

Europe Monitor

No. 14 in 2023



Europe

Council of Europe member Türkiye ignores decision

Four years ago, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the Turkish cultural promoter Osman Kavala was unjustly imprisoned and must be released immediately. Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeal ignored that ruling and confirmed the life sentence against Kavala - for an alleged coup attempt in connection with the Gezi protests of



Osman Kavala/ Photo: Amnesty International

2013. The judge's ruling now increases the pressure on the Council of Europe to show its colors in the infringement proceedings against Turkey. "Anyone who consistently thwarts a central court ruling cannot be a member of this institution," said MP Frank Schwabe, who is a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. "If governments do not act consistently now, the Parliamentary Assembly will increase the pressure through its own procedure," he said.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe initiated the infringement procedure in December 2021 because Turkey ignored the ruling of the European Court of Justice. Ultimately, it could lead to Turkey being excluded. In the Turkish opposition and civil society, the appeal court's ruling was seen as further evidence that the Turkish judiciary is following political guidelines. The head of the opposition CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, spoke of a "disgrace".

The court also confirmed the prison sentences of MP Can Atalay, urban planner Tayfun Kahraman, filmmaker Çiğdem Mater and cultural worker Mine Özerden. They were each sentenced to 18 years in prison for allegedly supporting the "attempted coup." As an elected representative, Atalay actually enjoys immunity, which the judiciary ignores.

Tunis sent EU money back to Brussels

After tensions over the controversial migration deal, Tunisia has paid back 60 million euros in budget aid to the EU. This was announced by a spokeswoman for the EU Commission. Tunisia had previously announced that it would reject the funds. Tunisia "does not accept anything that resembles grace or alms," President Kais Saied said. The EU's announcements would contradict a previously signed agreement in principle. What exactly Tunisia sees as a contradiction was not initially stated. The EU spokeswoman said they would continue to work on the agreement. However, doubts are increasing as to whether the controversial agreement on migration between

Brussels and Tunis will last. Under a declaration of intent from July, Tunisia was to receive financial aid of up to 900 million euros and in return take stronger action against smugglers and illegal crossings.



Tunisia's President Kais Saied and President of the EU-Commission Ursula von der Leyen Photo- AFP

Austria

Viennese bookstore propagates radical understanding of Islam

In the Muslim shop "Zahraa" there are books on display that are aimed at women and families who should be educated according to a strict interpretation of Islam. They are guides that explain to women how to submit to the patriarchy.

ZAHRAA
Way of Life

Abdeslam in court in Bussels/ Photo: tagesschau.de

The business is run by a woman who was listed on the Islamic Center Vienna's website as a teacher in the women's department and who offered Sunday classes in German. The largest Islamic place of worship in Austria later not only removed the name of the woman in question from its website, but also the eight-member women's department with it. The owner was then no longer listed as part of the women's department, as were all other members of the department. The center's response: The women would have wanted their names removed from there.

The works propagate a strict image of Islam that is otherwise only known from countries such as

Afghanistan or Iran:

"Nature does not want complete equality between the two sexes." The husband therefore holds the position of head, while it is the job of women to do the housework. Society places a burden on women "when it is required of them "to compete with men in the world of work, to look attractive and at the same time to take care of the household and the children," is explained in one of the guides. Wives also have to "take after the man" after marriage and are allowed to keep the house leave only with his permission. A woman must veil her body. In one of the books, this supposed duty is even extended to the hands and face. The latter is described as the "center" of temptation. The authors argue that covering up would protect women from "lewd" male stares. "Women are blessed with physical beauty and a soft and gentle nature, in contrast to the more sexually offensive nature of men," it says. Friendship between boys and girls does not exist, is explained in "How do I accompany my child through puberty?" Contact between the sexes is discouraged. Young girls should be prepared for their role as housewives, advises one of the parenting guides. They should supervise their younger siblings or clean at home. Boys should be "prepared for the office of head of the family as early as possible" and accompany their father in his "business activities". Parents are also advised to only let their children grow up in Muslim communities. In this way, other children can avoid "misleading" them.

Germany

Call for the reinstatement of the Expert Council on Islamism

Islam experts and politicians are calling for the expert council „Political Islamism“ to be reinstated. The group of experts was affiliated to the Federal Ministry of the Interior as an advisory committee and was dissolved in 2022 by Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (SPD). The reason given was that there was no need to see the committee planned to last for one year and that further institutionalization was not planned.

This decision will now be put to the test. The signatories include Islamism expert Susanne Schröter and migration researcher Ruud Koopmans, who were part of the group of experts at the time that was appointed under the former Federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) in 2021. The letter is also signed by, among others, the conservative politician Christoph de Vries, who initiated the group of experts on Islamism at the time, the psychologist Ahmad Mansour and the Berlin-Neukölln integration officer Güner Balci.



Photo: picture alliance

“We who have signed this statement are ready to take on this task at any time. Our availability is known to the relevant government authorities. One call is enough,” the letter says. The starting point of the letter was the terrorist attack by Hamas against Israel. “Since last Saturday we have once again had a moment like this that requires everything but silence,” said the signatories. The images and reports from Israel are “deeply shocking” and show the “extent of the brutality of Palestinian terrorism.”

In Germany, “in the middle of these media horror images” there have been numerous images and

videos “in which people not only show solidarity with the Hamas attack, but also seem to lose themselves in real dances of joy and celebrate the murder and abduction of innocent people with sweets.” .

The “silence” and “relativization” on the part of Islamic associations is criticized in the letter as “shameful and worrying”. It goes on to say clearly: “It is not only time, but long overdue, for us in Germany to face reality; namely that Arab and Turkish anti-Semitism has been increasing for years and hatred of Israel has been fueled to such an extent that it endangers peaceful coexistence in our society.”

