

To: Minister of Interior, Mr. Süleyman Soylu / Minister of Justice, Mr. Abdulhamit Gül  
cc: Minister of European Affairs, Mr. Ömer Çelik / Amb. of Turkey to the EU, Mr. Faruk Kaymakcı

Re: Detention of Osman Kavala

Strasbourg, 25 October 2017

We were shocked to learn about the detention of Osman Kavala last week as he returned from a meeting in Gaziantep.

Osman Kavala is one of the leading figures in Turkey's arts and culture scene as well as a prominent civil society figure and businessperson. Kavala is the chairman of Anadolu Kültür, a cultural institution established in 2002 with an aim to build bridges among different ethnic, religious and regional groups through arts and culture, with the support of the European Commission and several other European organisations.

We have been informed that Mr. Kavala was detained as part of a secret investigation and is being held at a counter-terror police department after an order was issued for him to be detained for seven days. Now that the deadline of his detention is in sight, we urge you to release him.

Before any judge has ruled in this case, President Erdogan already publicly convicted him in a speech to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) parliamentary group on 24 October, 2017. We strongly condemn this personal attack against Osman Kavala, who is a long-standing interlocutor of EU-Turkey relations. His detention represents a new low in the crackdown against civil society in Turkey.

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, call on the Turkish authorities to urgently release Mr. Kavala and to take the necessary steps needed in order to address the serious crackdown in the areas of rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms in the country.

Sincerely,

Bas Belder (ECR)	EP Shadow Rapporteur on Turkey
Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (EPP)	Member of the European Parliament
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)	EP Shadow Rapporteur on Turkey
Rebecca Harms (Greens/EFA)	Member of the European Parliament
Ska Keller (Greens/EFA)	Co-president of the Greens/EFA group
Kati Piri (S&D)	EP Rapporteur on Turkey
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)	Member of the European Parliament
Renate Sommer (EPP)	EP Shadow rapporteur on Turkey
Helga Trüpel (Greens/EFA)	Member of the European Parliament
Bodil Valero (Greens/EFA)	EP Shadow rapporteur on Turkey
Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL)	President of the GUE/NGL group

