



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

OF ACADEMIES AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Arjuna Aluwihare
Sri Lanka

D. Balasubramanian
India

Claude Cohen-Tannoudji
France

Abdallah S. Daar
Oman/Canada

Felton Earls
United States of America

François Jacob*
France

Belita Koiller
Brazil

Pedro León Azofeifa
Costa Rica

Ida Nicolaisen
Denmark

John Polanyi*
Canada

Alenka Šelih
Slovenia

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Carol Corillon

SECRETARIAT

Committee on Human Rights
The National Academies
500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001, USA
tel: (202) 334-3043
fax: (202) 334-2225
email: chr@nas.edu
nationalacademies.org/humanrights

FOUNDING MEMBERS

François Jacob* – *France*
Max Perutz* – *United Kingdom*
Pieter van Dijk – *Netherlands*
Torsten Wiesel* – *USA*
(*Nobel Laureate)

September 6, 2011

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
Basbakanlik
06573 Ankara
Republic of Turkey

Excellency:

Our Network is composed of national academies and scholarly societies around the world, many of which have worked with the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA) and its respected members over the years. We have seen how TÜBA, acting with financial and administrative autonomy, responsibly has promoted scientific activities in Turkey, determined scientific priorities, and proposed science policies and constructive changes in science legislation to the Turkish government in a sincere effort to elevate Turkey to the level of a true “scientific society.”

Because one of the charges of our Network is to support sister academies whose independence is threatened, we write, with all due respect, to tell you we are deeply distressed to learn of the recent government decree that appears to restructure TÜBA and effectively remove its independence. (Because we are certain that other science organizations will share our qualms, we are posting this letter on our website.) In writing, it is our sincere hope that you will understand our concern and use your good offices to quickly reverse this legislation and support and strengthen TÜBA. A healthy and independent science academy can do much to help Turkey produce good science and profit from its benefits.

As international scientists and scholars, we can assure you that autonomy—within legal, ethical, and scientific norms—is essential to the practice and culture of

Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

(The U.S. National Academies, non-profit, non-governmental honorary societies, host the Network secretariat.)

www.nas.edu.hnetwork

science (within academies as well as universities), to the public welfare, and to social stability. Any legitimate, respected national academy is self-governing. It elects its own members based on their scientific achievement and derives its prestige from their renown; it allocates its financial resources according to need; it provides objective, unbiased scientific opinions; and it remains independent of religious and political beliefs and influence.

We strongly believe that Turkey needs and deserves the respect and recognition of the international scientific community that an independent TÜBA would continue to attract.

Sincerely yours,

Arjuna Aluwihare, Sri Lanka

Dorairajan Balasubramanian, India

Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, France

Abdallah S. Daar, Oman/Canada

Felton Earls, United States of America

François Jacob, France

Belita Koiller, Brazil

Pedro León Azofeifa, Costa Rica

Ida Nicolaisen, Denmark

John Polanyi, Canada

Alenka Šelih, Slovenia

cc: Dr. Yücel Kanpolat, President, Turkish Academy of Sciences
Dr. Howard Alper, Co-Chair, Executive Committee, The Global Network of Science Academies (IAP)
Dr. Mohamed H.A. Hassan, Co-Chair, Executive Committee, The Global Network of Science Academies (IAP)
Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO
Dr. Catherine Bréchnignac, President, International Council for Science (ICSU)
Dr. Yuan T. Lee, President-Elect, International Council for Science (ICSU)