

German, Turkish authorities welcome acquittal of spy organization suspects

Both German and Turkish authorities welcomed a court decision acquitting representatives of five German foundations which were accused of conspiring to break up Turkey's state.

Ankara State Security Court (DGM) ruled there was insufficient evidence to convict the 15 defendants on charges they had formed a "secret alliance" to undermine Turkey's government.

The 15 defendants included affiliates of the Konrad Adenauer Foundations, the Friedrich Ebert, Heinrich Böll, and Friedrich Naumann Foundations and the Orient Institute. Convictions could have prison terms as long as 15 years.

German Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Walter Lindner welcomed the court decision as saying that all those spying accusations against the foundations' representatives turned out to be baseless with the court decision.

"We expect that the foundations will continue their activities on close cooperation with their Turkish partners without being prevented," Lindner added.

German Ambassador in Ankara Dr. Rudolf Schmidt said in a written statement that he welcomed the DGM decision, adding it was unveiled that the German foundations had nothing to do with the nonsense accusations.

The chairman of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's ruling Social Democratic Party, Olaf Scholz, was another person who welcomed the decision. "It's good that the work of the German political foundations has been recognized in Turkey as legal and legitimate and protected from the accusation of subversion and hostility to the state," Scholz said. "I'm relieved that a heavy burden has been removed from the bilateral relations between Turkey and Germany," he added.

"This decision has shown that the



Dr. Wulf Schonbohm, Representative of Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Turkey, flanked by two German embassy officials, smiles as he leaves a Turkish court that acquitted representatives of five German foundations accused of conspiring to break up Turkey's state, in Ankara. AP Photo

slander against the German foundations are completely baseless. Our trust in Turkey's state of law is not in vain," said Wulf Schonbohm, representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

The Turkish authorities also welcomed the DGM decision about German foundations. The Turkish Foreign Ministry stressed in a written statement that the DGM decision acquitting the directors of the German foundations highlighted the impartiality and objectivity of Turkish justice.

The ministry said that the decision proved the neutrality of German foundations which have always contributed to the development of Turkey's relations with Germany and the EU.

Meanwhile, Turkish Justice Minister Cemil Çiçek told reporters that Turkish jurisdiction was as independent as German jurisdiction when asked whether the German interior minister's Turkey visit was related with this case.

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