

ON THE SITUATION IN TURKEY

1. The failed military coup of 15th of July 2016 was deeply traumatic for Turkish society; the EGP reiterates its strongest rejection of all attempts to overturn an elected government through violence and expresses solidarity with all the victims. In particular, we were dismayed by the loss of lives, the attack on Parliament and by the fact that some military turned their weapons against their people; we were impressed by the rejection of military rule by Turkish society at large.

2. The European Green party and its members are committed to the idea that to be part of the European family all countries, including Turkey, must adhere to all relevant conditions and obligations¹ and notably to the Copenhagen criteria; we have supported all efforts to implement adequate democratic institutional and legislative reforms and civil society activities over many years; indeed, as a candidate country and as a member of the Council of Europe since 1950, Turkey is expected to uphold the highest standards of democracy, including the absence of the death penalty, respect for human rights, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and the universal right of all to a fair trial;

3. That is why, even before the attempted coup, we expressed our strong condemnation of the on-going repression of critical voices, journalists, academics, political and social activists, as well as their legal representatives in Turkey and raised our concerns about the increasing division and polarization of Turkish society. We have called on the EU and member state governments not to remain silent faced with this clear degradation of the democratic system in Turkey. We have promoted missions to Turkey to show solidarity and support to those concerned; we also reiterated our condemnation of all acts of terrorism;

4. After the coup, the state of emergency quickly became a tool to launch a very extensive and disproportional repression not only against the promoters of the coup, but indiscriminately against all critical voices; this was combined with reiterated calls for the reestablishment of the death penalty in the wake of the suspension of the European Convention on Human Rights. The bombings, imposed curfews and on-going violent conflict in predominantly Kurdish cities in the South-East, reignited by the sudden break-down of the peace process in April 2015 by the Turkish government, led to numerous civil and military losses, to which added up the arrest of 110 directly elected mayors in the area, including the mayors of Diyarbakir. And this also has created tensions within Turkish and within Kurdish communities elsewhere in Europe;

5. During a mission to Turkey organised by the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament in November 2016, it was possible to meet government officials, representatives of all political parties represented in Parliament and of the EU mission in Turkey; and to have first-hand testimonials of the extremely dangerous situation faced by so many politicians, trade union members, academics, judges, lawyers, journalists, writers, TV channels, radio channels, representatives of minorities, NGOs dealing with support to disadvantaged social groups and refugees; repressive actions against the alleged plotters soon evolved into massive arbitrary indiscriminate measures against hundreds of thousands of individuals, the pace and intensity of which took many citizens and observers by surprise.

¹ Including the Ankara protocol

6. The recent arrest of HDP co-presidents MPs Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yüksekdağ, and 10 other members of the Grand National Assembly, determined a new and very alarming development of an already extremely repressive context, in which the voices of peace and moderation are silenced. We value that the HDP represents many progressive forces in Turkey and has strong support amongst Kurdish and Roma communities, LGBTIQ and other minorities;

7. In particular, after the coup, some 150 journalists - the highest number in the world- , 2 386 judges-prosecutors; 40 000 people have been detained and more than 31 000 remain under arrest, 129 000 public employees remain either suspended (66 000) or have been dismissed (63 000); in many cases, those concerned had their properties and bank accounts confiscated with no explanation; after years of constant progress, different sources consistently report on the widespread return of torture in prisons and ill treatment of those detained, often without charge; moreover, now, even these numbers are not certain anymore, since, as reiterated by civil groups representatives during the Green mission in Turkey, it is often no longer possible to have access to data and even when data are there, to properly disseminate available information. Additionally, recent statements of the Turkish Prime Minister about the borders of Turkey and the Lausanne's treaty are increasing the tension with the neighbouring countries;

8. We welcome the efforts by Turkey to host 3 Mio refugees –more than the whole EU is hosting. We also note the ongoing difficulties for refugees in Turkey, such as the challenge to put almost 1 Mio children to school and the lack of employment for many refugees. We are worried about the situation at the border to Syria, where people in need of international protection can not enter freely and there are reports of refoulement to Syria. We take note of the fact that the EU and Turkish authorities maintain a positive cooperation at a technical level in the implementation of the support of refugees, with 2,3 billions euros allocated. All measures must be taken within the EU to meet the need of refugees and internally displaced people coming from Turkey. Whilst continuing this support, we call for an end to the EU-Turkey deal, which violates European refugee law;

9. In the light of this situation the EGP:

a. Commits to support and help give visibility and information on the activities of the many Turkish citizens, activists, academic, political, economic and social actors, including our fellow-Green party member and green activists and organisations, which resist the regression of Turkey towards an authoritarian regime, work for an open and democratic society and sustain disadvantaged people and refugees. As friends of the Turkish people and one of the established political families in Europe, together with the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament and member parties, we consider also our role to engage in a transparent contact and an open dialogue with the authorities of the Turkey State, when possible and useful to this end;

b. Notes that in all recent conversations and contacts with civil society and political opposition request for a more visible and effective support of the EU institutions to Turkish rule of law and democracy was strongly expressed as well as a clear support for the European Parliament resolution, calling on the Commission and on the Member States to initiate a temporary freeze of the on-going accession negotiations with Turkey, adopted by a large majority on the 24th of November 2016;

- c. Stresses that the political dialogue must continue and that our partners in the civil society and opposition need us now more than ever. For a democratic Turkey the doors to the EU must remain open. Completely stopping the EU accession process would therefore send the wrong signal to the government and citizens of Turkey;
- d. Considers that accepting such a proposal could encourage the EU and its member states to give up the current ambivalent and ineffective position in relation to the present patent violations of the rule of law by the Turkish government; stresses that the EU political dialogue with Turkey is important and must be maintained;
- e. Calls for a halting of the talks to enlarge the existing Customs Union with Turkey, as we believe that this is the wrong time to increase business relations while such severe human rights violations are happening. Stresses that any introduction of the death penalty will need to lead to the ending of accession talks.
- f. Calls for the reinstating of the immunity of HDP MP, a fair trial and the release from pre-trial detention of all elected politicians detained;
- g. Reiterates that the EU must change its current inadequate policies concerning refugees access and treatment in the EU. The EU should not bow to blackmail of Turkish threats to default on the EU-Turkey deal if it is to regain back its freedom of initiative towards the Turkish government; insists that Member States take their responsibility to formulate a strong and common EU response to the refugee crisis and participate to an ambitious resettlement plan of refugees;
- e. Considers in this respect as absolute priorities the speeding up of the already decided reallocation of refugees among EU member states according to the 2015 Juncker plan and a more effective, direct EU support for those countries, cities and communities who are currently engaged in supporting them.