



Mr Rıdvan Duran
General Director
Basin İlan Kurumu (BIK)
Merkez Efendi Mah. Mevlana Cad. No:140/A
Toya Plaza Kat:5 Zeytinburnu / İSTANBUL
Turkey

Subject: Ban on public advertising against Evrensel

23 March 2020

Dear Mr. Duran,

We, undersigned Members of the European Parliament who follow developments related to press freedom in Turkey closely, are writing to express our concerns regarding the indefinite ban on public advertising against the independent newspaper, Evrensel.

Media freedom and pluralism in Turkey are important to the European Union. Both are pillars of democracy as they represent essential components of open and free debate. The role of Basin İlan Kurumu, BIK, in overseeing the distribution of public sector advertising budgets evenly and fairly across the newspaper sector, is of great importance in this respect.

However, since September 2019, Evrensel has been subjected to an indefinite advertising ban. If the ban remains in place for a full six months, until March 28, 2020, Evrensel faces being removed from the public advertising system for at least three years.

Such a decision would have a devastating impact on the finances of the newspaper, threatening its closure and weakening the diversity and pluralism of Turkey's newspaper market.

Evrensel is judged to have breached technical regulations with respect to bulk purchases. Evrensel has since made the changes requested of it but has twice had their appeals refused after new audits conducted by BIK.

Evrensel is known for its independent reporting and has, in recent years, been subjected to considerable judicial harassment as a result. The indefinite ban by BIK together with a series of limited bans for alleged 'violations of press ethics' give the impression of a coordinated campaign against the newspaper as punishment for its editorial independence.

We urge you therefore to swiftly lift the ban on Evrensel prior to the end of the six month deadline.

For media pluralism in Turkey to grow, it is important that publications like Evrensel retain the economic means to survive and continue to contribute to a rich and vibrant media in Turkey.

Kind regards

Best regards,

David Casa MEP

Kati Piri MEP

Michaela Šojdrová MEP

Ernest Urtasun MEP

Sven Giegold MEP

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield MEP

Katrin Langensiepen MEP

Salima Yenbou MEP

Reinhard Bütikofer MEP

Terry Reintke MEP

Members of European Parliament

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