



TURKEY – FIVE YEARS OF DESTRUCTION OF THE RULE OF LAW

Next Thursday, July 15, marks the fifth anniversary of the attempted Coup d'État in Turkey.

In the aftermath of that event, the Turkish authorities have launched an unprecedented attack against the Rule of Law and one of its most fundamental principles – the independence of the Judiciary. A few short hours after the events of that evening, a list containing the names of magistrates allegedly involved in the coup was published. That list included incoherences, such as names of deceased magistrates or places of work that had changed long before, clearly showing that it had been prepared much in advance.

2745 Judges and Prosecutors and hundreds of Lawyers were dismissed, imprisoned and deprived of their property and income, without any due process or guarantees. Many had to escape from the country, sometimes in precarious conditions. This purge affected all areas of society, from the academia to the media or the public administration, inflicting a serious blow to Turkey's process of modernisation.

YARSAV, MEDEL's member association, was dissolved by decree on 23 July 2016 - a decision MEDEL does not recognise. Murat Arslan, its President (winner of the 2017 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), was imprisoned on 26 October 2016 and remains since then in prison, having been convicted to a 10-year sentence after a trial that has not met any international criteria of a due process of law.

Although Turkey has already been convicted by the European Court of Human Rights in cases involving the dismissal and detention of Judges, the Turkish authorities continue to disrespect those decisions, moving away from the values and principles that Turkey vowed to protect when became a member of the Council of Europe.

In this sad anniversary, MEDEL and its member associations, gathered in Firenze, Italy, in the Council of Administration, once again reaffirm their full solidarity with the Turkish people and especially with all the members of the Turkish Judiciary community – Judges, Prosecutors, Lawyers and Professors – and honour all those who gave their lives in these dark times.

MEDEL and its member associations demand the Turkish authorities:

- To immediately release Murat Arslan and all the unfairly imprisoned Magistrates, Lawyers and other citizens;
- To immediately and fully reinstate all Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers who were unlawfully dismissed;
- To fully respect the Rule of Law and the independence of the Judiciary.

Firenze, 10 July 2021