

FBE Human Rights Commission

Report from Commission meeting 24 May 2012 in Brussels

Present: Jean Jaques Forrer, Loredana Tassone, Susanna Heley, Konrad Frank, Yves Oschinsky, Patrizia Graziani, Ilaria Carmassi, Sara Chandler (President)

Agenda: 1. Belarus; 2. Turkey; 3. Colombia; 4. Council of Europe

The Commission reviewed the intervention of the FBE in support of lawyers at risk in three countries where lawyers have asked the FBE for assistance.

1. Belarus

FBE President Guido de Rossi wrote to the President Luschenko of Belarus in January to protest the persecution of lawyers who represent clients who are opposed to the President, and those lawyers who uphold human rights. This followed the resolution adopted at the Wroclaw Congress of the FBE in September 2011.

It was agreed that a report would be sent to the Council of Europe and to the Bar Associations in countries bordering Belarus.

2. Turkey

Yves Oschinsky reported on action taken on 12 January 2012 in a number of European cities to protest the imprisonment of 36 lawyers and the search of 40 lawyers' offices by the Turkish authorities. The situation commenced in September 2011, and in November 2011 lawyers and journalists were arrested.

The Commission thanked FBE President Guido de Rossi who wrote to the President of the Ankara Bar expressing the support of the FBE where access to justice denied in Specially Authorised Courts. The letter expressed concern for the rule of law in Turkey, when access to justice is denied and human rights are infringed.

It was agreed to draft a resolution for the FBE General Assembly on 26th May, and to include Turkey in the report for the Council of Europe.

3. Colombia

It was reported that 11 lawyers have been killed in Colombia in similar incidents bearing the pattern of para military killings, two men on a motorbike driving by and the passenger shooting the lawyer. The 11 lawyers were killed between 11th January and 3rd May and period of 16 weeks only.

Members of the Commission and the FBE are invited to join the International Human Rights delegation to Colombia (the Colombia Caravana) from 26th August to 1st September 2012.

The Commission agreed to support the request to the FBE Presidency to join the delegation and where possible to contribute some funds (up to E8374 or a lesser amount to enable the Colombian lawyers in the Caravana mission.

The Commission discussed ways of bringing pressure on multinational companies such as legal cases, shareholder action and raising corporate social responsibility issues.

4. Council of Europe

Loredana Tassone, the FBE representative at the Council of Europe was welcomed to the Commission. The FBE is a member of the FBE Commission and the Parliamentary Assembly Human Rights Committee. Current discussions include a) The Caucusus 2) Syria 3) European Court of Human Rights

It was agreed that frequent communication would be established, and that the FBE will be alerted on the issues to be discussed in the 4 meetings she attends per year.

The Directorate of Cooperation is offering training and financial support for the information on the Human Rights Convention. It was agreed to approach the Stage Commission and suggest that the FBE take up this offer for training.