

Attention: news desks/science and education correspondents

For immediate release

Brussels, 15 April 2016

**Academic freedom under pressure in Turkey  
EUA statement of solidarity with universities and scholars**

***EUA expresses solidarity with universities and scholars where academic freedom is under pressure, especially in Turkey where there are reports of retaliation against academics who have expressed their views on military action in south-eastern Turkey. EUA stands up for university values and calls on all governments, universities and scholars, as well as all higher education stakeholders to remain committed to the internationally recognised principles of academic freedom and to work towards constructive dialogue.***

The European University Association (EUA) would like to express its support for the higher education community in Turkey in relation to recent reports of widespread pressure and infringement on academic freedom. EUA stands behind the internationally recognised principles of free expression and freedom of association - principles through which quality higher education and research flourish.

EUA has many Turkish university members and is deeply concerned by ongoing legal action and administrative sanctions imposed on Turkish academics who have raised concern about attacks on civil populations in south-eastern Turkey and advocated for dialogue with the Kurds. Reports on these matters suggest widespread retaliation against scholars simply for the expression of their views.

EUA would like to stress that these nonviolent expressions are protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Turkey is a signatory. EUA would also like to underline that the right to voice one's opinion is a core university value and a *sine qua non* of democratic societies.

EUA therefore urges the government of Turkey to ensure that academics, and citizens in general, can voice and discuss ideas and opinions, even if they are controversial, without risk of censorship or repercussion. Furthermore, EUA calls on:

- all governments to protect academic freedom as a cornerstone of democracy and of quality higher education, to be tolerant of controversial ideas and to protect academics in their social responsibility;
- all universities and academics around the world to remain committed to the principles of academic freedom, freedom of expression and freedom of association;
- all higher education stakeholders, including watchdog organisations, to work towards positive, constructive and direct dialogue on these issues.

Finally, EUA strongly urges a collective and proactive search for solutions that will assist our colleagues who are struggling with these issues. EUA is initiating and following up on activities by working together with members, as well as with key partner organisations such as Scholars at Risk (SAR) and the Magna Charta Observatory (MCO).



EUA is a signatory to the statement sent to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan by SAR earlier this year and is involved in follow-up rounds of responses to the Turkish Minister of Education regarding the statement.

For more on how EUA stands up for university values, [please click here](#).

## **Ends**

*For more information please contact:*

Jessica Carter, tel: +32 2 743 11 59; mobile: +32 473 74 87 85; email: [jessica.carter@eua.be](mailto:jessica.carter@eua.be)  
or Ulrike Reimann, tel: +32 2 743 11 58; mobile: +32 491 15 89 72; email: [ulrike.reimann@eua.be](mailto:ulrike.reimann@eua.be)

*The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of more than 800 universities in 47 European countries and 36 national rectors' conferences (NRCs). The Council of EUA is comprised of the President, the members of the Board, and of the presidents of all of Europe's NRCs. EUA works closely with its members to ensure that the voice of European universities is heard.*