

Resolution on the situation of journalists in Turkey

2016/2935(RSP) - 27/10/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

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

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

Members recalled that according to the European Federation of Journalists and the Turkish Journalists' Association, following the coup attempt of 15 July 2016 **the Turkish police have arrested at least 99 journalists and writers**, most of whom have had no charges brought against them to date, bringing the number of media workers detained on charges believed to be related to their exercise of the right to freedom of expression to at least 130, as of 20 October 2016.

Parliament strongly condemned the attempted coup in Turkey of 15 July 2016 and gave its support to the legitimate institutions of Turkey. It stressed, however, that the failed military take-over **cannot be used as an excuse for the Turkish Government to further stifle legitimate and peaceful opposition and to prevent journalists and the media in their peaceful exercise of freedom of expression**. Members called on the Turkish authorities to release those journalists and media workers being held without compelling evidence of criminal activity. They recalled that a free and pluralistic press is an essential component of any democracy, as are due process, presumption of innocence and judicial independence.

Expressing concern about the **closure of more than 150 media outlets**, Parliament called for these to be reopened, their independence restored and their dismissed employees reinstated in accordance with due process. It also called on the Government of Turkey to **narrow the scope of the emergency measures**, so that they can no longer be used to harass family members of journalists who have fled abroad or gone into hiding. It condemned the attempts by the Turkish authorities to intimidate and expel foreign correspondents.

Whilst stressing that Turkey faces a real threat from terrorism, Parliament reiterated that the **broadly defined Turkish anti-terrorism legislation should not be used to punish journalists** for exercising their right of freedom of expression.

The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States should continue monitoring the practical implications of the state of emergency closely and to ensure that all trials of journalists are monitored.