Resolution on the situation in Turkey

2013/2664(RSP) - 13/06/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Turkey.

The resolution was tabled by the EFD, Greens/EFA, S&D, ALDE, and EPP groups.

It expresses its deep concern at the **disproportionate and 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 investigate the police violence, to bring those responsible to justice and to offer compensation to the victims. Parliament warns the Turkish Government against taking harsh measures against the peaceful protesters, and urges the Prime Minister to take a **unifying and conciliatory position** so as to avoid any further escalation.

Whilst welcoming the moderate response by President Gül and the apologies to the injured protesters expressed by Deputy Prime Minister Arinç, Parliament deplores the reactions of the Turkish Government and of Prime Minister Erdoan, whose unwillingness to take steps towards reconciliation, to apologise or to understand the reactions of a segment of the Turkish population have only contributed to further polarization. It believes that, in itself, the organisation of peaceful and legitimate protests testifies to the vibrancy of Turkish civil society, and reminds Turkey of the importance of continuing efforts to further improve its democratic institutions, the rule of law and the observance of fundamental freedoms.

Members observe that the unprecedented wave of protests also reflects growing dissatisfaction in parts of the Turkish population concerning lifestyle regulation and they call on the government to **respect the plurality and richness of Turkish society and to protect secular lifestyles.** Noting that in an inclusive, pluralist democracy **all citizens should feel represented and that the majority has a responsibility** to include the opposition and civil society in the decision-making process, Parliament also reminds the opposition parties of their responsibility to do their part to create a democratic political culture with respect for diverse views and opinions.

It is concerned about the deterioration in freedom of the press and about certain acts of censorship and growing self-censorship within the Turkish media, including on the internet, stressing that an independent press is crucial to a democratic society, and pointing to the essential role of the judiciary in protecting press freedom, thereby guaranteeing public space for free and inclusive debate. Members cite the large number of journalists in prison, the fact that mainstream Turkish media remained silent regarding the demonstrations, and that Twitter users have been arrested, and view as deeply regrettable the decision of RTUK (the Radio and Television Supreme Council) to punish the TV channels that have covered the Gezi Park events.