fought for freedom and democracy and for fundamental values of humanity; who wrote to defend the Republic against creeping islamization;

You, who investigated activities of the PKK and were abducted by this terrorist organization to be kept hostage in mountains for a month;

You, who uncovered and described networks of the Gülen movement as they spread into Turkish police and judiciary, at times when they still closely cooperated with Erdogan's AKP -

- You are now detained on terrorist charges?

Sadly, what looks as an absurdity turns out to be an outrageous, systemic move of Erdogan's authoritarian regime that wants to silence you and over hundred of fellow journalists as he strengthens his grip on power and on associated benefits. The measures Turkish authorities are taking are beyond the legitimate right of the state of Turkey to hold to account those who attempted a despicable coup.

As it looks, the regime wants to make sure its firmer grip on power happens in darkness, hidden away from the critical eye of journalists, of the public.

The motto of one of the main Dutch newspapers is "Lux et Libertas", "Light and Freedom". You, journalists, have a vital role in bringing light, otherwise freedom and democracy die away. It is very sad to see Turkey sliding into darkness.

But we know, and you know too, that darkness cannot last forever, that night is followed by day, a day on which all deeds are put under full light!

Dear Kadri, be assured that we will keep calling for your release, and for that of your oppressed fellow journalists. We will insist that the European Union measures Turkey against its obligations as a Member of the Council of Europe and a signatory of European Convention of Human Rights. And, we advocate the stepping up of support for the civil society and for the freedom of media in Turkey. We must help Turkish citizens to fight back for democracy, pluralism and freedom, fight to bring back the light to Turkey.

We hope that you will soon be free again and that you will reunite with your son who is impatiently awaiting you!

Yours,



Guy Verhofstadt,
President of the ALDE Group in the European Parliament



Marietje Schaake
Member of the European Parliament



Nathalie Griesbeck
Member of the European Parliament