



Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe

ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES CONDEMNS KAVALA CASE VERDICT AND CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION TO REIN IN ILLIBERAL AUTOCRATS

STRASBOURG 27.04.2022: Political scientists from 21 countries in Europe and North Africa today voiced shock and revulsion at the decision of a Turkish Court to sentence 64 year old Osman Kavala to spend the rest of his days in prison without any possibility of parole.

The Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe (ASPS) said the decision to find the Turkish Human Rights defender and philanthropist guilty of trying to overthrow the government on trumped up charges was a travesty of justice in defiance of a binding ruling of the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights to release him.

The ASPS called for the immediate release of both Osman Kavala, founder of the Turkish School of Political Studies and of the 7 other defendants in the case, including their colleague, Hakan Altınay, Director of the Turkish School who were all sentenced to 18 years in prison.

This is a blatant and unacceptable attempt to silence civil society, stifle pluralism and limit political debate which is the core concept of a democratic society for which the 46 member Council of Europe was set up to promote and defend, the ASPS said.

While welcoming the on-going infringement proceedings concerning Turkey's non-compliance with the ECHR's ruling, the ASPS underscored that the Kavala verdict was a political decision and called for **immediate** political action on the part of the Council of Europe, the European Union and their member States to reaffirm their commitment to Europe's fundamental values and to salvage their credibility.

The longer illiberal autocrats like Erdogan are allowed to get away with cynically flouting the values and principles to which all member states of the Council of Europe and of the European Union have voluntarily and solemnly committed themselves, the more they will erode the very foundations of the European project, the ASPS said.

Association of Schools of Political Studies

Council of Europe – 67075 Strasbourg Cedex France

www.schoolsofpoliticalstudies.eu

Contacts : aspscoe@gmail.com – Tél. : +33 (0)3 88 41 21 89

Nils Muižnieks President
of the Association of
Schools of Political Studies

Jack Hanning Secretary
General of the Association
of Schools of Political
Studies

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SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Urging all European democracies to stand up for their values the ASPS said Europe's two leading institutions, the European Union and the Council of Europe must act **now** to safeguard democracy, peace and security for future generations before it is too late.

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.

CONTACTS:

- Jack Hanning, Secretary General +33675797327 jack.hanning@gmail.com
- Arina Knyazeva, Project manager +33766197794 aspscoe@gmail.com

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