

*Council of Europe*  
*The Secretary General*

Strasbourg, 7 July 2020

Dear Mr Moroglu,

Thank you for your letter of 24 June in which you express concerns about draft amendments to be introduced to law No. 1136 on attorneys which regulates lawyers and their associations in Turkey.

Lawyers and their professional associations play a fundamental role in contributing to the protection of human rights and we must be vigilant in ensuring their independence is fully respected.

The protection and promotion of the freedom of exercise of the profession of lawyer without discrimination and without improper interference from the authorities or the public are the key principles underlying the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation No. R(2000)21 on the freedom of exercise of the profession of lawyer. Specifically with respect to lawyers' professional associations, member states of the Council of Europe are recommended to ensure that lawyers are allowed and encouraged to form and join professional local, national and international associations, and that Bar associations or other professional associations of lawyers should be self-governing and independent of the authorities and the public.

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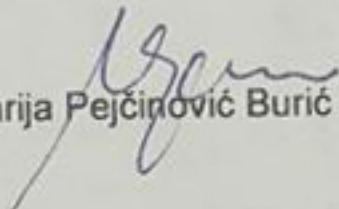
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Thank you for drawing my attention to the proposed legislative changes, which I will continue to follow, as indeed I am following developments more generally in Turkey with respect to the justice system. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights is also attentive to this matter, as visible from the statement she published on this question on 3 July.

These changes to the law on the Bar Association will be assessed by the Venice Commission following the request for an opinion made on 27 May 2020 by the Monitoring Committee of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The opinion is scheduled to be adopted by the Venice Commission at its Plenary Session of 8-9 October 2020. The Istanbul Bar Association will be contacted in the framework of the preparation of the opinion.

Yours sincerely,

  
Marija Pejčinović Burić