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Dear Vice-President, Dear Mrs. Federica Mogherini,

We ask you to contact the President of the General Assembly of the Turkish Parliament to express your concerns on a new law that is about to be adopted on health care and which would deprive thousands of doctors from the opportunity to work.

The Turkish Government introduced a draft Omnibus Law on Health Sector to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) on 30 October 2018. It targets “violence against health officers in the health sector.” Members of the AKP party supported it when discussed in the Parliamentary Commission on Health, Family, Labour and Social Issues.

This draft law does not aim to eliminate violence in the health sector. There has been no consultation over this law with organisations of health professionals by the government nor by the Parliament. These workers would have a good idea what would prevent the violence against them but they were not asked.

In fact the Omnibus Law introduces several changes to the law on health. Some of these changes include banning medical doctors and dentists ( who have been either dismissed from the public sector under the state of emergency laws or deemed problematic on the basis of a security investigation) from working in the private sector (private hospitals, foundation universities which are funded through the Social Security Agency). So they are not only banned from working in the public sector but now also from working in the private sector. Effectively this means a professional death for this professionals.

Further, these medical doctors and dentists will not be able to work in any health institution unless they complete the obligatory service for the public sector. In fact, the obligatory service is around 600 days. Those who complete the obligatory service will be able to work only for private hospitals. This provision will lead to another form of civic death.

Apart from being a professional and personal drama for the doctors concerned it will deprive the Turkish people – the ill, the poor, the handicapped and the elderly – of the health care they need. It undermines the public health care system.

Earlier President Erdogan stated that health officers, particularly dismissed medical doctors, could work for private hospitals even under the State of Emergency. It is not clear what has changed. The Opinion in Turkey of the professional medical organisations and trade unions is that the law is contrary to the Turkish Constitution, International ILO Conventions and fundamental rights and freedoms.

The above changes to the health law should be put in the perspective of the substantial changes which were introduced to the “*Regulation on Security Investigations and Archive/Classified Information*” by the Presidential Decree No 228 published by the Official Gazette on 24 October 2018. These changes requires stricter criteria that apply to almost all public officers and treats them as if they work for high-security institutions. The implication is that those who are not in line with the views of the ruling political power have a minimum chance to pass security investigations. This Presidential Decree is contrary to decisions of the Turkish Council of State’s decisions as well as the Constitution. Combined with the reference to the listing security investigations in the above reform of the health law is makes it very difficult for medical doctors and dentists to be employed by the public sector and the private sector.

We ask you to express your concerns and to enter into dialogue with the Turkish government over these changes to the law and prevent that generations of doctors become unemployed.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan  
EPSU General Secretary

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