“President Biden, end the persecution of the journalist Julian Assange”

To mark the 50th birthday of Julian Assange on 3 July 2021, and in light of the ongoing persecution of the detained journalist and Wikileaks founder by the administration of US President Joe Biden, the members of the cross-party working group “Free Julian Assange” (Freiheit für Julian Assange) Sevim Dağdelen (The Left Party), Bijan Djir-Sarai (FDP), Frank Heinrich (CDU), Frank Schwabe (SPD) and Margit Stumpp (Alliance 90/The Greens) issue the following statement:

“The latest revelations of fictitious hacking accusations from a key witness cooperating with the FBI show once again that the allegations against the journalist Julian Assange are construed and unfounded. We call upon the new US administration under President Joe Biden to end the extradition proceedings started by the previous administration led by Donald Trump once and for all and to stop the persecution of the Wikileaks founder. Julian Assange has been kept for over two years under conditions akin to torture at Belmarsh high security prison in London, where he is forced to spend his 50th birthday in solitary confinement despite the critical condition of his health. We call upon German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel to urgently advocate, during her forthcoming visit to Washington to meet with US President Biden, an end to the persecution of Julian Assange and to insist that freedom of speech and of the press are upheld.”

Sevim Dağdelen (The Left Party) stated the following: “For eleven years, Julian Assange has been robbed of his freedom at the instigation of the US leadership, because he made US war crimes public. The German Federal Government must at last make the case for the release of this journalist and the end to this political persecution. Especially following the revelation that key aspects of the accusations on which the US indictment is based have been found to be patently fictitious.”

Bijan Djir-Sarai (FDP) stated the following: “The refusal by the British judiciary to release Julian Assange on bail is, in light of the dire conditions of his detention, a rule-of-law and humanitarian scandal. If only for the protection of his life and
his fragile health, Julian Assange must be released immediately from Belmarsh high security prison.”

**Frank Heinrich** (CDU) stated the following: “President Biden’s administration should use the opportunity to leave the Trump era well and truly behind them in this respect, too, and to withdraw the extradition request against Julian Assange in the spirit of protecting freedom of opinion and of the press.”

**Frank Schwabe** (SPD) stated the following: “The treatment of Julian Assange is in no way compatible with rule-of-law principles. In light of his very poor health, this circus needs to come to an end immediately.”

**Margit Stumpp** (Alliance 90/The Greens) stated the following: “If the United States and the Western community of nations credibly wish to stand up for the protection of freedom of the press and the rule of law, they need to stop using Julian Assange as an example of how to persecute disagreeable journalists. The criminalisation of investigative journalism, which in the case of Wikileaks brought terrible war crimes, torture and corruption scandals to light, not only weakens democracy and the rule of law, but also undermines people’s trust in public institutions.”

Berlin, 1 July 2021