



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)



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CP/em

Mr. Olli Rehn
Commissioner for Enlargement
European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
1040 Brussels

olli.rehn@ec.europa.eu

Detention of Turkish Trade Union Leader Meryem Özsögüt

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to you to express our deep concern about the continued detention of Ms Meryem Özsögüt, member of the Executive Board of the Turkish Union of Public Employees in Health and Social Services, affiliated to the ETUC member organization KESK.

Ms. Özsögüt was arrested on the morning of 8 January following her participation in a press conference on 14 December 2007 to denounce the killing of a trade union activist. Ever since that date Ms Özsögüt has remained in custody and her trial has been postponed several times. Ms. Özsögüt was arrested in connection with allegedly "being a member of a terrorist organization" and "for making propaganda in favour of the terrorist organisation". Her continued arrest without trial has triggered a massive wave of protest within the European and international trade union movement calling for the immediate release of Ms. Özsögüt. The global trade federation Public Services International has submitted some 7000 messages of protest from around the world to the President of the Joint EU – Turkey Parliamentary Committee, Mr. Joost Lagendijk on Friday, 11 July.

The ETUC is supportive of Turkey becoming a full member of the EU. Our support is however coupled with the clear demand that the Turkish government strictly adheres to international and European labour and trade union rights.

The Özsögüt case raises very serious questions as to the political will of the current Turkish government to honour these standards.

As Commissioner responsible for EU Enlargement, I would request you urgently to press the Turkish government for the immediate release of Meryem Özsögüt.

Yours sincerely,

John Monks
General Secretary ETUC

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel
General Secretary EPSU

cc: Commissioner Špidla, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner