

Sel Yayınları  
Sn. İrfan Sancı  
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Turkey

Borgerhout, 30 June 2010

Dear Mr İrfan Sancı,

The European Council of Literary Translators' Associations (CEATL) has been informed about the court case against three books published by your publishing house, Sel Yayınları: a Turkish work entitled *Perinin sarkacı* by Ben Mila, and two works translated from French, *Genç Bir Don Juan'ın Maceraları* ('Les exploits d'un jeune Don Juan') by Guillaume Apollinaire, and *Görgülü ve Bilgili bir Burjuva Kadının Mektupları* ('Correspondance d'une Bourgeoise Avertie') by P.V.

We understand that on the instigation of the court an expert witness reported on these books. Although the expert deemed all three of them to be literary works, which cannot be considered to be obscene, the court has handed the three titles over to the Prime Ministerial Council for the Protection of Children from Harmful Publications. As we were notified, you and translator İsmail Yerguz have to appear in court on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July.

On behalf of CEATL I want to express my deep concern on this matter, which is directly related to the issue of freedom of expression. As we understand, the Turkish court uses a two step reasoning, in which the three books mentioned are first labelled as child literature; subsequently the lawfulness of their publication and distribution is investigated within the context of obscenity. Both steps in this line of argumentation raise doubts: while it is immediately clear that the two works translated from French are not addressed to children, the subsequent charges of obscenity lack justification. Furthermore, restriction of the freedom of expression in literary work on charges of obscenity should be bound to very strict conditions.

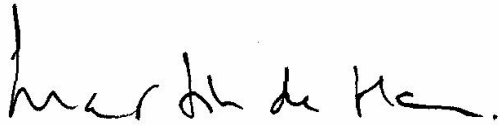
The court case you and translator İsmail Yerguz are facing now brings to mind a similar case against the Turkish translation of another work by Apollinaire, *Les onze mille verges* ('Onbin bir kırbaç'), translated in 1999 by publishing house Hades, and then charged of obscenity, too. As you will certainly know, the European Court ruled at the beginning of this year that the Turkish judgement violated the freedom of expression as formulated in the European Declaration of Human Rights, and that the penalty and confiscation, imposed by the Turkish court in this case, were disproportionate and not needed in a democratic country.

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We sincerely hope that in the trial you are facing the Turkish court will take this previous judgement by the European Court into account. CEATL will follow the further course of events in your case. We wish you and our colleague, translator İsmail Yerguz, strength and success. CEATL will be pleased to offer any moral assistance required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin de Haan".

Martin de Haan,  
President

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