

**President Nursultan Nazarbayev
Office of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Akorda building, Left bank of the Ishim River,
Astana, Kazakhstan**

Brussels, 27th of March 2013

Re: Concerns regarding the detention of lawyer Vadim Kuramshin in prison colony EC 164/4

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 has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concern over the situation of a lawyer, Mr Vadim Kuramshin, recently transferred from a temporary detention facility to prison colony EC/164/4 in North Kazakhstan.

Mr Kuramshin is a prominent lawyer and human rights defender, well known for his previous engagement in denouncing abuses committed against prisoners in Kazakhstan, including, among others, in prison colony EC 164/4.

According to the information we have received, on 7 December 2012, the Zhambyl Regional Court condemned Mr Kuramshin to 12 years severe regime imprisonment and confiscation of property on grounds of extortion. We understand that there are several reports stating that the abovementioned proceedings did not comply with essential fair trial standards.

On 14 February 2013, Taraz Regional Court rejected the appeal lodged by Vadim Kuramshin and upheld the condemnation verdict against him.

On 4 March 2013, Mr Kuramshin was finally transferred from a temporary detention facility in Taraz to prison colony EC 164/4.

The CCBE is alarmed because the abovementioned prison colony was the object of previous complaints presented by Mr Kuramshin. For this reason, the CCBE believes that he is at high risk of facing particularly harsh conditions and reprisals.

In this context the CCBE wishes to draw your attention draw to your attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Furthermore, Article 17 states that:

Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to take immediate and effective steps to ensure that Mr Vadim Kuramshin is removed from prison colony EC 164/4 and is protected from any form of reprisal. The CCBE also urges you to take all necessary measure to guarantee that Mr Kuramshin will be retried in accordance with fair trial standards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Tsouroulis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

EVANGELOS TSOUROULIS

CCBE President