

Basic information

2010/2996(RSP)

RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects

Resolution on Turkey's 2010 progress report

Subject

8.20.01 Candidate countries

Geographical area

Türkiye

Procedure completed

Key players

Council of the European Union

Council configuration

General Affairs

Meetings

3060

Date

2010-12-14

European Commission

Commission DG

Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

Commissioner

FÜLE Štefan

Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| 14/12/2010 | Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council | | Summary |
| 08/03/2011 | Debate in Parliament |  | |
| 09/03/2011 | Decision by Parliament | T7-0090/2011 | Summary |
| 09/03/2011 | Results of vote in Parliament |  | |
| 09/03/2011 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

Technical information

Procedure reference

2010/2996(RSP)

Procedure type

RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects

Procedure subtype

Resolution on statement

Legal basis

Rules of Procedure EP 136-p2

Stage reached in procedure

Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|--|-----------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0156/2011 | 17/02/2011 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T7-0090/2011 | 09/03/2011 | Summary |

European Commission

| Document type | Reference | Date | Summary |
|--|------------------------------|------------|---------|
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | SP(2011)5426 | 12/09/2011 | |

Resolution on Turkey's 2010 progress report

2010/2996(RSP) - 14/12/2010

The Council adopted a series of conclusions on the **enlargement strategy**. These may be summarised as follows:

Welcoming the communication from the Commission of 9 November 2010 on the [Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011](#), as well as the Opinions on Montenegro and Albania, and the progress reports on **Turkey**, Croatia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The Council states that it broadly shares the Commission's assessments.

The Council reaffirms the strong support of the EU for taking the enlargement process forward but states that **key challenges remain to be negotiated in most enlargement countries**. Sound macro-economic and fiscal policies and EU-related reforms can help to overcome the economic crisis and to achieve sustainable growth. Strengthening the rule of law, including through judiciary reform and stepping up the fight against corruption and organised crime, remains crucial and requires sustained efforts. Public administration reform is also important for EU policies to function properly. Social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups, including the Roma, should be improved. Problems affecting freedom of expression and the media remain a particular concern. Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are essential parts of the enlargement process. They contribute to reconciliation and a climate conducive to addressing open bilateral issues. The Council encourages all parties concerned to address bilateral issues, falling outside areas of EU competence and/or contractual obligations towards the EU, in a constructive spirit and taking into account overall EU interests.

As the countries concerned meet the standards which have been set, including notably those linked to democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms, the EU is committed to working with them to advance to the next steps in the process. The Council welcomes the strengthened link between priorities identified for the (potential) candidate countries and the programming of financial assistance, in particular through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

As regards Turkey: the Council expresses the following:

(1) Political criteria: the Council welcomes Turkey's continued commitment to the negotiation process and the political reform agenda. The constitutional reform package is an important step in the right direction as it addresses a number of priorities of the Accession Partnership in the area of judiciary, fundamental rights and public administration. Implementation in line with European standards will be key. The Council emphasises that any future constitutional changes should be prepared through the broadest possible consultation, involving all political parties and civil society.

Building on progress made, the **Council encourages Turkey to further improve the observance of fundamental rights and freedoms in law and in practice**, in particular in the areas of freedom of expression and freedom of religion. A number of positive steps have been registered on civilian oversight of the security forces and implementation of the judicial reform strategy, but further progress is needed. Further efforts towards fully meeting the Copenhagen criteria are also required, inter alia, as regards property rights, trade union rights, rights of persons belonging to minorities, women's and children's rights, anti-discrimination and gender equality, and the fight against torture and ill-treatment.

The Council strongly condemns all acts of terrorism perpetrated on Turkish territory. It recalls that PKK is on the EU list of terrorist organisations. The Council hopes that implementation and follow-up of the democratic opening, notably to address the Kurdish issue, will start producing the expected results.

- **On an external level:** Turkey has become more active in its wider neighbourhood and is an important regional player, inter alia for security in the Middle East, Western Balkans, Afghanistan/Pakistan, and the Southern Caucasus. In line with the principles set out in the Negotiating Framework, **the Council encourages Turkey to develop its foreign policy as a complement to and in coordination with the EU**. By thus acting together, the EU and Turkey can strengthen energy security, address regional conflicts and prevent divisions developing along ethnic or religious lines. In this regard, the Council stands ready to intensify its existing dialogue with Turkey on foreign policy issues of mutual interest.
- **On immigration:** Turkey is one of the key countries of origin and transit for illegal immigration to the EU. In this context, the Council welcomes that substantial progress has been made in the negotiations on an EU-Turkey readmission agreement. The Council looks forward to its conclusion, in view of its effective implementation. Pending this, adequate implementation of existing bilateral readmission agreements and readmission provisions contained in similar agreements remains a priority.

- **Good neighbourly relations:** the Council underlines that Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice. In this context, the Union urges the avoidance of any kind of threat, source of friction or actions which could damage good neighbourly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Furthermore, the EU stresses again all the sovereign rights of EU Member States which include, inter alia, entering into bilateral agreements, in accordance with the EU *acquis* and international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- **Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement:** the Council notes with deep regret that Turkey, despite repeated calls, continues refusing to fulfil its obligation of full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement. **In the absence of progress on this issue, the Council will maintain its measures from 2006, which will have a continuous effect on the overall progress of the negotiations.** Furthermore, Turkey has still not made progress towards the necessary normalisation of its relations with the Republic of Cyprus. The Council invites the Commission to monitor closely and specifically report on all issues covered by the declaration of the European Community and its Member States of 21 September 2005 in its forthcoming annual report. On this basis, the Council will continue to closely follow and review progress made, in accordance with its conclusions of 11 December 2006 and 8 December 2009. Progress is now expected **without further delay.** As emphasised by the Negotiating Framework, the Council also expects Turkey to actively support the ongoing negotiations aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the **Cyprus problem** within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded. Turkey's commitment and contribution in concrete terms to such a comprehensive settlement is crucial.

(2) **Other criteria:** recalling that negotiations have reached a more demanding stage, the Council notes that Turkey will be able to accelerate the pace of negotiations by advancing in the fulfilment of benchmarks, meeting the requirements of the Negotiating Framework and by respecting its contractual obligations towards the EU. In this context, the Council notes the good progress made by Turkey toward the fulfilment of the opening benchmarks in the field of **Competition Policy**. As soon as all the benchmarks are met, the Council will revert to this chapter, in accordance with established procedures, with a view to its opening.

Resolution on Turkey's 2010 progress report

2010/2996(RSP) - 09/03/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on Turkey's 2010 progress report.

It recalls that accession negotiations with Turkey were opened on 3 October 2005 and **the opening of those negotiations was the starting point for a long-lasting and open-ended process.** It notes Turkey's **slow progress with regard to reforms** and calls on the Turkish Government to increase its efforts in undertaking comprehensive reforms both with a view to fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and for the sake of Turkey's own modernisation. Members are concerned about the ongoing confrontation between political parties and the lack of readiness on the part of Government and opposition to work towards consensus on key reforms, and they urge all political actors, the Government and the opposition to work together. Whilst welcoming the adoption of constitutional amendments as a step in the right direction, Parliament underlines the **pressing need for overall constitutional reform** transforming Turkey into a fully fledged pluralistic democracy with the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at its core. Systematic improvements are needed in order fully to recognise the rights of minorities.

Fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria: the resolution expresses concern about the **deterioration in freedom of the press**, about certain acts of censorship and about growing self-censorship within the Turkish media, including on the internet. It calls on the Turkish Government to uphold the principles of press freedom; and underscores the need for adoption of a new media law addressing, inter alia, the issues of independence, ownership and administrative control. Parliament decides to closely follow the cases of Nedim Şener, Ahmet Şık and other journalists facing **police or judicial harassment.** It expresses concern at the fact that broadcasting may be stopped on grounds of national security without a court order or a ruling by a judge, and notes with concern the practice of bringing criminal prosecutions against journalists who communicate evidence of human rights violations or raise other issues in the public interest. Furthermore, whilst Members appreciate the progress made in reforming the judiciary, they are concerned that Turkish judicial arrangements have not yet been improved sufficiently to ensure the right to a fair and timely trial.

Parliament underlines the fact that investigations of alleged coup plans, such as the '**Ergenekon**' and '**Sledgehammer**' cases, need to demonstrate the strength and the proper, independent and transparent functioning of Turkish democratic institutions and the judiciary. They are concerned by the lack of progress in these investigations and note that the recent detention of well-known journalists such as Nedim Şener and Ahmet Şık might lead to a loss of credibility of these trials which should, on the contrary, strengthen democracy.

Regarding **religious freedoms**, the resolution supports the Government's ongoing dialogue with religious communities, including the Alevis, as well as the Greek, Armenian, Aramean and other Christian communities; but is disappointed that only limited progress has been made on the legal framework for the functioning of these communities. It calls for an effective effort on implementation of the Law on Foundations, which must enable religious communities to function without undue constraints.

Parliament strongly condemns the continuing terrorist violence by the PKK, and calls on the Government to revitalise its efforts, as part of the process of democratic opening, to address the **Kurdish issue** comprehensively with a view to reaching a peaceful solution.

Whilst welcoming the strengthening of the legal framework guaranteeing **women's rights and gender equality** through the constitutional package, Parliament is concerned about the falling rates of labour force participation even among highly educated women. It deeply deplores the persistent high levels of domestic violence, including so-called honour crimes and the phenomenon of forced marriages. It urges the main political parties to reach a solution on the **headscarf ban** in universities, in order to counter the polarising effects of the issue on Turkish society, and urges that this solution be based on respect for women's free choice.

Parliament commends the resilience of the **Turkish economy** vis-à-vis the global economic crisis, stressing that this economic revival is a unique opportunity to increase labour force participation and employment rates, which are still very low, barely reaching 50%.

Building good neighbourly relations: Members call on the Turkish Government and all parties concerned to give their active support to the ongoing negotiations on the **Cyprus issue**, and calls on the Government to facilitate a suitable climate for negotiations by starting to withdraw its forces from Cyprus immediately. Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot authorities are asked to refrain from any new settlements of Turkish citizens on the island, as this would continue to change its demographic balance. On **Armenia**, Parliament urges both parties, Turkey and Armenia, to ratify, without preconditions, the protocols and to open the border, and calls on Turkey to use its regional weight to enhance confidence-building measures.

Advancing EU-Turkey cooperation: the resolution deplores Turkey's non-implementation of the **Additional Protocol to the EC-Turkey Association Agreement**, which continues to affect the process of negotiations, and calls on the Turkish Government to implement the protocol in full. It welcomes the finalisation of the negotiations on the **EU-Turkey readmission agreement** and takes the view that, once the readmission agreement enters into force, the Council should mandate the Commission to initiate a visa dialogue, with particular attention to the matter of entry conditions for businesspeople and students travelling to the EU.

On foreign policy, Parliament calls on the Turkish Government to step up its foreign policy coordination with the EU. It asks the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union to intensify the existing dialogue with Turkey on foreign policy issues of mutual interest; in light of the inspiration Turkey provides to many in the Arab world, as a secular democracy with a majority Muslim population.

Lastly, Members call on the Turkish Government to sign and submit for ratification the Statute of the International Criminal Court, thus further increasing Turkey's contribution to, and engagement in, the global multilateral system.