



OPEN LETTER

To the attention of:

President of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (contact@tccb.gov.tr)
Minister of Justice, Mr. Bekir Bozdağ (info@adalet.gov.tr)
Minister of Health, Mr. Fahrettin Koca (ozelburo@saglik.gov.tr)

19 December 2022

Your Excellency,

Re: Hearing of Prof. Şebnem Korur Fincancı on 23 December 2022

We are writing to you on behalf of the World Medical Association (WMA), the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) as well as the undersigned European Medical Organisations¹ representing together millions of physicians in Europe and across the world with the shared professional commitment to medical ethics, human rights and peace.

Our Turkish colleague, Prof. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, President of the Turkish Medical Association (TMA), has been in pre-trial detention since 26 October 2022, after an interview in which she called for an independent investigation on the allegation of the use of chemical weapons. The Ankara 3rd Criminal Court ordered her arrest on charges of “propaganda for a terrorist organisation.” Prof. Fincancı has been recently transferred to Istanbul as the Istanbul 24th Heavy Penal Court has accepted its jurisdiction with a first hearing scheduled on 23 December 2022.

We are deeply concerned by this new charge on Prof. Fincancı and do not see any evidence supporting her indictment. The only prominent element of this case is the arbitrary nature of the accusations.

We have worked with Prof. Fincancı for many years and value her important contribution to our organisations. Prof. Şebnem Korur Fincancı is a well-known forensic physician in Turkey and globally, whose integrity and commitment to the ethical values of our profession are unquestionable.

¹ European Association of Senior Hospital Physicians (AEMH), European Council of Medical Orders (CEOM), European Union of General Practitioners/Family Physicians (UEMO), European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS)

Prof. Fincancı is in detention for merely expressing an opinion. Such denial of liberty constitutes a gross violation of the freedom of speech. Her detention is arbitrary, abusive, and contrary to the most elementary fair trial rules, guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Turkey has ratified in 2003.

We would like also to respectfully remind you that the use of chemical weapons is prohibited under international law Turkey ratified in 1997. It seems to us incongruous to the least that the Turkish authorities punishes one of its citizens for recommending an investigation on the use of weapons which they precisely committed to prohibit.

The international medical community urges you to deliver justice fairly and impartially and calls for the immediate release of Prof. Şebnem Korur Fincancı and to drop all charges against her.

Your sincerely,



Prof Frank Ulrich Montgomery
WMA Chair of Council



Dr Christiaan Keijzer
CPME President

Dr Erich-Theo Merholz
AEMH President

Dr José Santos
CEOM President

Dr Călin Bumbuț
UEMO President

Prof. Vassilios Papalois
UEMS President