Resolution on the human rights situation in Turkey, in particular the case of Selahattin Demirta and other prisoners of conscience

2021/2506(RSP) - 21/01/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 590 votes to 16, with 75 abstentions, a resolution on the human rights situation in Turkey, in particular the case of Selahattin Demirta and other prisoners of conscience.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR and the Left groups.

Since mid-September 2020, Turkish police have been carrying out large-scale dawn raids across Turkey in which dozens of politicians, political activists, lawyers, and other civil society actors have been detained under ‘terrorism’ related charges. Mr Selahattin Demirta, former member of the Turkish Parliament between 2007 and 2018, former co-chair of the Turkish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) and presidential candidate during the elections of 2014 and 2018, has been detained for more than 4 years on unsubstantiated charges and despite two European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rulings in favour of his release.

Condemning the treatment of Mr Demirta, Parliament called for his immediate and unconditional release from detention and to drop all charges against him. The Turkish authorities must let him exercise his democratic mandate independently and free from threats and impediments.

Parliament reminded the Turkish authorities that their failure to release Mr Demirta constitutes a direct violation of the European Convention on Human Rights and of its domestic law, an unjustifiable prolongation of the violation of Mr Demirta’s rights and a blatant breach of Turkey’s obligation to implement the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights. Members called on the EU Delegation to the Council of Europe to redouble its efforts in ensuring the implementation of the ECtHR judgments on Turkey.

Turkey should also:

- ensure full compliance with the provisions of the ECHR and the decisions of the ECtHR;

- fully cooperate with the Council of Europe in strengthening the rule of law, minority rights, democracy and fundamental rights;

- put an end to its judicial harassment of human rights defenders, academics, journalists, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

Lastly, the resolution took note of Turkey’s intention to turn a new page in its relations with the EU, its determination to implement reforms and its full commitment to the accession process. However, Parliament underlined that better and deeper relations are fully dependent on, inter alia, tangible improvements in respect for democratic principles, the rule of law and fundamental rights within Turkey.