



DGS / KWI / GOETHESTRASSE 31 / 45128 ESSEN

Botschafter der Republik Türkei in Berlin  
**Herr Hüseyin Avni Karşlıođlu**  
Türkische Botschaft  
Tiergartenstr. 19-21  
10785 Berlin

**DGS DEUTSCHE  
GESELLSCHAFT  
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VORSTAND · BEAUFTRAGTE  
FÜR INTERNATIONALE BEZIEHUNGEN  
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Munich, 3rd March 2016

Dear Mr. Hüseyin Avni Karşlıođlu,

on behalf of the European Sociological Association and of the German Sociological Association, we express our serious concern about the recent treatment of our colleagues in Turkey who have signed a call for peace in the South East region of the country.

The European Sociological Association is a community of scholars that represents national associations of sociology as well as its members (about 250,000 individual scholars in the European research area). Our statutes demand that our work contributes to understanding and solving social problems, to improving quality of life, and encouraging peaceful and productive relations among peoples. We recently considered plans to hold one of our European conferences of more than 4000 participants in Istanbul. The German Sociological Association represents more than 2.800 members, and is actively committed to the support of unconditional academic freedom.

We understand that in a climate of intimidation the Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK) began investigations and disciplinary actions against faculty members who signed the petition 'Academics for Peace'. The governmental, political and professional measures against its signatories fuels an atmosphere of threat and a public campaign that strongly contradicts the urgent need for thinking carefully and exploring scientifically a complex situation, which concerns all of us who share the strongest condemnation of all forms of terrorism.

These measures violate the human right to freedom of expression and they violate academic freedom. First, freedom of thought and opinion is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (art. 25-27). Second, academic freedom is a necessary requirement for the functioning of science that has the task of improving human life by exploring and articulating knowledge about complex situations.

Current developments in Turkey, in our view, also violate the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights' article 19 that guarantees the freedom to hold opinions without state and other interference.

We therefore respectfully ask the Turkish government to take immediate steps to ensure that all legal and other action against signatories of the 'academics for peace' statement, and all pending investigations into university faculty members who supported, will be stopped and that the basic requirement for the contribution of science to improve life, academic freedom, will be re-established.

Thank you for your attention.

Looking forward to your positive response.

Yours respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Villa', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

**Prof. Dr. Paula-Irene Villa**

Member of the Board of the German Sociological Association