

Endangered Lawyers – Hearing at the EP



Thomas Wahl

News

On 19 February 2019, the EP's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) held a [hearing on "attacks on the legal profession and lawyers defending human rights."](#) The persecution of lawyers has intensified worldwide. Lawyers defending human rights and representatives of NGOs reported that the professional activity of lawyers is increasingly subject to difficult conditions, e.g., abusive infringements of professional secrecy or surveillance of client conversations. Furthermore, lawyers themselves are being increasingly targeted by authoritarian regimes. Measures against lawyers range from revocations of their permission to practice to harassment and intimidation and even to detention, mistreatment, and possibly murder.

Next to reports on certain countries, such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and China, the meeting focused on the situation in Turkey where over 600 lawyers have been detained and over 215 convicted since 2016.

All speakers requested more proactive measures from the EU and an enhanced network of lawyers at the international level.

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which regularly intervenes in favour of persecuted lawyers, supported the conference. In addition to a [press release](#), the CCBE also published a brochure in English and French about the persecution of lawyers in different countries. A [recording of the hearing](#) is available at the committee's website.

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