

Attention: news desks/science and education correspondents

For immediate release

Brussels, 15 November 2016

University autonomy in Turkey: First impact of new decrees

Following the [recent news of further infringements on university autonomy and academic freedom](#) reflected in two decrees (675 and 676) published in the Turkish Official Journal on 29 October 2016, the concerns of the European University Association (EUA) have been confirmed with the first impact of the new decrees.

They state that university rectors will no longer be elected, but appointed by the President of the Republic who will take the decision based upon three candidates proposed by the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK). In exceptional cases a direct appointment of the university rector by the President of the Republic is possible, without any involvement of YÖK.

The first outcome of these recent decrees is that EUA Board member, Gülay Barbarosoğlu, is no longer President of Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, despite the record number of votes she received in the elections that were held in the university on 12 July 2016.

More specifically:

- Elections for the period 2016-2020 took place on 12 July 2016 in 18 public Turkish universities, including Boğaziçi University.
- Gülay Barbarosoğlu received 348 out of 399 votes in her university, with a turnout of 90%.
- At 17 of the 18 universities in which elections were held, appointments were made immediately.
- No decision was taken for Boğaziçi University. Professor Barbarosoğlu therefore continued in her capacity as Rector.
- On 12 November 2016, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan directly appointed Professor Mehmed Özkan as Rector of Boğaziçi University for the period 2016-2020. Professor Özkan was previously a Vice-Rector at Boğaziçi University.

In this context, EUA once more emphasises its solidarity with the Turkish academic community, and in particular with its Board member Gülay Barbarosoğlu, and underlines the importance of standing up for university values and remaining committed to the internationally recognised principles of university autonomy and academic freedom which are under ever greater pressure in Turkey.

For more information please contact:

Jessica Carter, tel: +32 2 743 11 59; mobile: +32 473 74 87 85; email: jessica.carter@eua.be

The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of more than 800 universities in 47 European countries and 33 national rectors' conferences (NRCs). The EUA Council is made up 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.