

TURKEY: SHOW ME THE MAN AND I'LL FIND YOU THE CRIME!

Strasbourg 25.02.2020: Osman Kavala, a leading Turkish philanthropist and human rights defender, who was released and then immediately re-arrested on trumped up charges, should be freed immediately, Nils Muiznieks, President of the Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe (ASPS), said today.

After 2 years in jail accused of masterminding the 2013 Gezi Park demonstrations Kavala, the founder of the Istanbul-based European School of Politics, was freed by a Turkish Court only to be re-arrested shortly afterwards charged with supporting the 2016 attempted coup.

This travesty of justice brings to mind Lavrentiy Beria, Stalin's Secret Police chief, who famously said "Show me the man and I'll find you the crime", Nils Muiznieks commented.

Last December, the European Court of Human Rights ruled Kavala's detention arbitrary and unlawful and ordered his release but Turkey's increasingly authoritarian President, Tayyip Erdogan, just couldn't care less.

Osman Kavala is innocent and must be released and compensated, said the President of the ASPS. Turkey clearly no longer respects the rule of law, he added, wondering whether the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers and its Parliamentary Assembly will ever find the courage to say so?

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- The Association of Schools of Political Studies (ASPS) was set up in July 2008 by the Directors of the Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe to play an enhanced role in the management of their programme, to strengthen links between the Schools and foster their activities.
- The first School was set up in Moscow in 1992. Since then other Schools have been established in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo*, Moldova, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.
- Nils Muiznieks became President of the ASPS in November 2018. He was the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights from 2012 to 2018. Previously he had held several important posts in Latvia including Minister responsible for social integration, Director of the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI) and Director of the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies.

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