Resolution on freedom of expression in Turkey: recent arrests of journalists, media executives and systematic pressure against media

2014/3011(RSP) - 15/01/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on freedom of expression in Turkey: Recent arrests of journalists, media executives and systematic pressure against media.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA and EDD groups.

Parliament recalled that on 14 December 2014 the Turkish police arrested journalists and media executives. It stated that Turkey already holds a very large number of jailed journalists and journalists awaiting trial, and the pressure against the media has increased over the past few years.

Parliament condemned the detention of these journalists and stressed that these actions call into question respect for the rule of law and freedom of the media.

Pluralistic press: Members recalled that a free and pluralistic press is an essential component of any democracy, as are due process, presumption of innocence and judicial independence. They stressed, therefore, the need:

- to provide ample and transparent information on the allegations against the defendants,
- to grant the defendants full access to the incriminating evidence and full defence rights,
- to ensure the proper handling of the cases to establish the veracity of the accusations without delay and beyond reasonable doubt.

Turkey is urged to work on reforms which should provide for adequate checks and balances fully guaranteeing freedom, including freedom of thought, of expression and of the media, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Parliament underlined the importance of press freedom and respect for democratic values for the EU enlargement process. It stressed that the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) for the period 2014-2020 sees the introduction of enhanced coherence between financial assistance and the overall progress made in the implementation of the pre-accession strategy, including full respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. It called for increased attention to be paid to independent media within the framework of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.