EC/Turkey: negotiation and conclusion of an agreement on the Customs Union

1995/0813(AVC) - 13/12/1995

The rapporteur, Mr CARNERO GONZALEZ (GUE/NGL, E), stated that at the present moment in time Turkey was still not a democratic state. In 1995 human rights violations, executions, arbitrary arrests and torture reached their highest levels in Turkey. The rapporteur therefore feared that if the EP voted in favour of this proposal it could be interpreted as support for the conservative powers that did not want any changes; he therefore did not support moving to the final phase of the customs union between the EU and Turkey. Pointing out that the winner of the Sakharov Prize, Mrs Leyla ZANA, could not be present in the Hemicycle because she was being held in a Turkish prison, Mr CARNERO GONZALEZ stated that Turkey had not fulfilled the minimum conditions imposed by the European Parliament itself for ratification of the customs union. Other Members also opposed ratification, including Mr PUERTA, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group, Mr SOUCHET, on behalf of the EDN Group, Mr SCHULZ, on behalf of the PSE members who disagreed with the majority who were in favour of ratification, and Mrs ROTH, who, on behalf of the Greens, proposed postponing the vote. Commissioner van den Broek stated that the Commission and the Council believed that the customs union would help the democratisation process and that they should not underestimate the efforts of the Turkish authorities to show their commitments in this respect. He also stressed that there was the risk of an upsurge in Islamic fundamentalism if ratification did not take place. For all of these reasons, the Council and the Commission urged Parliament to ratify the agreement in order to show its support for the reforms undertaken by the Turkish authorities and its solidarity with the Turkish people.