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Ref. CG-PR 088 (2013)

Congress rapporteurs pay second visit to Leyla Güven

Strasbourg, 9 December 2013 - On Saturday 7 December 2013, the rapporteurs of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on Turkey, Anders Knape (Sweden, EPP/CCE) and Leen Verbeek (Netherlands, SOC) visited former Congress member Leyla Güven, in the E-type prison in Diyarbakir, accompanied by Jean-Philippe Bozouls, Executive Secretary to the Chamber of Local Authorities.

During this visit, made at the request of the Congress Bureau and with the authorisation of the Turkish authorities, the rapporteurs were able to have a long discussion with Mrs Güven. They will report back to the Congress Bureau at its next meeting on 10 February 2014.

"This Christmas, Leyla Güven will have been in prison for four years", declared Anders Knape. "This situation is very sad. It is difficult to understand how this can happen in a Council of Europe member state".

"We found Leyla Güven with her resolve unbroken, displaying remarkable courage, despite her long detention, with no end in sight, and her seemingly unending trial" added Leen Verbeek.

Ms Güven, former Mayor of Viransehir Municipality, has been in prison in remand detention since 29 December 2009, together with a large number of other elected local politicians, charged under Turkey's penal and anti-terrorism laws. The situation of Ms Güven has been addressed in several Congress sessions and, since the rapporteurs first visited her in prison on 6 October 2011, the Congress Bureau has been updated on her situation at each of its meetings. She has been on trial since October 2010.

Gaye Doganoglu (EPP/CCE), Head of the Turkish delegation to the Congress, also participated in the mission.

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions.

It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress: Herwig Van Staa (Austria, EPP/DC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Nataliya Romanova (Ukraine, IDLG), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC)
Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)