

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly Communication Unit

Ref: 202a04

Tel: +33 3 90 21 50 26

Fax :+33 3 90 21 41 34

Assembly.news@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



45 members

Albania  
Andorra  
Armenia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Belgium  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Moldova  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Russia  
San Marino  
Serbia and Montenegro  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"  
Turkey  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom

### **Peter Schieder deplores Ankara state security court decision on Leyla Zana and three other former parliamentarians**

Strasbourg, 22.04.2004 - Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly President Peter Schieder said he deplored the confirmation of the conviction of Leyla Zana and three other former parliamentarians by the Ankara state security court as this conviction was to a large extent based on an unjustified interference with the applicants' freedom to discuss issues of public concern.

Mr Schieder regretted the time it had taken to have the criminal procedure against them re-opened following the Strasbourg Court's judgment in 2001 which found the original trial to be unfair (Sadak, Zana, Dilce and Dogan judgment). He deplored the fact that despite repeated requests by the Parliamentary Assembly, the execution of the original prison sentence imposed had not been suspended and the applicants had therefore remained in prison.

With regard to the conduct of the trial, Mr Schieder said he was concerned about various allegations made by international observers as to the lack of equity and fairness of the new procedure.

"While fully respecting the independence of the judiciary, I must say that this court sentence comes at a particularly delicate moment. Next week, our Parliamentary Assembly will debate a report on the honouring of obligations and commitments by Turkey which recommends closing the monitoring procedure on the grounds that 'over the last three years Turkey has clearly demonstrated its commitment and ability to fulfil its statutory obligations as a Council of Europe member state'.

This Court sentence damages the overall picture we have of Turkey, which has otherwise implemented a huge reform package and made progress with regard to respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles. I would therefore appeal to the Turkish authorities to do everything in their power to set them free," Peter Schieder concluded.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 626 members from the national parliaments of the 45 member states.

President: Peter Schieder (Austria, SOC); Secretary General of the Assembly: Bruno Haller.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); LDR (Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).