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The Congress calls for the release of Leyla Güven

Strasbourg, 26 March 2014 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, meeting in Session on 26 March in Strasbourg (France), examined a report on the situation of Leyla Güven and other local elected representatives in detention in Turkey. Following their second visit to Leyla Güven in Diyarbakir prison on 7 December 2013, the Congress rapporteurs, Anders Knape, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE) and Leen Verbeek, Netherlands (R, SOC) pointed out that 15 mayors, 23 deputy mayors and dozens of municipal councillors had been in remand detention for years – an unprecedented situation in the Council of Europe member states, while Turkey was preparing to hold new local elections on 30 March.

“Leyla Güven was arrested on 29 December 2009, while she was mayor of Viranşehir and member of the Congress. More than four years later, she is still in detention. She has been on trial since 2010, with no end to her trial in sight”, said Mr Knape. “Such detentions constitute a serious obstacle to the democratic process in Turkey and also raise serious questions about the rule of law and the protection of human rights in this country”, he added.

The rapporteurs also noted that as a result of a recent ruling of the Turkish Constitutional Court, all the members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly who had been detained in similar circumstances and for the same reasons as Leyla Güven had now been freed.

“We invite the Turkish authorities to apply the same standards and principles to local elected politicians as it does to its members of parliament, and therefore to release Leyla Güven and all the Turkish local elected representatives who find themselves in a similar situation” said Leen Verbeek.

Since 2010, the Bureau of the Congress has examined the situation of Leyla Güven at every one of its meetings.

[Report CG\(26\)6PROV](#)

More information : [File 26th Session](#)

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)