



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

11.6.2013

B7-0306/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Turkey
(2013/2664(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

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United in diversity

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B7-0306/2013

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Turkey
(2013/2664(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular that of 18 April 2013 on Turkey's 2012 progress report¹,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to the Negotiating Framework for Turkey of 3 October 2005,
 - having regard to Council Decision 2008/157/EC of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey² ('the Accession Partnership'), as well as to the previous Council decisions on the Accession Partnership of 2001, 2003 and 2006,
 - having regard to the European Urban Charter II adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 29 May 2008,
 - having regard to the EU directives on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA), on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA), and on public access to environmental information,
 - having regard to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention),
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in the early hours of Friday, 31 May 2013 the Turkish police engaged in an effort to disperse a group of demonstrators, who had been protesting for weeks against the planned felling of trees for a new construction project in Istanbul's Gezi Park in the Taksim Square area;
- B. whereas the police intervention led to clashes with the protesters, which quickly spread to other cities in Turkey, and whereas these clashes led to casualties, numerous people being wounded, mass arrests and severe damage to private and public property; whereas the demonstrations have gained support from different strata of Turkish society;
- C. whereas Article 34 of the Turkish Constitution guarantees the right to organise peaceful and unarmed meetings and demonstrations without permission;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0184.

² OJ L 51, 26.2.2008, p. 4.

- D. whereas the protests are also linked to concerns in Turkish society over a series of recent decisions and legislative acts on issues such as restrictions on the sale of alcohol, the banning of demonstrations in Taksim Square, educational reforms, the name of the ‘third bridge’ over the Bosphorus, etc.;
- E. whereas Commissioner Füle responded to the events immediately, while the EEAS failed to give a timely response;
1. Expresses its condolences to the families of the protesters and police officers who lost their lives, and wishes the numerous wounded a rapid recovery;
 2. Expresses its support for the peaceful demonstrators and calls for the immediate release of all peaceful demonstrators who were taken into custody;
 3. Strongly condemns the excessive use of force by the Turkish police in its response to the peaceful and legitimate protests in Istanbul’s Gezi Park, and calls on the Turkish authorities to thoroughly and impartially investigate the police violence and to bring those responsible to justice;
 4. Urges the Turkish authorities to guarantee and respect the right to information and the rights of freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and peaceful protest of all citizens;
 5. Deplores the harsh reactions of the Turkish Government and of Prime Minister Erdoğan, whose unwillingness to take steps towards reconciliation, inability to apologise and unwillingness to try to understand the reactions of a segment of the Turkish population have only contributed to further polarisation in Turkish society; welcomes the moderate response by President Gül and the apologies to the injured protesters expressed by Deputy Prime Minister Arınç, as well as their dialogue with the Taksim platform and political opposition figures to diffuse tensions; underlines the importance of dialogue between the Turkish Government and peaceful protesters;
 6. Welcomes the opposition’s decision to cancel a political meeting in order to avoid escalations of violence; for the same reason, urges the government to postpone its two mass rallies scheduled for 15 and 16 June 2013 in Ankara and Istanbul;
 7. Welcomes the decision of the Istanbul 6th Administrative Court to temporarily suspend the start of work on the Taksim ‘Pedestrian’ project, and urges local and national authorities in Turkey to launch public consultations and take into consideration all those residing in adjoining neighbourhoods with regard to all urban and regional development plans, such as the ‘third bridge’, the third Istanbul airport, the Illisu dam, the nuclear plants in Sinop and Akkuyu, and the hydroelectric projects in the Black Sea region; recalls the need to balance economic growth with social, environmental, cultural and historical factors; recalls the importance of environmental considerations and sustainable development;
 8. Calls for all projects in Turkey to undergo environmental impact assessment, without exception; in this context, asks the Commission to inform Parliament concerning the ongoing negotiations on Chapter 27 (Environment);

9. Reminds Turkey that in an inclusive, pluralist democracy all citizens should be respected and represented and that the majority have a responsibility to include the opposition and civil society in the decision-making process;
10. Is concerned at the ongoing confrontation between the political parties, and the lack of readiness on the part of both government and opposition to work towards consensus on key reforms, such as reform of the Constitution and the peace process, which both constitute historic opportunities to ensure renewed and inclusive citizenship as well as individual and collective rights in Turkey; urges all political actors, the government and the opposition to work together to enhance political plurality in state institutions and promote the modernisation and democratisation of the state and society;
11. Points to the crucial role of a system of checks and balances in the governance of a modern democratic state, for the Union, its Member States and Turkey; believes such a system should be based on the principle of separation of powers and the balance of the executive, legislative and judicial functions, on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – in particular freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of the press – and on a participatory political culture that truly reflects the plurality of a democratic society;
12. Recalls that freedom of expression and media pluralism are at the heart of European values and that a truly democratic, free and pluralistic society requires true freedom of expression; recalls that freedom of expression is applicable not only to information or ideas that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive but also, in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights, to those that offend, shock or disturb the state or any section of the population;
13. Is concerned that the mainstream Turkish media failed to report on the demonstrations in a timely and adequate manner; notes that the Turkish social media became the main source of diverse and timely information on the events; is concerned at the deterioration of freedom of the press, certain acts of censorship and increasing self-censorship within the Turkish media; calls on the Turkish Government to uphold the principles of press freedom and the right to information; stresses that an independent press is crucial for a democratic society, and points, in this context, to the essential role of the judiciary in protecting and enhancing press freedom, thereby guaranteeing a public space for free debate; is concerned at the large number of journalists in prison and the numerous ongoing trials of journalists;
14. Reiterates its concern over the fact that most Turkish media are owned by, and concentrated in, large conglomerates with a wide range of business interests; reiterates its call on Turkey, and also on some EU Member States, to adopt new legislation on the media addressing, inter alia, the issues of independence, ownership and administrative control;
15. Demands that the Turkish Government not take the responsibility for the ongoing standstill in the negotiations and that it not miss the opportunity opened up by the Commission's 'positive agenda' and by Parliament's request for the opening of Chapters 15, 19, 22, 23, and 24, which should give the negotiations a new dynamic;

16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, the President of the European Court of Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Turkey.