

Brussels
September 20, 2017

**Dear Mr. Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy,
Dear Mr. Minister of Justice Rafael Catalá,**

We, Swedish members of the European Parliament, are writing to urge you to act for the immediate release of Swedish-Turkish citizen and journalist, Mr. Hamza Yalcin, who has been detained in Spain since August 3.

While on holiday, Mr. Yalcin was arrested by Spanish police at the Prats airport in Barcelona. He later found out Interpol had issued a warrant for his arrest, in which he was accused of “terrorism”. He was then interrogated about his trip to Barcelona, the Gülen movement and the Turkish military coup in July 2016. The Turkish government has, even a month and a half later, failed to show any evidence to prove its case against Yalcin. The only crime Mr. Yalcin is guilty of is criticizing Mr. Erdogan’s regime.

We are well aware of the erosion of rule of law in Turkey, with systematic mass arrests of political opponents, including of members of the Turkish parliament. Erdogan’s government has also systematically closed down media and arrested journalists. More than 200 journalists have been jailed.

Furthermore, it has been made clear that the arrest of Mr. Yalcin is a direct result of Mr. Erdogan’s abuse of Interpol red-listing. It is absolutely unacceptable that the international police organization is being used by governments to persecute its critics.

We urge you not to contribute to the further erosion of democracy and rule of law in Turkey, and to ensure the swift release of Mr. Yalcin.

Best regards,

Max Andersson (Greens/EFA)

Malin Björk (GUE/NGL)

Fredrick Federley (ALDE)

Anna Hedh (S&D)

Olle Ludvigsson (S&D)

Jens Nilsson (S&D)

Soraya Post (S&D)

Marita Ulvskog (S&D)

Bodil Valero (Greens/EFA)