

Leyla and Arif Yunus to receive expert medical care at the Charité Hospital, Berlin

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Professor Karl Max Einhäupl and Dr Christian Witt welcomed Dr Leyla Yunus and Mr Arif Yunus for expert medical care at the Charité Hospital in Berlin on Friday. The authorisation given to Leyla and Arif Yunus, human rights activists imprisoned in Azerbaijan, to travel to Berlin has been welcomed as a humanitarian step undertaken by the Azeri authorities.

The decision followed over 15 months of combined engagement in the form of a medical humanitarian mission, led by Dr Christian Witt of the Charité Hospital Berlin, and the mediation of the European Parliament led by Elmar Brok.

The European Parliament Committee for Foreign Affairs Chair, Elmar Brok (EPP, DE), made the following statement:

"I am delighted that Leyla and Arif Yunus, united with their daughter, can receive the necessary and urgent specialist medical assistance.

I would like to thank personally, and in the name of the European Parliament, in particular Dr Christian Witt, and the Charité Hospital in Berlin, for the outstanding humanitarianism, medical aid and diplomacy shown during this complex and sensitive mission."

The Charité Hospital in Berlin has developed a track-record in recent years of providing expert medical assistance in sensitive humanitarian and political situations in third countries. The CEO Professor Karl Max Einhäupl stated that:

"As part of its long-standing philanthropic tradition, it is the responsibility of the Charité to offer humanitarian medical aid in such cases. I am extremely grateful to all involved and am very pleased that the Charité has been able to contribute towards such a valuable international humanitarian mission"

Professor Einhäupl and Mr Brok also stressed their appreciation for the EU and German Ambassadors in Baku, the EU delegation in Baku for their assistance, and the European Commission and the EEAS for their cooperation.

Note to editors

Leyla Yunus is an Azerbaijani human rights activist who serves as the director of Institute of Peace and Democracy, a human rights organisation. She is particularly known for her work helping citizens affected by forced evictions in Baku, on whose behalf she organized several small protests.

In July 2014, the Azerbaijani authorities jailed Yunus and her husband. After being sentenced to 8.5 years in jail on 13 August 2015, Leyla Yunus was released on grounds of her deteriorating health on 9 December 2015, with a court converting her sentence into a suspended one.

Further information

- Committee on Foreign Affairs: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/afet/home.html>
- Elmar Brok (EPP, DE): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/1263.html>

Press release

Contact

Emilie TOURNIER

BXL: (+32) 2 28 30578

STR: (+33) 3 881 72649

PORT: (+32) 473 55 74 66

EMAIL: foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu

TWITTER: EP_ForeignAff