

President Mr Tayyip Erdoğan  
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi  
06689 Çankaya, Ankara  
Turkey

Brussels, 5 November 2015

**Re: Concerns regarding the arrest and investigation of Tahir Elçi**

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has observer representatives from a further thirteen European countries' bars. The CCBE places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law, and is particularly concerned with the situation of human rights defenders around the world.

The CCBE wishes to express its serious concern over the situation of Tahir Elçi, Turkish human rights lawyer and President of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, who was recently arrested and is now placed under judicial supervision, awaiting trial.

On 20 October 2015, Tahir Elçi was arrested by the anti-terror police in the offices of the Diyarbakır Bar Association and interrogated by the Bakirköy Public Prosecutor. We understand that the prosecutor has started an investigation of Mr. Elçi for allegedly 'making propaganda for or promoting a terrorist organization'. After Mr. Elçi was questioned, the prosecutor requested the court to impose pre-trial detention, but the court ordered Mr. Elçi's release. However, his release is pending completion of the investigation, and restrictions have been imposed: Mr. Elçi is not allowed to leave the country and is placed under judicial supervision.

In this context, the CCBE again wishes to draw to your attention the Principle of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (attached), in particular Principles 16 and 18 on Guarantees for the functioning of lawyers, and Principle 23 on Freedom of expression and association.

**In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges your Excellency to take effective steps to ensure that the charges against Tahir Elçi are dropped, and to guarantee his safety and security. In addition, the CCBE asks you to guarantee in all circumstances that all lawyers in Turkey are entitled to freedom of expression without fear of reprisal, hindrance, intimidation, or harassment.**

Yours sincerely,



Maria Slazak  
President