



Plenary sitting

B9-0264/2020

14.9.2020

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the preparation of the special European Council summit focusing on the dangerous escalation and the role of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean (2020/2774(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the preparation of the special European Council summit focusing on the dangerous escalation and the role of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean
(2020/2774(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Turkey, in particular those of 24 November 2016 on EU-Turkey relations¹, of 27 October 2016 on the situation of journalists in Turkey², of 8 February 2018 on the current human rights situation in Turkey³, of 13 March 2019 on the 2018 Commission Report on Turkey⁴, of 19 September 2019 on situation in Turkey, notably the removal of elected mayors⁵, and of 13 November 2014 on Turkish actions creating tensions in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus⁶,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 29 May 2019 on EU enlargement policy (COM(2019)0260), and its accompanying staff working document (SWD(2019)0220),
 - having regard to Council Decision 2020/275 of 27 February 2020 concerning restrictive measures in view of Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, and to the previous relevant Council and European Council conclusions on Turkey,
 - having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to which Greece and Cyprus, as well as the European Union, are parties,
 - having regard the Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union, which obliges Member States to aid and assist a Member State that is the victim of armed aggression on its territory,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Eastern Mediterranean, an area of strategic importance for the EU and a key area for the peace and stability of the entire Mediterranean and Middle East regions, is blighted by a long-standing, multi-layered set of disputes of political, economic and geostrategic natures; whereas recently there has been a serious escalation in disputes over the extent of exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and continental shelves, as a result of illegal Turkish actions stemming from differing interpretations of maritime law; whereas there are mutual claims that the interpretation of maritime law by the other side is against international law and that the activities of the other side are illegal; whereas

¹ OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 93.

² OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 199.

³ OJ C 463, 21.12.2018, p. 56.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0200.

⁵ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0017.

⁶ OJ C 285, 5.8.2016, p. 11.

these disputes cannot be solved through the use of force and should be addressed through dialogue and cooperation and ultimately solved by the relevant courts through the application of international law;

- B. whereas the way in which Turkey has more recently decided to assert its claims, including unilateral actions with a strong military component and abusive language, is unacceptable and unseemly for an EU candidate country; whereas the EU is clear and determined in defending the European Union's interests, demonstrating its unwavering support and solidarity with Greece and Cyprus and upholding international law;
- C. whereas the illegal exploration and drilling activities by Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean are taking place with the active participation of the Turkish military, resulting in an intense and dangerous militarisation of the Eastern Mediterranean, thus posing a serious threat to the peace and security of the whole region; whereas these activities by Turkey are accompanied by increasingly hostile rhetoric against both Greece and Cyprus, other EU Member States and the EU itself;
- D. whereas on 20 April 2020, Turkey sent the drill ship Yavuz, accompanied by a Turkish navy vessel, into Cyprus's EEZ; whereas on 30 July 2020, Turkey sent the seismic research vessel Barbaros, accompanied by a Turkish warship and a second support ship, into Cyprus's EEZ; whereas on 10 August 2020, Turkey sent the Oruç Reis research vessel accompanied by warships into Greek waters to map out sea territory for possible oil and gas drilling in an area where Turkey also claims jurisdiction; whereas, as a reaction, Greece responded by dispatching its own warships to track the Turkish vessels, one of which collided with a Greek ship;
- E. whereas on 31 August 2020 Turkey again extended its exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean by the Oruç Reis until 12 September 2020; whereas Turkey's naval alert (Navtex) concerns an area that is within Greece's continental shelf; whereas these activities by Turkey have led to a significant deterioration in relations between Greece and Turkey;
- F. whereas on 8 June 1995, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey officially declared that any action by Greece to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles in the Aegean Sea – as recognised by UNCLOS – would be a *casus belli*; whereas this declaration still stands and has recently been recalled by the Turkish Government;
- G. whereas the VP/HR Borrell, who has deployed an intense activity in the region, together with the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, has been looking for solutions through dialogue between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus; whereas in order to allow the dialogue to advance, Turkey has to refrain from unilateral actions;
- H. whereas NATO has also proposed different initiatives for dialogue between the parties; whereas on the initiative of the NATO Secretary General, Greece and Turkey have agreed to enter into technical talks at NATO to establish mechanisms for military deconfliction to reduce the risk of incidents and accidents in the Eastern Mediterranean;
- I. whereas Turkey has not signed UNCLOS, which is part of the EU acquis; whereas Turkey has signed the maritime Memorandum of Understanding with Libya, which is illegal and contrary to UNCLOS and international law; whereas on 6 August 2020

Greece signed an agreement on an EEZ with Egypt; whereas the announcement of the agreement between Greece and Egypt led Turkey to cancel the exploratory talks agreed a day before;

- J. whereas a framework for restrictive measures in response to Turkey's illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean was set up in November 2019 after the Council had repeatedly expressed its concerns and strongly condemned the drilling activities in various sets of conclusions, including the European Council conclusions of 22 March 2018 and 20 June 2019;
 - K. whereas on 27 February 2020 the Council placed two persons under restrictive measures in relation to Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean; whereas these persons are responsible for or involved in planning, directing and implementing offshore hydrocarbon exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean which have not been authorised by Cyprus; whereas the restrictive measures consist of an EU travel ban and an asset freeze;
 - L. whereas on 28 August 2020 the informal Council (Gymnich) meeting called for further targeted sanctions against Turkey in the event that it does not de-escalate tensions in the region; whereas these restrictive measures would be discussed at the special European Council summit on 24 and 25 September 2020;
1. Calls on Turkey to show restraint, to de-escalate the situation and to refrain from any further illegal exploration and drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean; expresses its deep regret that the threat of *casus belli* issued by Turkey in 1995 against Greece still stands and calls for its withdrawal; rejects the use of threats and abusive language towards Member States and the EU as unacceptable and unseemly for an EU candidate country;
 2. Strongly supports a return to the dialogue between the parties as the only means of overcoming the current situation; considers the withdrawal of any military and exploratory vessel from the disputed waters to be a necessary gesture of good will in order to facilitate this dialogue; is deeply concerned that in the current extremely tense scenario of increasing militarisation, any incident, whether intentional or accidental, may lead to a real conflict that could have severe consequences for all parties involved;
 3. Condemns Turkey's illegal activities in the continental shelf/EEZ of Greece and Cyprus, which violate the sovereign rights of these EU Member States; urges Turkey to engage in the peaceful settlement of disputes and to refrain from any unilateral and illegal action or threat, as that could have a negative impact on good neighbourly relations; therefore calls on Turkey to step up efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral issues, including unresolved legal obligations and unsettled disputes with its immediate neighbours over land and maritime borders and airspace, in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter and with international law; reiterates its call on the Turkish Government to sign and ratify UNCLOS, which is part of the EU acquis; calls on all parties involved to agree to resort to the relevant international courts to resolve their conflicting claims under international law if no agreement can be reached between them; recalls that both Greece and Cyprus have already called on Turkey to refer the case to the relevant international courts, but Turkey has not accepted the proposal;

4. Calls on Turkey, as an EU candidate country, to fully respect maritime law and the sovereignty of the EU Member States Greece and Cyprus over their territorial sea, as well as all their sovereign rights in their maritime zones, including those rights related to prospecting for and exploiting natural resources, such as the right to enter into bilateral agreements concerning its EEZ, in accordance with the EU acquis and international law; urges Turkey to end the repeated violations of Greek airspace and Greek and Cypriot territorial waters, and to respect the territorial integrity of all of its neighbours;
5. Welcomes the efforts made by the EU, most notably by VP/HR Borrell and the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and other international institutions such as NATO, to look for solutions through dialogue between Turkey and Greece and Cyprus; calls on all sides in a genuine collective engagement to negotiate the delimitation of EEZs and the continental shelf in good faith, fully respecting international law and the principle of good relations between neighbours; supports the proposal for a multilateral conference on the Eastern Mediterranean with the participation of all actors involved, to provide a platform to settle disputes through dialogue; regrets the cancellation by Turkey of the exploratory talks between Turkey and Greece following the conclusion of the maritime agreement between Greece and Egypt on 6 August 2020;
6. Expresses serious concerns and underlines the negative impact that Turkey's illegal exploration and drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean have across the range of EU-Turkey relations, including its candidate status, as well as the negative impact that this and other actions in the framework of Turkey's current foreign policy are having on the stability of the whole region;
7. Calls on the Council, in the absence of any significant progress in engaging with Turkey, to develop a list of further sanctions, which would be discussed at the special European Council summit on 24 and 25 September 2020; takes the firm stance that these sanctions should not have an adverse impact on the people of Turkey, on our support to Turkey's independent civil society, or on the refugees residing within Turkey;
8. Calls on the VP/HR, for as long as Turkey continues with its current illegal unilateral actions in the Eastern Mediterranean, which run counter to the sovereignty of EU Member States (notably Greece and Cyprus) and international law, and for as long as it does not engage in dialogue based on international law, to introduce an initiative in the Council for all Member States to halt the licensing of arms exports to Turkey in accordance with Common Position 2008/944/CFSP⁷;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the President, Government and Parliament of Turkey.

⁷ OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99.