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DRAFT REPORT

on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Türkiye
(2025/2023(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Nacho Sánchez Amor

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Türkiye (2025/2023(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 17 and 18 April 2024, 23 June 2022, 24 June 2021, and to all relevant previous Council and European Council conclusions,
- having regard to the statement of the members of the European Council of 25 March 2021 on Türkiye,
- having regard to the ‘EU-Turkey statements’ of 18 March 2016 and 29 November 2015,
- having regard to the ‘Turkey Negotiating Framework’ of 3 October 2005,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 October 2024 on EU enlargement policy (COM(2024)0690) and to the accompanying Türkiye 2024 Report (SWD(2024)0696),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 November 2023 on EU enlargement policy (COM(2023)0690) and to the accompanying Türkiye 2023 Report (SWD(2023)0696),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Council of 29 November 2023 on the state of play of EU-Türkiye political, economic and trade relations (JOIN(2023)0050),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 September 2023 entitled ‘Seventh Annual Report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey’ (COM(2023)0543),
- having regard to Article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which states that the contracting parties undertake to abide by the final judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in any case to which they are parties, and to the ensuing obligation of Türkiye to implement all judgments of the ECtHR,
- having regard to the relevant resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,
- having regard to the 2024 Freedom in the World report published by Freedom House,
- having regard to the 2024 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders,
- having regard to the January 2025 prison statistics report published by the Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CISST) and to the 2024 country profile for Türkiye

published by Prison Insider,

- having regard to recent reports of the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Türkiye, in particular those of 13 September 2023 on the 2022 Commission Report on Türkiye¹, of 7 June 2022 on the 2021 Commission Reports on Turkey² and of 26 November 2020 on escalating tensions in Varosha following the illegal actions by Türkiye and the urgent need for the resumption of talks³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 5 May 2022 on the case of Osman Kavala in Turkey⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 10 October 2024 on the case of Bülent Mumay in Türkiye⁵,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10-0000/2025),
- A. whereas Türkiye remains a candidate for EU accession, and EU membership remains the repeatedly declared political goal of the Turkish Government;
- B. whereas any accession country is expected to respect democratic values, the rule of law and human rights, and to abide by EU law;
- C. whereas the 2023 Commission progress report on Türkiye painted a picture of no progress, while its latest progress report of 2024 appears to present a somewhat more positive overall picture of progress on enlargement-related reforms in Türkiye; whereas this cannot, however, be applied to the core matters related to democracy and fundamental rights;
- D. whereas Türkiye is classified as ‘not free’ by Freedom House and has experienced one of the worst declines in the level of freedom in the world in the past 10 years;
- E. whereas in recent months, Türkiye has taken steps towards a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish question;
- F. whereas, alongside being a candidate for EU accession, Türkiye is a NATO ally and a key partner in the areas of security, trade, economic relations and migration;
- G. whereas Türkiye is the EU’s fifth largest trade partner, and the EU is Türkiye’s largest trading partner by far, as well as its primary source of foreign direct investment;
- H. whereas in the past year, the level of engagement between the EU and Türkiye has

¹ OJ C, C/2024/1760, 22.3.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/1760/oj>.

² OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 2.

³ OJ C 425, 20.10.2021, p. 143.

⁴ OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 112.

⁵ Texts adopted, P10_TA(2024)0018.

increased in terms of both technical and high-level meetings in sectoral areas;

- I. whereas Türkiye hosts the largest refugee population in the world, with around 3.4 million registered refugees, mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan;

Commitment to EU accession

1. Welcomes the Turkish Government's recent statements reiterating its commitment to EU membership as a strategic goal, amid a more constructive environment for revitalising EU-Türkiye relations;
2. Stresses, nonetheless, that EU membership is contingent on fulfilling the accession (Copenhagen) criteria, which require stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and the protection of minorities;
3. Regrets, in this regard, that the aforementioned positive statements have not been accompanied by any real action by the Turkish authorities to close the persistent vast gap between Türkiye and the EU on values and standards, particularly with regard to the fundamentals of the accession process;
4. Recognises the strategic and geopolitical value of Türkiye and its closer cooperation with the EU, to which the Turkish Government has made frequent reference, but stresses that this cannot in any way be a substitute for the necessary real progress which Türkiye, as a candidate country, needs to make with regard to meeting the fundamental requirements for accession;

The core of the accession process: democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

5. Considers that, in terms of human rights and the rule of law, Parliament's recent resolutions on the matter remain valid in light of the continued dire human rights situation and democratic backsliding in Türkiye over the last year;
6. Deeply regrets that, despite a reform strategy with nine judicial reform packages, the state of independence of the judiciary in Türkiye remains desolate following systematic government interference in and political instrumentalisation of the judicial system;
7. Remains deeply concerned by the continued and relentless crackdown by the Turkish authorities on any critical voices;
8. Calls on the Turkish authorities to put an end to the current serious restrictions on fundamental freedoms and the constant attacks on the fundamental rights of members of the opposition, human rights defenders, lawyers, trade unionists, members of minorities, journalists, academics and civil society activists, among others;
9. Continues to be appalled by the Turkish authorities', in particular the Turkish judiciary's, continuous disregard for and failure to apply landmark ECtHR rulings;
10. Strongly condemns the Turkish Government's decision to dismiss the democratically elected mayors of 10 municipalities and districts and to replace them with trustees appointed by the interior ministry; regards this long-standing practice of appointing

trustees as a blatant attack on the most basic principles of local democracy;

11. Deplores the continued targeting of political parties and members of the opposition, who continue to suffer increasing pressure;

Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations

12. Continues to commend Türkiye for hosting around 3.4 million refugees, including 3.1 million Syrians; further welcomes the fact that the EU has contributed close to EUR 10 billion to these efforts since 2011;
13. Welcomes the continued de-escalation and positive momentum in the Eastern Mediterranean and the recent positive climate of re-engagement between Türkiye and Greece, albeit that unresolved issues continue to affect bilateral relations; regrets the fact that Türkiye continues to dispute the sovereignty and sovereign rights of EU Member States;
14. Strongly reaffirms its view that the only sustainable solution to the Cyprus issue is a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement, including of its external aspects, within the UN framework, on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with a single international legal personality, single sovereignty, single citizenship and political equality;
15. Affirms its support for a free, secure and stable future for Syria and its citizens and the need for an inclusive and peaceful political transition that is Syrian-led and Syrian-owned; expresses its wish for a close cooperation between the EU and Türkiye to that end;
16. Notes that the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine continues to affect EU-Türkiye relations, as Türkiye attempts to maintain ties with both the West and Russia simultaneously, and that trade between Türkiye and Russia has risen sharply since the start of the war in Ukraine, making Türkiye Russia's second largest trading partner;
17. Regrets the further deterioration in the level of alignment on common foreign and security policy positions, including on sanctions and countering the circumvention of sanctions, which has fallen to a historically low rate of 5 %, the lowest rate for any accession country; urges Türkiye to cooperate closely with the EU's Sanctions Envoy;

Socio-economic and sustainability reforms

18. Welcomes Türkiye's return to a more conventional economic and monetary policy, while maintaining robust growth and a moderate budget deficit; regrets, however, that the cost of this is yet again being borne by citizens in the form of higher interest rates and an excessive cost of living;
19. Welcomes Türkiye's increased investment activity in the green energy sector and calls on Türkiye to continue improving the compatibility of its energy policy with the EU *acquis*; expresses concern about the lack of any significant progress on climate action; recalls that trade union freedom and social dialogue are crucial to the development and prosperity of a pluralistic society;

Strategic partnership(s) with Türkiye

20. Reiterates its firm conviction that, despite the currently frozen accession process, Türkiye is a country of strategic relevance, a key partner for the stability of the wider region and an important ally, including within NATO;
21. Reaffirms its support for an upgraded customs union with a broader, mutually beneficial scope; underlines the fact that for Parliament to give its consent at the end of the process, such a modernisation would need to be based on strong conditionality related to human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for international law and good neighbourly relations;
22. Notes with deep regret that no progress has been made by Türkiye towards meeting the required benchmarks for visa liberalisation; reiterates its willingness to start the visa liberalisation process as soon as the Turkish authorities fulfil the clearly established conditions;

The way forward for EU-Türkiye relations

23. Considers, in view of the above, that the Turkish Government has failed to take the necessary steps to address the existing fundamental democratic shortcomings within the country and therefore reiterates its view that Türkiye's EU accession process cannot be resumed in the current circumstances;
24. Urges the Turkish Government and the EU's institutions and Member States to continue working, beyond the currently frozen accession process, towards a closer, more dynamic and strategic partnership; insists on the need to begin a process of reflection to find a parallel and realistic framework for EU-Türkiye relations that encompasses the interests of all parties involved;
25. Continues to acknowledge and commend the democratic and pro-European aspirations of the majority of Turkish society; regards these aspirations as the main reason for keeping Türkiye's accession process alive;

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26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Council and the Commission; asks that this resolution be translated into Turkish and forwarded to the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Türkiye.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This is the first report in this legislature on the progress of Türkiye as a candidate country to the EU. Due to the fact that 2024 was an EU election year, this resolution encompasses Parliament's response to the Commission's enlargement reports of both 2023 and 2024.

The report evaluates the state of play and latest developments with regard to Türkiye's accession progress and also the broader relations between the EU and the country. Accession negotiations with Türkiye have remained at a standstill since 2018, in line with the European Council Conclusions. The report argues that, despite Turkish Government's recent statements on its commitment to the EU membership, the gap between Türkiye and the EU's values and normative framework -which are at the core of the accession process- has remained unaddressed during the last period with persisting laws and measures aimed at curtailing the rule of law and fundamental rights. The report calls on the Turkish authorities to put an end to those current serious restrictions and the constant attacks on the rights of members of the opposition, human rights defenders, lawyers, trade unionists, members of minorities, journalists, academics and civil society activists, among others.

As a conclusion, the report reiterates that Türkiye's EU accession process cannot be resumed in the current circumstances and urges the Turkish Government and the European Union's institutions and Member States to keep working, beyond the currently frozen accession process, towards a closer, more dynamic and strategic partnership.

ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that he received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the draft report, prior to the adoption thereof in committee:

Entity and/or person
European Commission - DG NEAR
European External Action Service (EEAS)
Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Türkiye
Ambassador of Spain to the Republic of Türkiye
Permanent Representation of Greece to the EU
Permanent Representation of Türkiye to the European Union
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye
Justice and Development Party (AK Party)
Republican People's Party (CHP)
Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party)
Trade Union DISK
Trade Union GENEL-İş
The German Marshall Fund (GMF)
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - Carnegie Europe
Global Relations Forum (GRF)
International Republican Institute (IRI)
Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD)
Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP)
Human Rights Association (İHD)
European Women's Lobby
KAOS GL
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
International Press Institute (IPI)
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
Human Rights Watch
Amnesty International
Constitutional law experts from Türkiye

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteur declares that he has submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do>), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.