

Press Release

7 November 2016

On the Current Developments and Latest Arrests in Turkey – Cultural Institutions Make a United Appeal to the German Federal Chancellor

Emphatically supported at the general members' meeting of the Akademie der Künste and in accord with the Berlin Artists-in-Residence programme of the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), the Berliner Festspiele, the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels e.V. (The German Publishers and Booksellers Association), the Deutsches Theater, the Frankfurter Buchmesse (Frankfurt Book Fair (FBF)), the HAU Hebbel am Ufer, the Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Capital Cultural Fund), the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, the Internationales Literaturfestival Berlin (Berlin International Literature Festival), the Kulturforum Türkei Deutschland e.V., the Maxim Gorki Theater, as well as other institutions, a joint open letter was sent to Federal Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel today.

The Wording of the Appeal to the German Federal Chancellor*

Dear Madame Chancellor,

in its plenum on 5 November, the assembled members of the Akademie der Künste have united to emphatically pledge their support and solidarity to the arrested writers, journalists and opposition members in Turkey, declaring the Akademie's commitment to strive for their release.

In accord with the Berlin Artists-in-Residence programme of the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), the Berliner Festspiele, the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels e.V. (The German Publishers and Booksellers Association), the Deutsches Theater, the Frankfurter Buchmesse (Frankfurt Book Fair (FBF)), the HAU Hebbel am Ufer, the Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Capital Cultural Fund), the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, the Internationales Literaturfestival Berlin (Berlin International Literature Festival), the Kulturforum Türkei Deutschland e.V., the Maxim Gorki Theater, as well as other institutions and numerous artists, who join us in our appeal, we urge you to intervene on behalf of the immediate release of the arrested artists and other professionals in the cultural sector, journalists, government representatives and parliamentarians in Turkey.

Human rights and democracy have been fundamentally attacked in an unprecedented wave of arrests of well-known journalists, writers, scientists and opposition members in Turkey. The social, cultural and political relationships between Turkey and Germany, which are of great importance to the future of both countries, are currently being put to a severe test. As a result the shared efforts

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toward cultural and social development that have taken decades to establish are being destroyed in just a few months.

We will continue to demonstrate proof of our solidarity with those who have been incarcerated and victims of persecution through invitations, joint art projects and the cultural-political debates fostered by our programmes. We strongly urge the German Federal Government to counteract this disastrous development in Turkey as quickly as possible with vigorous political pressure.

Akademie der Künste, Jeanine Meerapfel, president, and Johannes Odenthal, programme director | Berlin Artists-in-Residence programme of the DAAD, Katharina Narbutovic, director | Berliner Festspiele, Thomas Oberender, artistic director | Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, e.V., Alexander Skipis, CEO | Deutsches Theater, Ulrich Khuon, artistic director | Frankfurter Buchmesse, Jürgen Boos, CEO | HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Annemie Vanackere, artistic director | Hauptstadtkulturfonds, Joachim Sartorius, curator | Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Bernd Scherer, artistic director | Internationales Literaturfestival Berlin, Ulrich Schreiber, director | Kulturforum Türkei Deutschland, e.V., Osman Okkan, board spokesman | Maxim Gorki Theater, Shermin Langhoff, artistic director

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See also the petition, which the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels e.V. has initiated together with PEN and Reporters Without Borders / Reporter ohne Grenzen / Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF):
www.freewordsturkey.de/petition

* = in translation