

PRESS RELEASE

**ASPS CONDEMNS ARBITRARY ARRESTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ACTIVISTS IN TURKEY**

Strasbourg 23.11.2018:

Political scientists from Europe and North Africa, meeting in Strasbourg this week, have called on Turkey to halt secret investigations into a number of academics and human rights campaigners who were detained last week and then conditionally released on the basis of undisclosed allegations dating back to 2013.

The Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe (ASPS), which groups 21 Schools in Eastern and Southern Europe and North Africa, condemned the witch-hunt against civil society representatives, including their colleague Hakan Altınay, who heads the Turkish School.

Nils Muiznieks, former Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, who was elected President of the ASPS this week in Strasbourg, said "these arbitrary arrests, which represent a blatant attempt to silence civil society are totally unacceptable in a democratic society."

"I call on the authorities in Turkey to respect fully the human rights and rule of law obligations to which Turkey is legally committed as a member of the Council of Europe" he added.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Association of Schools of Political Studies (ASPS)

The Association was set up in July 2008 by the Directors of the Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe to play an enhanced role in the management of their programme, to strengthen links between the Schools and foster their activities.

Nils Muiznieks became President of the ASPS in November 2018. He was the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights from 2012 to 2018. Previously he had held several important posts in Latvia including Minister responsible for social integration, Director of the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI) and Director of the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies.

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