

## Time to Talk open letter in support of Osman Kavala

November 7th 2017

We, the undersigned representatives of Time to Talk debate centres from across Europe, were shocked to learn about the detention of Osman Kavala, the chairperson of Anadolu Kültür and the founder of our fellow Time to Talk member, DEPO Istanbul.

Osman Kavala is a key figure within Turkish culture and civil society, a committed European and democrat and a central figure who inspires and enables cultural exchange throughout Turkey and with other European countries. Collaborating with some of the important cultural organisations that he has founded in Turkey, we have witnessed the power of his commitment to democracy, pluralism, freedom of speech, peace and human rights as well as his devotion to intercultural dialogue, cultural heritage and the arts.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017, Osman Kavala was detained. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, after 14 days in custody, he was charged with having ties to terrorist organisations and with attempting to overthrow the constitutional order in Turkey. According to Turkish media reports, he is accused of being the “leader and organiser” of the Gezi protests as well as of having had contact with a U.S.-based expert on Turkey, who the Turkish state appears to believe to have been amongst those behind plotting the coup attempt of summer 2016.

Such accusations are entirely absurd and grotesque. We urge European media and politicians to follow the Osman Kavala case closely and to request full transparency in its processing. We insist on and hope to see a prompt release of Osman Kavala by the Turkish authorities - for the sake of Turkey and its people.

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