



European Parliament Resolution of 2010 on Turkey's Progress Report 2009

On January 27, 2010, the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee adopted the draft resolution prepared by the Christian Democrat Parliamentarian Ria Oomen-Ruijten on Turkey's 2009 progress report, and the draft motion was finalized on February 10. Although, the Resolution does not have a legal binding effect on Turkey, it is an important document revealing the general attitude of the EP towards Turkey's membership.

The EP Resolution has criticized the AKP government for its failure of guaranteeing the rule of law, democracy, human rights and freedoms. The CHP agrees with these criticisms. However, it is very unfortunate to find out in that Resolution that the EP is of contradictory, even wrong opinions about Turkey, giving harm to the objectivity and the credibility of the Resolution. In the Turkey- EU Joint Parliamentary Commission (JPC) Meeting held on February 22-23, 2010 in Brussels, Mr. Onur Öymen, the vice president of the CHP and the vice co-president to JPC expressed the CHP's point of view regarding the EP resolution, while at the same time strongly stressed that the CHP not oppose to the Resolution as a whole.

The Assessments in the Resolution shared by the CHP

- ◆ The legislative changes are not sufficient for bringing Turkish democracy in line with those of the EU countries. Better implementation of the amended law in the areas of women's rights, non-discrimination, freedom of religion, thought and belief, freedom of speech and expression, zero tolerance of torture and the fight against corruption are also essential.
- ◆ A union law should be enacted as soon as possible to ensure the labor rights and social state.
- ◆ The government fails to provide sufficient guarantee for freedom of expression. The continued restrictions on press freedom, particularly on reporting on the investigations into the Ergenekon network by imposing of an unprecedented fine on a media group as well as frequent website bans are startling.
- ◆ The Government should devote further attention to eradicating corruption, to increase the transparency of funding of political parties and election campaigns and to promote openness of administration at all levels. The CHP agrees on this assessment without any reservation and draws attention to the fact that the politics manipulated by money is very much detrimental to democracy.

The disagreements on the Resolution

- ◆ The CHP regrets that the EU has devised the reports related to Turkey through a very limited and one- way news channels, that is, in turn, detrimental to the objectivity and constructive nature of these reports.
- ◆ The Remarks in the Resolution regarding Cyprus seem to be exclusively made based on the arguments of the Greek Cypriots. It is not fair, on the one hand, to be asked from Turkey to make



bilateral concession, while the negotiations on the Island are continuing, on the other hand. The current wording of the Resolution may satisfy the Greek Cypriots, while having no use of the settlement the dispute on the Island and hurting the positive image of the EU, the EP in particular, in Turkey.

- ◆ Similarly, it is stated in the Resolution that Turkey should ratify, without any preconditions, the protocols concluded between Turkey and Armenia. In other words, Turkey is asked for opening its borders with Armenia, irrespective of Armenia to withdraw its forces from the Azerbaijan lands occupied by Armenia. The latter is the prerequisite for Turkey to ratify the signed protocols; however, not even a single word of these preconditions is made in the Resolution.
- ◆ It is said in the Resolution that the structure and the composition of the HCJP (High Council of Judges and Prosecutors) must be revised. The EP used to refer in its resolutions/reports very often to the independence of the judiciary. In this Resolution, the EP, do, instead, refer to such terms as impartiality, objectivity, transparency and representation, which the CHP has found it to be unfortunate.
- ◆ The military intervention in Turkish politics and foreign policy is criticized in the Resolution. The CHP demands that the allegations on the military intervention be substantiated by the solid and concrete proofs, which would otherwise be perceived as, excessive, groundless and being far from persuasive. Mr Öymen pointed out that he has not witnessed over the past eight year of his term in the Parliament any sort of intervention of the military in Turkish politics and foreign policy issues including the rejection of the 2003 government motion bill on the deployment of the American combat troops in Turkey.
- ◆ As for the Greek Orthodox Halki seminary, it is necessary to point out once again that according to our constitution, no private religious and military high school can be established. In order to meet the clergy needs of the Orthodox Community, the Halki seminary can be reopened and attached to the Faculty of Theology attached to the University of Istanbul.

How does the New Turkish Foreign Policy Look From Europe?

Two Meetings in Brussels :
Suspicious Raised Regarding the Turkey's New
Foreign Policy

By Kader Sevinç, CHP EU Representative
Strategic Thinking Review, October, 2009

Undoubtedly, the political and economic developments in the EU member states are immediately echoed in Brussels. Domestic political discussions in the European countries regarding Turkey's accession to the EU have recently gained impetus, naturally depending on the ups-and-

downs of political and social transformation in Turkey.

Recently, some commentators have argued that Turkey is turning away from the West to the East. During his visit to Brussels in January 2009, after a four-year break, Prime Minister Erdoğan made the audience disappointed by his speech. He centered his speech on Hamas and used a very emotional language on the Israel-Philistine conflict, instead of demonstrating Turkey's institutional standpoint. This gave the impression to some that Turkey is part of the problem but not part of the solution.