



Bureau of the Assembly

Statement¹

Call for the immediate release of Ekrem Imamoğlu, Mayor of Istanbul

Meeting in Strasbourg on 19 March 2025, the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly has expressed its grave concern at the arrest of the Mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem Imamoğlu from the Republican People's Party (CHP), just days before he was to be selected as the CHP's candidate for the 2028 presidential election. The Turkish authorities have reached this decision in the context of a corruption investigation that has led to the arrest of hundreds of people, including other politicians, journalists and businessmen. Likewise, the Bureau is dismayed by yesterday's decision by Istanbul University to revoke Mr Imamoğlu's university degree, which under Turkish law effectively prevents him from running for the country's presidency.

This comes despite some recent positive developments in the country regarding the peace process and Türkiye's important role in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which the Bureau welcomes.

These recent arrests appear to be politically motivated and go against the will of the people who democratically elected Mr Imamoğlu and other detained politicians. By preventing Mr Imamoğlu from standing as a presidential candidate, they also aim to intimidate and obstruct the opposition in Türkiye and to limit the Turkish citizens' free political choice.

Reiterating its previous resolutions on Türkiye, including [Resolution 2459 \(2022\)](#) on *The honouring of obligations and commitments by Türkiye*, the Bureau recalls that Türkiye, as a member State of the Council of Europe, has committed itself to upholding and promoting democratic values. It therefore urges the authorities to release Mr Imamoğlu immediately and to drop all unfounded charges against him and other detained politicians. It also calls on Istanbul University to repeal its decision to revoke Mr Imamoğlu's degree.

In the light of these developments, the Bureau considers that the situation in Türkiye requires greater attention. The Assembly should step up its work on Türkiye through the instruments at its disposal, including the monitoring procedure (co-rapporteurs: Mr Stefan Schennach, Austria, SOC, and Lord David Blencathra, United Kingdom, ECPA) as well as the General rapporteur on political prisoners (Ms Azadeh Rojhan, Sweden, SOC).

¹ As approved by the Bureau on 19 March 2025.