



12.06.2013

B7-/2013

# JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the **Situation in Turkey**

...on behalf of the EPP Group

...on behalf of the S&D Group

tabled by **Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, Guy Verhofstadt, Louis Michel, Graham Watson, Marietje Schaake, Hans van Baalen, Sarah Ludford, Frédérique Ries, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Edward McMillan-Scott, Hannu Takkula, Kristiina Ojuland**

...on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

...on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

... on behalf of the EFD

*The European Parliament;*

- having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular that of 18 April 2013, on Turkey’s 2012 progress report,
  - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
  - having regard to the Negotiating Framework for Turkey of 3 October 2005,
  - having regard to Council Decision 2008/157/EC of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey<sup>1</sup> (‘the Accession Partnership’), as well as to the previous Council decisions on the Accession Partnership of 2001, 2003 and 2006,
  - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in the early hours of Friday 31 May 2013 the Turkish police used excessive violence in an effort to dispel a group of peaceful demonstrators, which had since weeks been protesting against the planned felling of trees for a new construction project in Istanbul's Gezi Park in the Taksim Square area,
- B. whereas the heavy handed police intervention led to clashes with the protestors, which quickly spread to other cities in Turkey, and whereas these clashes led to four deaths, over a thousand people wounded, mass arrests and severe damage to private and public properties; whereas tear-gas was used extensively against the protesters and tear-gas canisters were fired directly at protestors causing serious injuries;
- C. whereas the demonstrations have gained support among different layers of Turkish society; whereas men and women participated equally in the demonstrations;
- D. whereas the harsh condemnations from the Turkish government seem to have been counterproductive,
- E. whereas article 34 of the Turkish Constitution protects the right to organise peaceful and unarmed meetings and demonstrations without permission; whereas article 26 of the Turkish Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and articles 27 and 28 of the Constitution guarantee the "freedom of expression" and "unhindered dissemination of thought";
- F. whereas the protest are also linked to concerns in some sectors of the Turkish society over a series of recent decisions and legislative acts on issues such as restrictions on the selling of alcohol and educational reforms;
- G. whereas the protesters are increasingly voicing concerns over a perceived lack of representation of minority voices, of authoritarian governance, the lack of the rule of law and good governance, and of fair trial and due process in Turkey;
- H. whereas the mainstream Turkish media remained silent on the demonstrations and Twitter users have been arrested;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 51, 26.2.2008, p. 4.

- I. whereas Commissioner Füle and HR/VP Catherine Ashton reacted to these events;
- J. whereas the freedom of assembly, freedom of expression (including through social media both online and offline) and freedom of the press are fundamental principles of the EU;
1. Expresses its sincere condolences to the families of protestors and of the police officer who lost their lives and wishes rapid recovery to the numerous wounded people;
2. Expresses its deep concern on the disproportionate and excessive use of force by Turkish police forces in their response to the peaceful and legitimate protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park and calls on the Turkish authorities to thoroughly investigate the police violence, to bring those responsible to justice and offer compensation to the victims; warns the Turkish government against harsh measures against the peaceful protestors and urges the Prime Minister to take a unifying and conciliatory position so as to avoid any further escalation;
3. Calls on the Turkish authorities to guarantee and respect the right to freedom of expression, to peaceful assembly and to peaceful protest for all citizens; calls for the immediate release of all peaceful protestors that were taken into custody and are currently detained; asks for information on the exact number of detainees and injured;
4. Deplores the reactions of the Turkish Government and Prime Minister Erdoğan, whose unwillingness to take steps towards reconciliation, to apologize and to understand the reactions of a segment of the Turkish population only contributed to further polarization;
5. Welcomes the moderate response by President Gül and the apologies to the injured protestors by Deputy Prime Minister Arinc as well as their dialogue with the Taksim platform and political opposition figures to diffuse tensions; underlines the importance of dialogue between the Turkish government and peaceful protestors;
6. Reminds Turkey that in an inclusive, pluralistic democracy all citizens should feel represented and that the majority has a responsibility to include opposition and civil society in the decision making process; also reminds the opposition parties of their responsibility to do their part to create a democratic political culture with respect for diverse views and opinions;
7. Is concerned about the ongoing confrontation between the political parties and the lack of readiness on the part of Government and opposition to work towards consensus on key reforms; urges all political actors, the Government and the opposition to work together to enhance political plurality in state institutions and promote the modernisation and democratisation of the state and society;
8. Points to the crucial role of a system of checks and balances in the governance of a modern democratic state which should be reflected in the ongoing constitutional process, and which must be based on the principle of separation of powers with balance between the executive, legislative and judicial functions, on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – in particular freedom of expression and freedom of the press – and on a participatory political culture truly reflecting the plurality of a democratic society; believes that, in itself, the organization of peaceful and legitimate protests testifies to the vibrancy of Turkish civil society; reminds Turkey of the importance to continue efforts to further improve its democratic institutions, the rule of law and the observance of fundamental freedoms;
9. Stresses the need for continued intensive training of the police force and the judiciary in both their formal education and during their active careers on the implementation of the Istanbul

Protocol ,a set of international guidelines against torture and ill-treatment, and also on the primacy of individual rights and liberties;

10. Calls on local and national Turkish authorities to launch public consultations for all urban and regional development plans; recalls the necessity to balance economic growth with social, environmental, cultural and historical factors; asks that all relevant projects in Turkey be subjected to environmental impact assessment without exception;
11. Observes that the unprecedented wave of protests also reflects growing dissatisfaction in parts of the Turkish population concerning lifestyle regulation; reiterates that, in a democratic polity, governments must promote tolerance and ensure freedom of religion and belief for all citizens; calls on the government to respect the plurality and richness of the Turkish society and to also protect secular lifestyles;
12. Recalls that freedom of expression and media pluralism are at the heart of European values and that a truly democratic, free and pluralistic society requires true freedom of expression; recalls that freedom of expression is applicable not only to information or ideas that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive, but also, in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights, to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any section of the population;
13. Is concerned 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; calls on the Turkish Government to uphold the principles of press freedom; stresses that an independent press is crucial for a democratic society and points, in this context, to the essential role of the judiciary in protecting and enhancing press freedom, thereby guaranteeing public space for free and inclusive debate; is concerned about the high number of journalists in prison and high number of ongoing trials of journalists; calls for the release of social media activists;
14. Reiterates its concern about the fact that most media are owned by and concentrated in large conglomerates with a wide range of business interests; reiterates its call for the adoption of a new media law addressing, inter alia, the issues of independence, ownership and administrative control;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice- President of the Commission, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, the President of the European Court of Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Turkey.