



CEMR Statement on the arrest of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and other Local Representatives

As European local and regional leaders, we are deeply alarmed by the recent news shared by our member association, the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, regarding the arrest of **Ekrem İmamoğlu**, President of the Union and Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, along with over a hundred democratically elected representatives and municipal employees.

European institutions and organisations have been closely monitoring the state of local democracy in Türkiye, particularly since 2019, when Mayor İmamoğlu was freely elected by the citizens of Istanbul—the most populated city in Europe—to represent them. This latest development raises serious concerns about the erosion of democratic principles and the integrity of political processes in Türkiye. The detention of elected officials threatens public trust, undermines local governance, and weakens the very foundations of democracy.

CEMR remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting and empowering Local and Regional Governments across Europe. In this regard, we call on the Turkish authorities to uphold the principles enshrined in the **European Charter of Local Self-Government** by:

- **Respecting electoral mandates and the universal values of democracy.**
- **Guaranteeing the freedom of elected representatives to carry out their functions without interference.**
- **Upholding democratic principles and restoring full local self-governance.**

CEMR urges all European institutions and the international community to stand in solidarity and demand an immediate end to such actions. **Democracy and local self-government must not be compromised.** We call for the immediate release of the detained officials and the full restoration of their rights.

We stand firmly with our colleagues in Türkiye and reaffirm the vital importance of protecting democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the fundamental rights of elected representatives.

Vince Maple

Councillor of Medway
Chair of the
Financial Management
Committee

Philippe Laurent

Mayor of Sceaux
Co-President

Christoph Schnaudigel

President of the County of
Karlsruhe
Co-President

Gunn Marit Helgesen

Member of Telemark
County Council
President

Jan van Zanen

Mayor of The Hague
Executive President

Anders Knappe

Councillor of Karlstad
Executive President

Anne Hidalgo

Mayor of Paris
Executive President

Aleksandra Dulciewicz

Mayor of Gdansk
Executive President