Resolution on the 2012 progress report on Turkey

2012/2870(RSP) - 18/04/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 451 votes to 105 with 45 abstentions a resolution tabled by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the 2012 Progress Report on Turkey.

It states that **renewed mutual engagement** in the context of the negotiation process is needed in order to maintain a constructive relationship based on common values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Members stress Turkey's strategic role, politically and geographically, and call for further reinforcement of the existing political dialogue between the EU and Turkey on **foreign policy choices** and objectives. They regret that the **alignment of Turkey with CFSP declarations continued to be low in 2012** and they encourage Turkey to develop its foreign policy in the framework of dialogue and coordination with the EU.

Copenhagen criteria: Members fully support the Commission's new approach of opening the chapters on the judiciary and fundamental rights (Chapter 23), and on justice and home affairs (Chapter 24), early in the negotiation process and closing them as the very last ones. They call on the Council to make **renewed efforts for the opening of these Chapters**. Parliament commends the Turkish Constitution Conciliation Committee for its commitment to drafting a new Constitution but expresses concern at the apparently slow progress made by the Committee. It stresses that the **reform of the Turkish judiciary system** is central to the efforts to bring about democratic consolidation in Turkey, and also emphasises the importance of **freedom of expression and media pluralism**.

Members commend Turkey's efforts to fight against ‘honour killings’, domestic violence and the phenomenon of forced marriages and child brides, but are concerned by the fact that, despite such efforts, violence against women is still a regular occurrence.

They welcome the **direct political dialogue** that the Turkish Government has recently opened with Abdullah Öcalan, and encourages the parties to transform these talks into structured negotiations as soon as possible, staing that this could lead to a historic agreement that would settle the Kurdish conflict in a peaceful and democratic way. Parliament reiterates its condemnation of the **terrorist violence committed by the PKK**, and calls on Turkey to adopt a data protection law so that a cooperation agreement can be concluded with Europol, and judicial cooperation with Eurojust and the EU Member States can be further developed.

Building good neighbourly relations: taking the view that Turkey missed an important opportunity to start a process of normalisation of relations with Cyprus during the latter's Presidency of the Council of the EU, Parliament stresses that progress in Turkey's relations with Cyprus is urgently needed in order to give new momentum to the EU-Turkey accession negotiations. It calls on Turkey to sign the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and recalls the full legitimacy of Cyprus's **exclusive economic zone**, in accordance with UNCLOS.

Advancing EU-Turkey cooperation: Parliament again deplores Turkey's refusal to fulfil its obligations on the Additional Protocol to the EC-Turkey Association Agreement towards all Member States, recalling that this refusal continues to have a **profound effect on the negotiation process.**

It supports Turkey's commitment to the provision of **humanitarian assistance** to the increasing number of **refugees from Syria**, but notes that the repercussions of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Syria on the stability of the region are multiplying. Members stress Turkey’s need for assistance from the international community and the importance of a **common understanding between the EU and Turkey on how to**

deliver humanitarian assistance. Beyond this, the EU and Turkey should actively seek to develop a **joint strategic vision** to achieve reinforced leverage to end the tragic crisis in Syria.

Lastly, Members feel that initial consideration should be given to the value of opening negotiations on **Chapter 15 on energy** with a view to furthering the EU-Turkey strategic dialogue on energy.