



**The Council of Higher Education**

06539 Bilkent, Ankara - TURKEY

**The Office of the President**

Phone : + 90 (312) 266 4725

Fax : + 90 (312) 266 5153

e-mail : baskanlik@yok.gov.tr

URL : www.yok.gov.tr

**Ref** : 95916564-724.01

July 21, 2016

**European University Association (EUA)**

Avenue de l'Yser, 24

1040 Brussels

BELGIUM

Dear EUA Board Members,

Upon EUA's public statement titled "EUA Statement condemning the forced resignation of 1577 university deans" we have noticed that Turkey's Higher Education Council's actions have been misinterpreted. We believe there is a need for further communication and clarification.

Turkey has experienced a coup attempt to overthrow its democratically-elected and legitimate government on July 15, 2016. This despicable coup attempt has failed thanks to the citizens of this country, the leaders and especially the leadership of President of Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who have courageously and decidedly stood up against the armed and violent attacks.

Turkish state, with the support of its citizens, parliament including all oppositional parties, is vigilantly going after the perpetrators of these malicious attacks. These efforts to protect its democracy and reestablish and maintain the functioning of the Turkish state and its institutions require extraordinary measures that need to be implemented promptly and unequivocally.

The failed coup attempt in Turkey has provided strong signals that the responsible clandestine and illegal armed organization may have penetrated into our higher education system and this illegal organization may have established strong links with the schools and universities nationwide.

The resignation of the deans should be regarded as a precautionary measure to facilitate and precipitate the implementation of the necessary steps to reestablish the autonomy of our universities by severing possible ties with these clandestine and illegal organizations. The Turkish Government is acting within the boundaries of its constitution to overcome the continuing potential risks.

We have agreed with our universities' Rectors for their faculty deans to temporarily step aside so that the investigatory process shall be conducted swiftly. It is very likely most of the universities will be able to reinstate their deans back to their duties once the reviews are completed.

We believe that EUA's continuing support in campaigning Turkish democracy, Turkey's Democratic Institutions and her Higher Education system will help us get through these difficult times.

Cordially,

Prof. Dr. M. A. Yekta Saraç

President

Council of Higher Education of Turkey