



Event at the OSCE PA Winter Meeting: "Persecution of lawyers: Selected cases from Moldova, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan"

The Open Dialog Foundation is glad to invite you to an event on the topic of the persecution and protection of lawyers, which will be held on Friday 23 February 2018, from 12:30 to 14:00, room 531 at the premises of the Hofburg Congress Centre, Vienna. The event is co-hosted by MP and Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Mr José Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Spain) in partnership with the Open Dialog Foundation.

In many Eastern European and Central Asian countries, the work of a lawyer is fraught with many risks: murders and attempted assassinations, criminal prosecution, beatings, threats, pressure on relatives, illegal searches, surveillance, attempts to withhold licenses of attorneys, and slanderous media campaigns. Legislation deficiencies in professional activities of counsels, ineffective law enforcement agencies, and the difficult general situation with respect for human rights all subject lawyers to danger.

The tightening trend of authoritarian regimes in some of the eastern countries is accompanied by an increase in the number of cases of political repression. **Lawyers involved in politically motivated cases become, in turn, victims of persecution and pressure.**

Many are the examples that we wish to discuss in order to show the importance that such an initiative entails. Several are the cases of lawyers being prosecuted in **Russia, Moldova, Azerbaijan** and **Ukraine**, as well as cases of prosecution in the territory of European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic) by extra-European authoritarian regimes (**Kazakhstan**).

During its last session, in January 2018, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe voted in favour of the drafting of an [European Convention on the Profession of Lawyer](#), in order to offer greater protection to lawyers who are constantly endangered by their engagement in the defence of their clients.

Similarly, Members states of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly need to engage in the promotion of the respect and protection of the often difficult and hurdled profession of lawyer.

The event aims at gathering together representatives of OSCE PA, civil society organisations and international bar associations, exiled lawyers and human rights defenders.

We hereby take this opportunity to debate about what actions can be undertaken with:

- **Mr Josè Ignacio Sanchez Amor**, Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions
- **Ms Lyudmyla Kozlovska**, President of the Open Dialog Foundation (ODF)
- **Ms Leyla Yunus**, Azerbaijani human rights defender and director of the 'Institute for Peace and Democracy' (IPD)
- **Ms Bakhytzhana Toregozhina**, Kazakh leader of the human rights and youth activism group 'Ar-Rukh-Hak'
- **Ms Ana Ursachi**, Moldovan lawyer and human rights defender, founder of the civic movement '#NuMaTem' ('I am not afraid')
- **Mr Dmitry Sotnikov**, Russian lawyer known for his work on the case of Ukrainian activist Oleksandr Kostenko
- **Mr Emin Huseynov**, founder and chairman of the Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS)
- **Mr William Browder** (the Magnitsky Act), Founder of Hermitage Capital Management and leader of the global Magnitsky justice campaign - video recording
- **Mr Osman Erturk**, LLM, Lawyer, Human Rights activist, Amnesty Member - video recording

[See the programme of the event and find out more about speakers](#)

For further information and registration please contact:

xheni.dani@odfoundation.eu