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**PRESS RELEASE**

Freedom of expression in Turkey is still not guaranteed despite legal reforms during EU accession negotiations.

Recent reforms have not abolished penal codes and articles which prevent people from speaking in a democratic and free atmosphere: Article 220/8, 288 and 301 of the penal code and article no.7 of the Anti-Terror Code, which has been introduced in the recent past.

Last victim of these laws is Selahattin DEMIRTAS, speaker of Diyarbakir Democracy Platform and President of Diyarbakir Branch of Human Rights Association (IHD). He has been sentenced to 2 ½ years prison without suspension because he had proposed in 2005 during a TV talk that a dialogue between Turkish government and PKK officials would be from his point of view the best way to overcome the conflict in South East Anatolia. Selahattin DEMIRTAS is partner of IFIAS in an EU funded human rights project in Diyarbakir.

“You can reject such a proposal but a Turkish court should not have the right to put anyone to jail because of a suggestion to bring to an end the conflict by non-violent means. Similar talks have been conducted in Spain or Ireland”, said Gerd Greune, President of IFIAS after the trial, (\*) on the occasion of a roundtable meeting with local NGOs at the European Human Rights Centre in Diyarbakir.

“This is also contrary to the policy of the European Union seeking a political solution in South East Anatolia.”

Diyarbakir, 23 November 2006

(\*) Brussels based IFIAS is implementing an EIDHR project in partnership with IHD funded by the European Commission