



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Démocracy, Social Cohesion  
and Global Challenges Committee

Mr Abdullah Gül  
President of Turkey  
General Secretariat of the Turkish Presidency  
06689 Çankaya  
Ankara  
Turkey

Strasbourg, 3 July 2013

Dear President,

Turkey is one of the most active founding members of the Council of Europe. It is one of the first countries to have signed the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in 1950. Similarly, it was the first to join the recent campaign to combat violence against women by signing the Istanbul Convention, in 2011.

Turkey cannot afford today to undermine its European and international commitments, either in the sphere of democracy and human rights or in others such as sustainable development or protection of the heritage or the environment.

Consequently, the international NGOs in the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe – many of which are also represented at the European Union and the United Nations – appeal to your government to show its wisdom and you yourself to exercise your personal authority in this respect.

They would like Turkey to show, both inside and outside its borders, that it is able to meet the challenge of upholding democracy and protecting its citizens in times of crisis.

We call on you to do everything within your power to restore the dialogue between the authorities and civil society and see to it that everyone's fundamental rights and freedoms are protected and that bodies for mediation and direct democracy, citizens' assemblies, neighbourhood councils, conciliation conferences and other forms of direct participation are set up.

This is the hope that we the INGOs at the Council of Europe, would like to express on this day of 26 June 2013.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Anne-Marie Chavanon  
Chair

Annelise Oeschger  
Chair of the Human Rights Committee