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To:

Charles Michel,

President of the European Council

Ursula von der Leyen,

President of the European Commission

Brussels, 30 March 2021

Dear President Von der Leyen,

Dear President Michel,

Ahead of your meeting with the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that should take place on 6 April, we would like to raise our major concerns about the permanent dismantlement of human rights and democratic norms in Turkey. You are well aware of the internal crackdown on human rights defenders and all opinion dissidents, on the executive interferences in the judiciary as well as on the permanent restrictions on freedoms of expression, media and assembly. The recent withdrawal from the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence is one more illustration of the continuing decline of fundamental freedoms in Turkey.

But beyond this, Turkey does not hesitate to carry out actions within the EU going so far as to threaten the death of European citizens. The Belgian citizen Bahar Kimyongür constantly receive threats while he has been mentioned in a “wanted list” issued by the Turkish Ministry of Interior since February 2018, and granting a reward of 2 million Turkish Liras for any information leading to his capture.

Sevim Dagdelen, deputy leader of the Left parliamentary group in Germany, is another well-known case. Although she does not figure in the “wanted list”, she often receives threats and lives under police protection for years.

In Austria, last January, a Turkish agent was deported. He claimed himself that he had been charged with killing three political figures opposed to the current Turkish President, one of them is Berivan Aslan.

The right to personal security is fundamental as mentioned in the European Charter of fundamental rights and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. “Terrorism accusation and charges” are often used to muzzle opponents and activists. The EU and its Member States have the responsibility to protect its citizens. Such death threats against opponents living in the

European soil is unacceptable. Therefore, we urge you to raise this fundamental issue during your bilateral meeting with the Turkish President and to make it a goal towards the appeasement of our bilateral relations with Turkey.

Sincerely,

Maria Arena
Bernard Guetta
Nicolae Stefanuta
Pierfrancesco Majorino
Dimitrios Papadimoulis
Helmut Scholz
Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana
Massimiliano Smeriglio
Giuseppina Picierno
Claude Gruffat
Idoia Ruiz Villanueva
Nils Usakovs
Petra Kammerevert
Evin Incir
Klara Dobrev
Attila Ara-Kovacs
Sandor Ronai
Sylvie Guillaume
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Athanasios Konstantinou
Andreas Schieder
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