Resolution on the 2014 Commission progress report on Turkey

2014/2953(RSP) - 10/06/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 432 votes to 94, with 127 abstentions, a resolution on the 2014 Commission Progress Report on Turkey.

Parliament recalled that on 3 October 2005 accession negotiations with Turkey were opened. The opening of such negotiations is the starting point for a long-lasting and open-ended process based on fair and rigorous conditionality and a commitment to reform.

The state of play in EU-Turkey relations: Members stressed that the reform process in the context of negotiations with the EU could **present a significant opportunity for Turkey to develop a strong pluralistic democratic system**. They asked the Commission to make a reassessment of the way in which negotiations have been conducted so far.

Parliament called on Turkey to place the reform process at the centre of its domestic policy choices and to commit itself unequivocally to respecting democratic values and principles, which are at the heart of the EU.

Rule of law and democracy: noting that Turkey has continued to implement the reforms from previous years, Members encouraged the Government to continue to give priority to and enhance the social, cultural and political rights and equal treatment of citizens of **Kurdish origin**. Efforts are needed as regards the fight against corruption. Members are concerned about the high degree of political polarisation in Turkey.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms: Members insisted on the need to revise the law on the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of Turkey in order to make it an independent body. They urged the Government of Turkey to guarantee media freedom as a matter of priority and to provide an adequate legal framework guaranteeing pluralism in line with international standards. They condemned the recent police raids and the detention of a number of journalists and media representatives. Turkey is urged to undertake serious efforts to protect the rights of the LGBTI community against acts of violence.

Shared interests and common challenges: Members underlined the important benefits of the Customs Union (CU) between the EU and Turkey. They recalled that, since the start of the CU in 1996, the value of bilateral trade between Turkey and the EU has increased more than fourfold, with a parallel significant rise in foreign direct investment from the EU to Turkey and deeper integration between Turkish and European firms for the benefit of both sides. However, they stressed the need: (i) to extend the scope of the CU to agricultural products, services and public procurement, (ii) to create favourable conditions for continued growth in trade, including the facilitation of visas for business travellers, and (iii) for consultations between the EU and Turkey on the impact on Turkey of Free Trade Agreements signed by the EU with third countries to be intensively pursued.

They also stressed that political dialogue between Turkey and the EU should be complemented by a regular, structured high-level economic dialogue on issues of common concern.

Cyprus issue: Members reiterated their strong support for the **reunification of Cyprus**, on the basis of a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement for both communities, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the values and principles on

which the EU is founded. They called on Turkey and all parties concerned to actively support the negotiations on reunification and to take the necessary steps towards the normalisation of relations with Cyprus. They also called on Turkey to begin to withdraw its troops from Cyprus and to transfer the sealed-off area of Famagusta to the UN in accordance with UNSC Resolution 550(1984).

Members urged **Turkey and Armenia** to proceed to a normalisation of their relations by ratifying, without preconditions, the protocols on the establishment of diplomatic relations, by opening the border and by actively improving their relations, with particular reference to cross-border cooperation and economic integration.