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Congress Bureau gravely concerned about massive detention of local elected representatives in Turkey

Strasbourg, 21.10 2011. – At its meeting on 20 October 2011, the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe expressed its grave concern about the continued massive detention of local elected politicians in Turkey, including Mayor of Viransehir and Congress member Leyla Güven, incarcerated since 2009.

Acting on the report of the Congress delegation that visited Ms Güven in prison on 6 October 2011, the Bureau reiterated its position that the prolonged detention of a large number of mayors and city councilors, who are prevented from fulfilling their duties to the citizens, is debilitating for local democracy. The Bureau called on several bodies of the Council of Europe to address this situation, asking the President of the Congress in particular:

- to invite the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights to look into the issue in the light of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR);
- to invite the Venice Commission to examine the question of the use of languages other than Turkish in its constitutional assistance to Turkey;
- and to invite the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) to examine the detention conditions of Ms Güven.

The Bureau also asked the Congress' own Monitoring Committee to look closely into the massive detention of local elected politicians in the light of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. It insisted that it is alarming and not in the spirit of the Charter, which Turkey has ratified, that the seats of local elected representatives remain vacant for such long periods of time.

[Decisions of the Bureau](#)

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).