

PRESS RELEASE

The CCBE 2016 Human Rights Award

02/12/2016

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) today granted its 2016 Human Rights Award to four Turkish lawyers who have been particularly active in the defence of human rights and the rule of law in Turkey.

At its Plenary Session in Brussels, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) granted its 2016 Human Rights Award to four Turkish lawyers: Ayşe Bingöl Demir, Ayşe Acinikli, Ramazan Demir and posthumously to Tahir Elçi.

Tahir Elçi was a Turkish human rights lawyer and the President of the Diyarbakır Bar Association and worked on cases concerning the persecution of Kurds and the grave violations of human rights in Turkey. He was one of the key figures in the struggle for a rule of law in Turkey and fought for the respect of democracy and due process. Mr Elçi was murdered on 28 November 2015.

Ayşe Bingöl Demir is a Turkish lawyer who has brought several cases alleging violations of human rights before domestic courts and institutions in Turkey, as well as before the European Court of Human Rights. She has worked extensively on the internal displacement phenomenon in Turkey, representing hundreds of internally displaced persons before the ECtHR.

Ayşe Acinikli is a Turkish lawyer, member of the Association of Libertarian Lawyers (ÖHD). She was one of the nine lawyers arrested and placed in custody in March 2016. She was released along with her colleagues on 19 March and again arrested on 6 April, together with Ramazan Demir. She was conditionally released on 7 September 2016.

Ramazan Demir is a Turkish lawyer who is also the Secretary General of the Association of Libertarian Lawyers (ÖHD), and who works with many human rights NGOs and organisations. In March 2016, he was arrested together with nine other lawyers and was accused of being a member of a terrorist organisation and propagandising for it. All the lawyers arrested were representing the 46 lawyers who were in turn arrested in 2011 on suspicion of “working for, or belonging to, a terrorist organisation”. He was eventually released a few days later but was re-

arrested, together with Ayşe Acinikli, on 6 April 2016. He was conditionally released on 7 September 2016.

Ms Ayşe Bingöl Demir, along with Mr Elçi's widow, travelled to Brussels to receive the award. Unfortunately, due to travel bans imposed on them following their arrest, Ayşe Acinikli and Ramazan Demir were unable to attend the ceremony. They sent videos thanking the CCBE and explaining the difficult situation of lawyers in Turkey.

This year marked the 10th CCBE Human Rights Award, and to mark this occasion, the ceremony was attended by Mr Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative for Human Rights. Mr Lambrinidis' mission is to enforce the efficiency and visibility of the European Commission in terms of human rights.

The CCBE also published a brochure highlighting the winners since 2007.

About the CCBE:

The CCBE represents the bars and law societies of 45 countries, and through them over one million European lawyers. Since 2007, the CCBE has annually granted its Human Rights Award to a lawyer or lawyers' organisation that has brought honour to the legal profession by upholding the highest values of professional and personal conduct in the field of human rights. More information about past recipients and criteria for the award is available [here](#).

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