



2019/2176(INI)

11.11.2020

DRAFT REPORT

on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Turkey
(2019/2176(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

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The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Turkey, in particular those of 13 March 2019 on the 2018 Commission Report on Turkey¹, of 19 September 2019 on the situation in Turkey, notably the removal of elected mayors², of 24 October 2019 on the Turkish military operation in northeast Syria and its consequences³, and of 17 September 2020 on the preparation of the special European Council summit focusing on the dangerous escalation and the role of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 6 October 2020 on EU Enlargement Policy (COM(2020)0660) and to the accompanying Turkey 2020 Report (SWD(2020)0355),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 29 May 2019 on EU Enlargement Policy (COM(2019)0260) and to the accompanying Turkey 2019 Report (SWD(2019)0220),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 February 2020 entitled ‘Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans’ (COM(2020)0057),
- having regard to the Negotiating Framework for Turkey of 3 October 2005,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 July and 14 October 2019 on Turkey’s illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, to the European Council conclusions of 1 October 2020, to the statements of the EU Foreign Ministers of 15 May 2020 and 14 August 2020 on the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, to the outcome of the informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers (Gymnich) of 28 August 2020, and to all previous relevant Council and European Council conclusions,
- having regard to the Report by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe of 19 February 2020 following her visit to Turkey,
- having regard to the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council on Cyprus, including Resolution 550 (1984) and Resolution 789 (1992),
- having regard to the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 April 2020 on the Fourth

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0200.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0017.

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0049.

⁴ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0230.

Annual Report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (COM(2020)0162),

- having regard to the 2020 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders, which ranks Turkey 154th out of 180 countries, and to the Bertelsmann Transformation Index Turkey Country Report 2020,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Petitions,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0000/2020),
- A. whereas being a candidate country presumes a willingness to progressively approach in all aspects the values, interests, standards and policies of the EU;
- B. whereas an analysis of the Commission's reports on Turkey since 2014 and, in particular, the 2019 and 2020 reports, reveals that Turkey has increasingly and rapidly distanced itself from the EU's values and its normative framework;
- C. whereas in its previous annual report, Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to formally suspend accession negotiations with Turkey;
- D. whereas, in spite of this principled stance by Parliament and all of the current circumstances, the European Council, in its conclusions of 1 October 2020, offered Turkey a renewed and broad positive agenda, provided that constructive efforts are sustained, in a further attempt to restore our relations;

General assessment of the accession process

1. Notes with concern that Turkey's continuous and growing distancing from European values and standards has brought EU-Turkey relations to a historical low point, having deteriorated to such an extent that it requires both parties to profoundly reassess the current framework of relations;
2. Notes that Turkey's lack of commitment to carrying out the reforms assumed in the accession process has made the latter inadequate to frame a complex relationship that has progressively become more transactional and driven by circumstances;
3. Is deeply concerned that, over the years, the lack of progress in Turkey's convergence has now transformed into a full withdrawal, marked by a stark regression in three main areas: backsliding on the rule of law and fundamental rights, adopting regressive institutional reforms and pursuing a confrontational foreign policy; is further concerned by the fact that this regression has increasingly been accompanied by an explicit anti-EU narrative; calls, in this context, on Turkey to reassess the sincerity of its commitment to the EU path, as an indispensable component of the viability of the entire accession process;
4. Stresses that no incentive that the EU could offer can ever replace the much-needed political will to build a mature democracy and, in turn, become a member of the EU;
5. Stresses that, since Parliament's last report, the situation, far from improving, has deteriorated even further; firmly insists, therefore, on the formal suspension of

accession negotiations with Turkey, in order for both sides to review in a realistic manner the appropriateness of the current framework and its ability to function, or, if necessary, to explore possible new models for future relations;

6. Regrets the current lack of understanding between the EU and Turkey, but reaffirms its firm conviction that Turkey is a strategic neighbour and ally with which the EU wishes to have the best possible relations;
7. Expresses its will to strengthen and deepen mutual knowledge and understanding between Turkish and European societies, combating all manifestations of social, religious or cultural prejudice; expresses its full commitment to continue supporting Turkey's independent civil society in whatever circumstances and framework of relations that the future may bring; believes, nevertheless, that the accession process would still be the most powerful tool to exercise normative pressure on the Turkish government and the best framework to sustain the democratic and pro-European aspirations of Turkish society; stresses that a purely transactional relationship will hardly contribute to the advancement of Turkey towards a more democratic model;

The rule of law and fundamental rights

8. Is appalled by the serious backsliding on fundamental freedoms revealing the dire human rights situation in Turkey and the continued erosion of democracy and the rule of law;
9. Believes that this fundamental area, which is at the core of the accession process, cannot be disconnected and isolated from overall relations and that it remains the main obstacle to progress on any positive agenda that could be offered to Turkey;
10. Notes with deep concern that, despite the formal lifting of the state of emergency in July 2018, its impact on democracy and fundamental rights continues to be strongly felt;
11. Deeply regrets that this repressive form of rule has now become a deliberate, relentless, systematic state policy, which extends to any critical activities, such as Kurdish activism, or even to events that took place prior to the attempted coup, such as the Gezi protests;
12. Regrets that the current overly broad anti-terrorism provisions and the abuse of the anti-terror measures have become the backbone of this state policy; reiterates its firm condemnation of the violence by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been on the EU list of terrorist organisations since 2002;
13. Considers that the erosion of the rule of law and the systemic lack of independence of the judiciary continues to be one of the most pressing and worrying issues; condemns the increased surveillance by the executive and the political pressure affecting the work of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and bar associations;
14. Is deeply worried about the disregard by the Turkish judiciary of European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rulings and the increasing non-compliance of lower courts with the judgments of the Constitutional Court;
15. Expresses serious concern about the disproportionate and arbitrary measures curtailing

freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information; urges Turkey to guarantee media freedom as a matter of priority;

16. Is deeply concerned about the constant attacks and pressure on the opposition parties, which undermines the proper functioning of a democratic system;
17. Notes with great concern the way that the People's Democratic Party (HDP) has been specifically and continuously targeted by the Turkish authorities; strongly condemns the continued detention of former HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş;
18. Calls on Turkey to release all imprisoned human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, academics and others who have been detained on unsubstantiated charges and to enable them to carry out their work without threat or impediment in all circumstances; strongly condemns the re-arrest and continued detention of Osman Kavala, a prominent civil society figure;
19. Commends the existence of a vibrant, plural, engaged and heterogeneous civil society in Turkey, in spite of the massive political crackdown, as it represents one of the few remaining checks on the Turkish Government;
20. Remains deeply concerned by the situation in the south-east of Turkey with regard to the protection of human rights, freedom of expression and political participation;
21. Urges Turkey to protect the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, including women, LGBTI people and ethnic and religious minorities;

Institutional framework

22. Is alarmed by the consolidation of an authoritarian interpretation of the presidential system; is deeply concerned about the continued hyper-centralisation of power in the Presidency, which does not ensure a sound and effective separation of powers between the executive and the legislative branches and the judiciary;
23. Is concerned about the ever more frequent use of a hyper-nationalist narrative among the ruling elite that increasingly gives rise to antagonistic approaches towards the EU or its Member States; is concerned about the increasing clout of religious conservatism in political life;
24. Strongly condemns the removal of democratically elected mayors from office on the basis of questionable evidence and, in particular, their arbitrary replacement by unelected trustees appointed by the central government; strongly believes these unlawful decisions constitute a direct attack on the most basic principles of democracy, depriving millions of voters of their democratically elected representation;

Wider EU-Turkey relations and Turkish foreign policy

25. Recalls the laudable role played by Turkey in responding to the migration crisis resulting from the war in Syria; takes the view that the EU should continue to give the necessary support to Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey; supports an objective assessment of the EU-Turkey Statement and underlines the importance of both parties' compliance with their respective commitments;

26. Stresses that a modernisation of the Customs Union could be beneficial for both parties and would keep Turkey economically and normatively anchored to the EU; reiterates that this would need to be based on strong conditionality related to human rights and fundamental freedoms; highlights that it seems unrealistic to envisage any modernisation of the Customs Union given the current circumstances; recalls that the current Customs Union will not achieve its full potential until Turkey fully implements the Additional Protocol in relation to all Member States;
27. Is deeply concerned by the ongoing dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean and the related risk of a military escalation; condemns Turkey's illegal activities in Greek and Cypriot waters, which violate both the sovereign rights of EU Member States and international law; expresses its full solidarity with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus; urges Turkey to engage in the peaceful settlement of disputes and to refrain from any unilateral and illegal action or threat;
28. Condemns the partial reopening of Varosha beach, which undermines mutual trust and therefore the prospect of the resumption of direct talks on the comprehensive resolution of the Cyprus issue; calls on Turkey to reverse this action; reiterates its support for a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality;
29. Strongly condemns the Turkish military interventions in Syria, especially in the northeast and Idlib, which constitute grave violations of international law;
30. Calls on Turkey to remain committed to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Libya under the auspices of the UN, and to fully adhere to the arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council;
31. Regrets that, rather than calling for an end to the violence and for a resumption of peaceful negotiations supporting the efforts of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, Turkey instead decided to unconditionally sustain the military actions of one of the sides in the recent conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh;

Way forward for EU-Turkey relations

32. Believes that it is high time to review the EU's relations with Turkey and to define a comprehensive, unified and coherent strategy for the medium to long term, among all EU institutions and Member States;
33. Takes the view that enhancing communication and dialogue at all levels are key to restoring mutual trust between the EU and Turkey; deplores the continuous and unjustified refusal of the Turkish side to reinstate the normal functioning of the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee;
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34. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High

Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and to the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Turkey.