



T +33(0)390214895

[www.coe.int/congress](http://www.coe.int/congress)

[congress.com@coe.int](mailto:congress.com@coe.int)

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## **Congress delegation concludes visit to Leyla Güven**

Strasbourg, 7 October 2011. – A Congress delegation visited Leyla Güven, a member of the Turkish delegation to the Congress, in Diyarbakir E-Type prison on 6 October.

The delegation was headed by Anders Knappe, Vice-President of the Congress and President of the Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, and included Leen Verbeek, Vice-President of the Dutch Congress delegation and Governor of the Province of Flevoland, and Congress Secretary General Andreas Kiefer. The delegation was accompanied by Ms Gaye Doganoglu, Head of the Turkish delegation to the Congress.

The visit was facilitated by the Turkish authorities, to allow Congress members to obtain first-hand information on the situation of their fellow member, following discussions in different Congress meetings since the detention of Leyla Güven in December 2009. The delegation was able to speak with Ms Güven at length and learn about the conditions of her imprisonment. Apart from her, many other local politicians are in detention.

“The Congress is very concerned about the large number of around 1,800 elected local politicians in detention in Turkey, many of them, like Ms Güven, since 2009. It is not satisfactory if Congress members are no longer able to carry out the mandate for which they were elected. For this reason the Congress will continue to follow-up this matter closely”, the delegation stated.

Concerning the specific situation of Leyla Güven, the Congress delegation insisted on a fair trial that should not drag on for too long, “since Ms Güven has been in detention, as other local politicians, for almost two years.”

Anders Knappe and Leen Verbeek will report on this visit to the Congress Bureau which will meet in Strasbourg on 17 October and decide on the follow-up to the mission. The issue will be also brought to the attention of Congress members who will meet at the 21st Plenary Session (18 to 20 October 2011).

The delegation, who met also with the Governor of Diyarbakir, Mustafa Toprak, and a group of mayors of the region, thanked the Turkish authorities for the opportunity to see Leyla Güven, enabling them to mark their solidarity with a fellow member of the Congress.

[Full text of the statement](#)

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: Keith Whitmore (United Kingdom, ILDG), President of the Chamber of Regions: Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/CD), 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).