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P8_TA(2017)0306

2016 Report on Turkey

European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2017 on the 2016 Commission Report on Turkey (2016/2308(INI))

(2018/C 334/14)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular those of 24 November 2016 on EU-Turkey relations⁽¹⁾, and 27 October 2016 on the situation of journalists in Turkey⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 November 2014 on Turkish actions creating tensions in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus⁽³⁾ and its resolution of 15 April 2015 on the centenary of the Armenian genocide⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 9 November 2016 to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on EU Enlargement Policy (COM(2016)0715), and to the Turkey 2016 Report (SWD(2016)0366),
- having regard to the Presidency conclusions of 13 December 2016, and to previous relevant Council and European Council conclusions,
- having regard to the Negotiating Framework for Turkey, and in particular its paragraph 5 of the principles governing the negotiations, 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⁽⁵⁾ ('the Accession Partnership'), and to the previous Council Decisions of 2001, 2003 and 2006 on the Accession Partnership,
- having regard to the joint statement following the EU-Turkey Summit of 29 November 2015, and the EU-Turkey Action Plan,
- having regard to the declaration issued by the European Community and its Member States on 21 September 2005, including the provision that the recognition of all Member States is a necessary component of the negotiations, and the need for Turkey to fully and effectively implement the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement in relation to all Member States by removing all obstacles to the free movement of goods without prejudice and discrimination,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which states that the contracting parties undertake to abide by and implement the final judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in any case to which they are parties,
- having regard to the opinions of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, in particular those of 10-11 March 2017 on the amendments to the Constitution to be submitted to a national referendum, on the measures provided in the recent Emergency Decree Laws with respect to freedom of the media and on the duties, competences and functioning of the criminal peace judgeships, of 9-10 December 2016 on Emergency Decree Laws Nos 667-676 adopted following the failed coup of 15 July 2016, and of 14-15 October 2016 on the suspension of the second paragraph of Article 83 of the Constitution (parliamentary inviolability),

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0450.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0423.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 285, 5.8.2016, p. 11.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 328, 6.9.2016, p. 2.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 51, 26.2.2008, p. 4.

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- having regard to the statement by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights of 26 July 2016 on measures taken under the state of emergency in Turkey,
- having regard to the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 2 March 2017 to the European Parliament and the Council on the First Annual Report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (COM(2017)0130) and to the Commission's Fifth Report of 2 March 2017 to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (COM(2017)0204),
- having regard to the fact that Turkey has committed itself to the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria, adequate and effective reforms, good neighbourly relations and progressive alignment with the EU, and having regard to the fact that these efforts should have been viewed as an opportunity for Turkey to strengthen its institutions and continue its process of democratisation and modernisation,
- having regard to the Commission recommendation of 21 December 2016 for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations with Turkey on an Agreement on the extension of the scope of the bilateral preferential trade relationship and on the modernisation of the Customs Union,
- having regard to the fact that respect for the rule of law, including, in particular, the separation of powers, democracy, freedom of expression and media, human rights, the rights of minorities and religious freedom, freedom of association and peaceful protest, are at the core of the negotiation process, according to the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the European Union,
- having regard to the fact that Turkey has been assessed as occupying 155th place in the World Press Freedom Index, published on 26 April 2017, ranked lower than ever before, and as one of the countries where journalists suffered the most threats, physical attacks, and judicial harassment, including detention and prison sentences,
- having regard to the fact that in November 2016 Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to initiate a temporary freeze on the ongoing accession negotiations with Turkey and committed to reviewing its position once the disproportionate measures under the state of emergency in Turkey have been lifted, with the review being based on whether the rule of law and respect for human rights have been restored throughout the country,
- having regard to the crisis in Syria, the efforts towards a ceasefire and a peaceful settlement, and Turkey's obligations to enhance stability and promote good neighbourly relations through intensive efforts in order to resolve outstanding bilateral issues, disputes and conflicts with the neighbouring countries over land and maritime borders and airspace, in accordance with international agreements, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the UN Charter,
- having regard to Russian involvement in Syria, including support of the Syrian military's use of chemical weapons, which further destabilises the country and increases the number of refugees seeking protection in Turkey and the EU,
- having regard to Turkey's security situation, which has deteriorated both internally and externally, and to the terrorist attacks carried out in the country,
- having regard to the fact that Turkey hosts the largest refugee population in the world, with almost 3 million registered refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),
- having regard to the economic and financial situation in Turkey, which is due partly to the recent wave of attacks and to political instability, but also to deeper underlying problems with the economy,

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- having regard to the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ‘The human rights situation in South-East Turkey’, of February 2017,
- having regard to the fact that Turkey has been admirably hospitable to the large number of refugees living in the country,
- having regard to the ‘Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions’ of the International Referendum Observation Mission, issued on 17 April 2017,
- having regard to Resolution 2156 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) entitled ‘The functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey’, of 25 April 2017, resulting in the reopening of the monitoring procedure,
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A8-0234/2017),

A. whereas millions of Turks and people of Turkish extraction have been living in the Member States and contributing to their prosperity for decades;

Introduction

1. Underlines that 2016 was a difficult year for Turkey’s population as a result of the continuing war in Syria, the high numbers of refugees, the conflict in the south-east, a string of heinous terror attacks, and a violent coup attempt in which 248 people were killed; reiterates its strong condemnation of the coup attempt of 15 July 2016 and expresses its solidarity with the people of Turkey; recognises the right and the responsibility of the Turkish government to take action in bringing the perpetrators to justice while guaranteeing respect for the rule of law and the right to a fair trial;

2. Underlines, however, that measures taken under the state of emergency have large-scale, disproportionate and long-lasting negative effects on a large number of citizens as well as on the protection of fundamental freedoms in the country; condemns the collective dismissal of civil servants and police officers, the mass liquidation of media outlets, the arrests of journalists, academics, judges, human rights defenders, elected and unelected officials, members of the security services and ordinary citizens, and the confiscation of their property, assets and passports, the closure of many schools and universities, and the travel ban imposed on thousands of Turkish citizens, on the basis of emergency decree laws without individualised decisions, and without the possibility of timely judicial review; is concerned about the confiscation, and in some cases nationalisation, of Turkish private companies and enterprises; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners held without proof of individual involvement in committing a crime; regrets, in this context, that the parliament’s legislative prerogatives have been seriously undermined;

3. Stresses the strategic importance of good EU-Turkey relations and the high added value of cooperation in coping with the challenges both sides face; recognises that both Turkey and the EU have gone through their own internal transformation processes since the accession negotiations were opened in 2004; regrets that the accession instruments have not been used to the fullest extent, and that there has been a regression in the areas of the rule of law and human rights, which are at the heart of the Copenhagen criteria, and that, over the years, public support for Turkey’s full integration into the EU has weakened on both sides; remains committed to cooperating and maintaining a constructive and open dialogue with the Turkish Government, in order to address common challenges and shared priorities, such as regional stability, the situation in Syria, migration and security;

4. Takes note of the outcome of the referendum that took place on 16 April 2017, held under the state of emergency and in circumstances that prevented a fair campaign and an informed choice as the two sides of the campaign were not on an equal footing in terms of opportunities and since the rights of the opponents to the constitutional reform were violated; is seriously concerned by the allegations of irregularities and widespread electoral fraud identified in the findings of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODHIR) Observation Mission, issued on 17 April 2017, raising serious doubts about the validity and legitimacy of the outcome; supports an independent inquiry into all claims in relation to irregularities listed in the OSCE/ODHIR statement; notes the decision of PACE to reopen the monitoring process for Turkey;

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5. Points out that Turkey must abide by its commitments as a member of the Council of Europe; calls on Turkey to remain in compliance with its Council of Europe commitments and to implement constitutional and judicial changes and reforms in cooperation with, and according to the criteria of, the Venice Commission;

6. Strongly condemns the repeatedly declared support for the re-introduction of the death penalty by the Turkish President and various other politicians; recalls that the unequivocal rejection of the death penalty is an essential requirement for EU membership and underlines that a reintroduction of the death penalty would violate Turkey's international commitments, would call into question Turkey's membership of the Council of Europe and lead to an immediate end of EU accession talks and pre-accession support; underlines that, if a referendum on the reintroduction of the death penalty is organised in Turkey, the Member States have the right to refuse to allow this vote to be facilitated in their respective countries;

7. Recalls its position from November 2016 to freeze the accession process with Turkey;

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in accordance with the Negotiating Framework, to formally suspend the accession negotiations with Turkey without delay if the constitutional reform package is implemented unchanged; underlines, taking into account the remarks of the Venice Commission on the constitutional reform, that the proposed constitutional amendments do not respect the fundamental principles of the separation of powers, do not provide for sufficient checks and balances and are not in line with the Copenhagen criteria; invites the Commission, the Member States and Turkey to hold an open and honest discussion about the areas of mutual interest for which intensified cooperation would be possible; underlines that any political engagement between the EU and Turkey should be built on conditionality provisions concerning respect for democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights;

Human rights and fundamental freedoms

9. Notes with regret that the disproportionate measures undertaken following the declaration of the state of emergency have targeted, through detention, dismissals, arrests and property confiscation, not only thousands of people who are alleged members/supporters of the Gülen movement, but also dissenters in general and political parties of the opposition in particular; is still awaiting compelling evidence as regards the perpetrators of the coup attempt; strongly condemns the imprisonment of 11 MPs belonging to the People's Democratic Party (HDP), including its co-chairs Ms Figen Yükkökçü and Mr Selahattin Demirtaş, of one MP from the Republican People's Party (CHP), and of 85 Kurdish municipal mayors; urges the Turkish Government to lift the state of emergency immediately; warns against the abuse of anti-terror measures to legitimise the clampdown on human rights; calls on the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) to immediately admit the first exemplary cases and to bring the first proceedings to a close as soon as possible, since no effective national remedies would appear to exist;

10. Asks the Turkish authorities to carry out a thorough investigation into allegations of the serious ill-treatment of prisoners, as reported by several human rights organisations and calls for the full accountability and punishment of those guilty of human rights violations; is deeply concerned about detention conditions; calls for the immediate publication of the latest reports of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of the Council of Europe and urges the Turkish authorities to allow national and international observers to monitor detention facilities;

11. Calls on the Turkish Government to offer to all persons subject to restrictive measures appropriate and effective remedies and judicial review in line with the rule of law; stresses that the presumption of innocence is a fundamental principle in any constitutional state; notes that, under the ongoing state of emergency, arrested citizens have no right to legal aid during the first five days of their detention and laments the severe restrictions placed on access to lawyers by detainees; underlines that since July 2016 more than 100 000 legal complaints have been filed with the Turkish Constitutional Court, which declared itself not competent on matters falling under the emergency decree; calls on Turkey to revise as a matter of urgency the 'Commission of Inquiry for State of Emergency Practices' in such a way that it becomes a robust, independent and fully mandated commission capable of giving individual treatment to all cases, of processing effectively the enormous number of applications it will receive and of ensuring that the judicial review is not unduly delayed;

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12. Condemns strongly the serious backsliding and violations of freedom of expression and the serious infringements of media freedom, including the disproportionate bannings of media sites and social media; notes with concern the closure of around 170 media outlets — including almost all Kurdish-language outlets — and the jailing of more than 150 journalists; stresses that Turkey's decision to block access to Wikipedia constitutes a grave attack on the freedom of information; notes the continuous deterioration of Turkey's ranking in the press freedom index compiled by Reporters without Borders, which now places Turkey as number 155 out of 180 countries; recalls that a free and pluralistic press, including a free and open internet, is an essential component of any democracy and urges the Turkish government to release all unlawfully arrested journalists immediately; calls on the Turkish government to allow former MEP and President of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, Mr Joost Lagendijk, to return to his family in Turkey;

13. Expresses its serious concern at the continuously deteriorating situation in south-east Turkey, especially in the areas where curfews were imposed, excessive force was used and collective punishment applied to all inhabitants, and where some 2 000 people were reportedly killed in the context of security operations and an estimated half a million people became displaced in the period from July 2015 to December 2016; notes that local prosecutors have consistently refused to open investigations into the reported killings and that access to the area by independent observers has been denied; recalls that the Turkish government has a responsibility to protect all of its citizens, irrespective of their cultural or religious origins and beliefs; deplores the widespread practice of expropriation, including of properties belonging to the municipalities and also of church properties, which is a violation of the rights of religious minorities; is convinced that only a fair political settlement of the Kurdish question can bring sustainable stability and prosperity, both to the area and to Turkey as a whole, and therefore calls on both sides to return to the negotiating table; notes that a series of laws, including Law No 6722 on the legal protection of security forces participating in the fight against terrorist organisations adopted in 2016, have created an atmosphere of 'systematic impunity' for the security forces;

14. Condemns the decision of the Turkish Parliament to waive the immunity of a large number of MPs unconstitutionally, including 55 out of 59 HDP parliamentarians, paving the way for the arrests of opposition politicians and seriously damaging the Parliament's image as a democratic institution; underlines that the Turkish Grand National Assembly should be the central institution in Turkish democracy, and represent all citizens on equal terms; regrets the high electoral threshold;

15. Is concerned that judges and prosecutors continue to come under strong political pressure and that as many as 4 000, which is close to one fourth of all judges and prosecutors, have been dismissed or arrested and in some cases their properties have been confiscated; calls on Turkey to restore and implement all legal guarantees to ensure full respect for the independence of the judiciary, including by amending the law on the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) in order to reduce the executive's influence within that Council; is particularly concerned that the institution of 'criminal judges of peace', established in June 2014 by the government in office, appears to have been transformed into an instrument of harassment to stifle opposition, as well as controlling the information available to the general public;

16. Is seriously concerned about the lack of respect for the freedom of religion, about discrimination against religious minorities, including Christians and Alevis, and violence on religious grounds, including verbal and physical attacks, stigmatisation and social pressure at schools, and problems in relation to legally establishing a place of worship; calls on the Turkish authorities to promote positive and effective reforms in the area of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, by enabling religious communities to obtain legal personality, allowing charitable foundations to elect their governing bodies, eliminating all restrictions on the training, appointment and succession of the clergy, complying with the relevant judgements of the ECtHR and the recommendations of the Venice Commission and by eliminating all forms of discrimination or barriers based on religion; calls on Turkey to respect the distinct character and importance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to recognise its legal personality; reiterates the need to allow the reopening of the Halki Seminary and lift all obstacles to its proper functioning; is concerned about the recent seizure of the churches in the region of Diyarbakir; urges the government to return them to their rightful owners; urges the Turkish authorities to combat seriously all manifestations of anti-Semitism in society;

17. Calls on Turkey to protect the rights of the most vulnerable groups and of persons belonging to minorities; regrets that the LGBTI marches in Ankara and Istanbul were banned for the third consecutive year and faced suppression and police violence; is seriously concerned about gender-based violence, discrimination, hate speech against minorities, hate crime, and violations of the human rights of LGBTI persons; calls on Turkey to take adequate measures to prevent and

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punish hate speech or crimes targeting minorities; calls on Turkey to harmonise its domestic legislation with the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, which it ratified in 2014; welcomes the government's national strategy and action plan for Roma and calls on the Turkish government to start implementing the strategy and to set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism; encourages the authorities to address key obstacles to the social inclusion of Roma; calls on Turkey to provide full equality for all citizens and to address the problems faced by members of minorities, in particular with regard to education and property rights; notes that, in compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, minorities should also have the right to receive education in their native language in public schools; recalls the importance of implementing the resolution by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Imbros and Tenedos and calls on Turkey to assist the repatriation of minority families who wish to return to the islands; welcomes the opening of the Greek-minority school on the island of Imbros, which constitutes a positive step;

18. Calls on the Turkish government to respect and fully implement the legal obligations which it has entered into concerning the protection of cultural heritage, and, in particular, to draw up in good faith an integrated inventory of Greek, Armenian, Assyrian and other cultural heritage that was destroyed or ruined in the course of the last century; calls on Turkey to ratify the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; calls on Turkey to cooperate with the relevant international organisations, especially the Council of Europe, in preventing and combating illicit trafficking and the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage;

19. Welcomes moves by individual Member States, which have speeded up asylum procedures for Turkish citizens persecuted under the emergency decrees;

EU-Turkey relations

20. Calls for the deepening of EU-Turkey relations in key areas of joint interest, such as counter-terrorism, migration, energy, the economy and trade, and reiterates that dialogue and cooperation should be maintained and encouraged; believes that EU-Turkey cooperation in these areas represents an investment in the stability and prosperity of both Turkey and the EU, provided it is based on respect by all sides of their commitments on fundamental rights and basic freedoms; believes that cooperation among members of civil society is of key importance and urges that these contacts be intensified;

21. Calls on Turkey to further align its foreign policy with that of the EU; calls for closer cooperation and coordination of foreign policy challenges between the EU and Turkey; is of the opinion that the Turkish Foreign Minister should be invited to attend Foreign Affairs Council meetings on a case-by-case basis whenever relevant; recommends that the Council invite the Turkish government to a summit to discuss EU-Turkey relations;

22. Believes that strengthening trade relations could bring concrete benefits to citizens in Turkey and the EU, and therefore, in the light of the current failings of the Customs Union, supports the Commission's proposal to start negotiations on the upgrading of the Customs Union; reiterates that the EU is Turkey's main trading partner and that two thirds of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Turkey comes from EU Member States; underlines, furthermore, the economic importance of Turkey as a growth market for the EU; considers the involvement of social partners in negotiations as crucial; calls on the Commission to include a clause on human rights and fundamental freedoms in the upgraded Customs Union between Turkey and the EU, making human rights and fundamental freedoms a key conditionality; recalls that the Customs Union can only achieve its full potential when Turkey fully implements the Additional Protocol vis-à-vis all Member States; notes the Commission's conclusion that further trade integration with the EU would be stimulated by Turkey eliminating the impediments to the functioning of the Customs Union;

23. Notes that visa liberalisation is of great importance for Turkish citizens, particularly for business people and for people of Turkish origin in the EU, and will enhance people-to-people contacts; encourages the Turkish Government to comply fully with the final outstanding criteria, as identified in the visa liberalisation roadmap; underlines that the revision of its anti-terrorism legislation is a key condition to ensuring fundamental rights and freedoms and that visa liberalisation will only be possible once all the criteria have been met;

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24. Stresses the importance of the fight against corruption and recalls the Commission's findings that corruption remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be a serious problem; is concerned that the track record of investigation, prosecution and conviction in high-level corruption cases remains poor;

25. Calls on the Commission to take into account the latest developments in Turkey when conducting the mid-term review of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds in 2017, and to suspend the pre-accession funds if accession negotiations are suspended; calls on the Commission, in case that scenario ensues, to use those funds to support Turkish civil society and refugees in Turkey directly, and to invest more in people-to-people exchange programmes, such as Erasmus+ for students, academics and journalists;

26. Condemns in the strongest terms all terrorist attacks carried out in Turkey, and stands firmly by Turkey's population in our joint fight against terrorism; notes the bilateral relations between EU Member States and Turkey in the field of anti-terrorism cooperation on 'foreign fighters'; underlines that strong cooperation between Europol and Turkish law enforcement agencies is key to combat terrorism effectively; reiterates its condemnation of the return to violence by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been on the EU's list of terrorist organisations since 2002 and urges it to lay down its arms and to use peaceful and legal means to voice its expectations; underlines that a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question is also necessary for Turkey's democratic future, and will be reached only by involving all parties and democratic forces concerned; calls for a resumption of negotiations with a view to achieving a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the Kurdish issue; invites the Member States to enforce legislation banning the use of signs and symbols of organisations which are on the EU's list of terrorist organisations;

27. Deplores the decision of the Turkish Government to prevent German MPs from visiting the German Federal Armed Forces in Incirlik, which means that they will now be relocated to a non-NATO country, representing a major setback for effective cooperation between NATO allies in the fight against terrorism;

28. Commends the engagement by the Turkish Government and local NGOs and the hospitality shown by the population in hosting around 3 million refugees; notes the EU-Turkey statement on migration, and urges the Member States to initiate the voluntary resettlement scheme for the most vulnerable refugees in Turkey; calls on the Commission to ensure long-term investment in both refugees and their host communities in Turkey as well as the adequate spending of the funds; encourages the Turkish Government to grant work permits and access to healthcare to all Syrian refugees, and to provide access to education for Syrian children; calls on Ankara and the EU to keep up their coordinated patrolling efforts in the Aegean, to step up efforts to combat migrant smuggling and to implement fully and effectively the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement and the bilateral readmission agreements signed with Bulgaria and Greece;

29. Condemns strongly the statements made by President Erdogan accusing some EU leaders of 'Nazi practices' and their citizens of being 'Nazis'; points out that the continuation of such unwarranted statements undermines Turkey's credibility as a political partner and that exporting its internal conflicts poses a threat to peaceful co-existence within society in those Member States with a substantial community of Turkish origin; underlines that the Turkish government must refrain from systematic efforts to mobilise the Turkish diaspora in the Member States for its own purposes; notes with concern the reports of alleged pressure on members of the Turkish diaspora living in the Member States, and condemns the Turkish authorities' surveillance of citizens with dual nationality living abroad; is concerned at the revocation of a large number of passports, leaving people stateless in violation of the 1954 UN Convention relating to the status of stateless persons and the 1961 UN Convention on the reduction of statelessness, and at the reported refusal of service by Turkish consulates to a number of its citizens;

30. Reiterates the importance of good neighbourly relations; calls on Turkey, in this connection, to step up efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral issues, including unresolved legal obligations and unsettled disputes with its immediate neighbours over land and maritime borders and airspace, in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter and with international law; calls on the Turkish Government to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); urges the Turkish Government to end the repeated violations of Greek airspace and territorial waters, and to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all of its neighbours; expresses its regret that the *casus belli* threat issued by the Turkish Grand National Assembly against Greece has not yet been withdrawn;

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31. Calls on Turkey and Armenia to work on the normalisation of their relations; stresses that the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border could lead to improved relations, with particular reference to cross-border cooperation and economic integration;

32. Calls on the Turkish Government to halt its plans for the construction of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant; points out that the envisaged site is located in a region prone to severe earthquakes, hence posing a major threat not only to Turkey, but also to the Mediterranean region; requests, accordingly, that the Turkish Government join the Espoo Convention, which commits its parties to notifying and consulting each other on major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries; asks, to this end, the Turkish Government to involve, or at least consult, the governments of its neighbouring countries, such as Greece and Cyprus, in relation to any further developments in the Akkuyu venture;

33. Underlines that a settlement of the Cyprus problem would have a positive impact on the entire region, while first and foremost benefiting both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots; welcomes the joint declaration of 11 February 2014 as a basis for a settlement and praises the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities for having achieved major progress in the reunification talks; welcomes the agreement by the two leaders on a series of confidence-building measures and urges that all agreed measures be implemented; welcomes the exchange of preferred maps, thus far unprecedented, and the first conference on Cyprus held at Geneva with the guarantor powers and with the participation of the EU, and supports its continuation with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement on the chapter on security and guarantees; supports a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement based on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation, a single international legal personality, single sovereignty and single citizenship with political equality between the two communities, in line with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, international law, the EU *acquis*, and on the basis of respect for the principles on which the Union is founded; welcomes the intensified engagement by the parties to achieve the settlement of the Cyprus problem; expects Turkey to show active support for a rapid and successful conclusion to the negotiations, and reiterates that Turkey's commitment and contribution to a comprehensive settlement remains crucial; calls on all parties concerned to support the negotiation process actively, to contribute to a positive outcome, and to make use of the current window of opportunity; urges the Commission to use all its resources to support fully the successful conclusion of the reunification process;

34. Reiterates its call on Turkey to begin withdrawing its troops from Cyprus, to transfer the sealed-off area of Famagusta to the UN, in accordance with UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 550 (of 1984), and to refrain from actions altering the demographic balance on the island through its policy of illegal settlements; notes that the implementation of the EU *acquis* in the future Turkish Cypriot constituent state upon the entry into force of the settlement agreement must have already been well prepared for; acknowledges, in this regard, the continuation of the work of the bi-communal ad hoc committee on EU preparation; commits to stepping up its efforts to engage with the Turkish Cypriot community in its preparation to fully integrate into the EU, and calls on the Commission to do the same; praises the important work of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP, which deals with both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot missing persons), and commends the fact that improved access to relevant sites, including military areas, has been granted; calls on Turkey to assist the CMP by providing information from its military archives; calls for special consideration to be given to the work done by the CMP and welcomes, in this respect, the appointment of a European Parliament Standing Rapporteur on missing persons;

35. Recognises the right of the Republic of Cyprus to enter into bilateral agreements concerning its exclusive economic zone; reiterates its call on Turkey to respect fully the sovereign rights of all Member States, including those related to prospecting for and the exploitation of natural resources in accordance with the EU *acquis* and international law; urges Turkey to engage in the peaceful settlement of disputes, and to refrain from any threat or action which might have negative effects on good neighbourly relations;

36. Firmly believes that only a credible political solution will ensure the stability of Syria and enable the decisive defeat of ISIS/Daesh and other UN-designated terrorist groups in Syria; reaffirms the primacy of the UN-led Geneva process; recognises the efforts made in the Astana meetings to re-establish a full cessation of hostilities as well as the establishment of the trilateral mechanism to monitor and ensure full compliance with the ceasefire; urges all guarantors, including Turkey, to live up to their commitments to ensure the full implementation of the ceasefire and to make progress in securing full,

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unhindered, country-wide humanitarian access, the lifting of sieges and the release of all arbitrarily detained persons, especially women and children, in line with UNSC Resolution 2268; reiterates its call on Turkey to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all of its neighbours;

37. Calls for the translation of this resolution into Turkish;

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38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy, and the Member States.
