

Solidarity with student protesters and civil society in Turkey

The European Students' Union strongly condemns the disturbing crackdown on student protesters and politically motivated attacks on academic and civic freedoms in Turkey. In the past week, students have taken to the streets to exercise their fundamental rights, but have been met with police violence, mass arrests and government-imposed media blackouts, all in an effort to silence dissent.

Disturbingly, just a day before his detention, Istanbul University revoked Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's diploma under allegations of falsification, a move that raises serious concerns about academic integrity and the use of universities as tools of political retaliation, directly contradicting the fundamental principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The repression of student protests constitutes a clear violation of fundamental student rights as derivable amongst others from Art. 19 and 20 of the Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. ESU unequivocally condemns the arrest of students whose only act is seeking justice and standing up for their rights. The excessive use of police force to suppress these peaceful demonstrations is politically motivated and infringes upon students' rights to assembly and free expression. The heavy surveillance and threat of identification faced by student protestors represent a deliberate attempt to stifle political dissent and silence those who stand up for democratic values.

ESU demands that:

- The European community unequivocally condemns the unjust and undemocratic force executed by Turkish public authorities against students, academics and wider civil society standing up for democratic values
- The European community establishes monitoring mechanisms on academic freedom and closely monitors the current violations against academic freedom and student rights in Turkey.
- The rights of students to free expression and to organise peacefully without fear of persecution or academic repercussions must be upheld.
- Academic qualifications should never be exploited as political tools and the revocation of diplomas for political reasons must be reversed including through legal intervention at the European level.
- Turkey and Turkish higher education institutions must follow the fundamental values as enshrined within the Bologna Process, including academic freedom, student participation, academic integrity and democratic values.

- The fundamental right to protest must be protected as part of democratic participation, in line with international human rights law.
- Higher education institutions must remain independent, free from state interference, and uphold democratic governance structures.

ESU stands in full solidarity with Turkish students and academics who continue to demonstrate such courage in the face of repression.