

Date: 12. February 2024

To whom it may concern:

In my dual capacity as President of the Socialist Group of the Congress of the Council of Europe, the second largest political group in the Congress, and as rapporteur for local democracy in Türkiye for the monitoring of the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, I am writing to express my unwavering and timeless support for all those working in Türkiye to achieve the greatest possible democratization. I believe that those who work tirelessly to establish democratic standards and European norms for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, protection of the press, etc.) and the implementation of all measures necessary for the unconditional application of the rule of law, must be supported because they are moving their country forward.

As rapporteur on Türkiye for many years, I have been observing the latest developments in this country, some of which I believe are going in the right direction. As with many countries, there is sometimes a long way to go before we achieve a high level of democracy in line with certain European standards, which are quite demanding.

In this respect, the existence of a genuine opposition in Türkiye, which is making great efforts to move in this direction, is more than encouraging. And this is precisely why I insisted on appointing Mr Tunc SOYER, in addition to his many political qualities, to the second most important political post in the Congress of the Council of Europe.

I believe it is important for Türkiye, as one of the largest member states of the Council of Europe, to have a visible place, proportional to its place in the Congress, to be heard and to be able to contribute, with some influence, to the functioning of the Congress.

In my view, the choice and subsequent decision to appoint Tunc SOYER was also a clear political signal for your country, Türkiye. This appointment to an international political body gives him the opportunity to act, to express himself and to work at local

level to adapt European standards to conditions in his country, to ensure that they are implemented appropriately.

I think it is necessary to emphasize that Tunc SOYER is a particularly solid member of the internal political leadership of the Congress. He is Vice-President of an international political body made up of delegations of local and regional elected representatives from 46 Member States. His work is indispensable in helping us to better understand the complexity of the functioning of local democracy in Türkiye.

A potential decision to exclude him from the forthcoming local elections, which I will personally observe as deputy head of the Congress observation delegation, would mean not only the loss of an outstanding figure in the political leadership of the Congress, but also, more generally, an inestimable loss for Türkiye which he represents with pride and commitment within this international political assembly.

I am, of course, fully aware of the decision-making autonomy that governs the nomination of candidates, but I nevertheless felt it my duty to draw your attention to Tunc SOYER's particular situation, to his high position in the political executive within the Congress, and to his dedicated commitment to leading his country towards the values to which he firmly adheres and on which we are working together. That is why I thought it essential to inform you of this.

I wish the party to which Mr. SOYER belongs, and even more so to Türkiye, every success in these forthcoming elections, which I will be happy to observe next month, with my colleagues from the Congress, to learn even more about your country and understand how electoral procedures work in Türkiye with regard to major local elections.

I remain at your disposal for any further information you may need...

Yours faithfully,

Prof. dr. Vladimir Prebilič  
President of the Group of Socialist, Progressive Democrats and Greens