



## Václav Havel Prize 2017:

### Human rights defenders from Austria, Hungary and Turkey shortlisted

Strasbourg / Prague 29. 08. 2017 – The selection panel of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, comprising independent figures from the world of human rights and chaired by the Vice-President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) Sir Roger Gale, drew up the shortlist of candidatures in Prague today.

The shortlisted nominees, in alphabetical order, are:

- **Murat Arslan (Turkey)**

The nominee, in detention since 2016, is a well-known and reputed judge. President of the now dissolved Association for the Union of Judges and Prosecutors (YARSAV), he has always been a supporter of the independence of the judiciary.

- **Hungarian Helsinki Committee**

A non-governmental human rights organisation founded in 1989 and based in Budapest, it carries out a broad range of activities in the area of human rights with a particular focus on access to justice and the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons.

- **Father Georg Sporschill (Austria)**

A Jesuit who has devoted his life to the care of the most vulnerable, notably children. He has set up an association (*Elijah*) which carries out numerous projects in Austria, Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova and Romania.

Chairing the meeting of the selection panel, Sir Roger Gale, the most senior Vice-President of the Assembly, said: “the jury chose the candidates from among a long and well-qualified list of nominees, fully respecting the spirit and the principles of the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize”.

The overall winner of the annual prize, which rewards outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights in Europe and beyond, is due to be announced at the opening of the autumn plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg on 9 October 2017.

The Václav Havel Human Rights Prize is awarded each year by [PACE](#), in partnership with the [Václav Havel Library](#) and the [Charta 77 Foundation](#), and consists of a sum of 60,000 euros, a trophy and a diploma. The ceremony will be followed by the conference in honour of the prizewinner called [What Price Human Rights?](#) in Prague on 11 October 2017.

Contacts:

PACE Communication Division: +33 3 88 41 31 93 ; [pace.com@coe.int](mailto:pace.com@coe.int)

Václav Havel Library: Radka Prošková: +420 222 220 112

[Václav Havel Human Rights Prize website](#)