



TEXTS ADOPTED

Provisional edition

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2014 Progress Report on Turkey

European Parliament resolution of 10 June 2015 on the 2014 Commission Progress Report on Turkey (2014/2953(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 2014 Commission Progress Report on Turkey (SWD(2014)0307),
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 8 October 2014 entitled ‘Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2014-15’ (COM(2014)0700),
- having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular those of 10 February 2010 on Turkey’s progress report 2009¹, 9 March 2011 on Turkey’s 2010 progress report², 29 March 2012 on the 2011 Progress Report on Turkey³, 18 April 2013 on the 2012 Progress Report on Turkey⁴, 13 June 2013 on the situation in Turkey⁵, 12 March 2014 on the 2013 progress report on Turkey⁶, 13 November 2014 on Turkish actions creating tensions in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus⁷ and 15 January 2015 on freedom of expression in Turkey⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 April 2015 on the centenary of the Armenian Genocide⁹,
- 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

¹ OJ C 341 E, 16.12.2010, p. 59.

² OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 98.

³ OJ C 257 E, 6.9.2013, p. 38.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0184.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0277.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0235.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0052.

⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0014.

⁹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0094.

- Turkey¹ ('the Accession Partnership'), and to the previous Council decisions of 2001, 2003 and 2006 on the Accession Partnership,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 14 December 2010, 5 December 2011, 11 December 2012, 25 June 2013, 24 October 2014 and 16 December 2014,
 - 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 judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in any case to which they are parties,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to the World Bank report of 28 March 2014 entitled 'Evaluation of the EU-Turkey Customs Union',
 - having regard to the Commission report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap (COM(2014)0646),
 - having regard to the work of Kati Piri as the standing rapporteur on Turkey of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas accession negotiations with Turkey were opened on 3 October 2005 and the opening of such negotiations is the starting point for a long-lasting and open-ended process based on fair and rigorous conditionality and a commitment to reform;
 - B. whereas the EU remains committed to further enlargement as a key policy to promote peace, democracy, security and prosperity in Europe; whereas each candidate country will be judged on its own merits and, on this basis, the Commission does not foresee any new accession to the EU in this legislative term;
 - C. whereas Turkey has committed itself to the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria, adequate and effective reforms, good neighbourly relations and progressive alignment with the EU; whereas these efforts should be viewed as an opportunity for Turkey to strengthen its institutions and continue its process of democratisation and modernisation;
 - D. whereas, according to the Freedom House ranking of press and media freedoms, Turkey is now ranked as not having a free press and as having only partial internet freedom;
 - E. whereas Reporters Without Borders classified Turkey in 2014 as one of the countries where journalists suffered the most threats and physical attacks;
 - F. whereas the EU should remain the benchmark for reforms in Turkey;
 - G. whereas full compliance with the Copenhagen criteria and the EU's integration capacity, in accordance with the conclusions of the December 2006 European Council meeting, remains the basis for accession to the EU;
 - H. whereas the rule of law in the negotiation process – including, in particular, the separation

¹ OJ L 51, 26.2.2008, p. 4.

of powers, the fight against corruption and organised crime, freedom of assembly and peaceful protest, freedom of expression and the media, the rights of women, freedom of religion, the rights of persons belonging to (national) minorities, and tackling discrimination against vulnerable groups such as the Roma and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons – is of central importance;

- I. whereas in its communication entitled ‘Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2014-15’ the Commission concluded that Turkey is a strategic partner for the EU, in economic and energy security terms, and that cooperation on foreign policy issues with Turkey is crucial; whereas in the same communication, the Commission expressed its concerns regarding the protection of fundamental rights, the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law, and the right to assembly and freedom of expression;
- J. whereas, for the ninth consecutive year, Turkey has still not implemented the provisions stemming from the EC-Turkey Association Agreement and the Additional Protocol thereto; whereas this refusal continues to have a profound negative effect on the negotiation process;
- K. whereas, with a view to enhancing stability and promoting good neighbourly relations, Turkey needs to step up efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral issues, including unsettled legal obligations and 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;
- L. whereas the Turkish authorities did not agree to the reopening of the Orthodox seminary on the island of Heybeliada;

The state of play in EU-Turkey relations

- 1. Welcomes the Commission’s 2014 progress report on Turkey, and shares its conclusion that Turkey is a key strategic partner for the EU and that active and credible negotiations would provide a suitable framework for exploiting the full potential of EU-Turkey relations; stresses that the reform process in the context of negotiations with the EU could present a significant opportunity for Turkey to develop a strong pluralistic democratic system, with solid institutions, for the benefit of all citizens of Turkey, and for closer relations with the EU; asks the Commission to make a reassessment of the way in which negotiations have been conducted so far and how EU-Turkey relations and cooperation could be improved and intensified;
- 2. Underlines that an effective and functioning relationship, based on dialogue, closer cooperation, mutual commitment and negotiations between the EU and Turkey – considering their geographical proximity, their historical links, the large Turkish community living in the EU, the close economic ties and common strategic interests – is to the benefit of both parties; calls on Turkey to place the reform process at the centre of its domestic policy choices; takes the view that the EU should seize this opportunity to become the main anchor of the process of further democratisation in Turkey by promoting universal values and European regulatory standards as benchmarks for the reform process, and by supporting Turkey in developing solid, democratic institutions and effective legislation based on the respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law and representing and defending the interests of all sectors of Turkey’s society;

3. Encourages the Government of Turkey to accelerate the pace of negotiations and urges it to commit itself unequivocally to respecting democratic values and principles, which are at the heart of the EU; supports the new Commission in its efforts to step up engagement with Turkey on the basis of shared interests and common challenges; notes the opening of negotiations on Chapter 22 (Regional Policy) in November 2013;
4. Welcomes the election of the most inclusive and representative parliament in Turkish modern history, reflecting the country's diversity; commends the resilience of Turkish democracy and the democratic spirit of its citizens, as proven by the very high voter turnout and the impressive participation of civil society volunteers on election day; calls on all political parties to work towards the establishment of a stable and inclusive government with the aim of reinvigorating Turkey's democratisation process and reform dialogue with the EU;
5. Underlines the importance of investing more efforts in people-to-people contacts in order to create a favourable environment of cooperation between Turkey and the EU; stresses, therefore, that in the interest of closer links between the EU and Turkey concrete progress should be made on visa liberalisation, based on the fulfilment of the requirements set out in the roadmap towards a visa-free regime with Turkey; stresses that in the interim period, the EU should make it easier for business people to obtain visas, and that student and academic exchange programmes and access opportunities for civil society should be actively promoted; believes that enhanced access opportunities to the EU would provide further support to the reform process in Turkey;

Rule of law and democracy

6. Notes that Turkey has continued to implement the reforms from previous years; welcomes, in this regard, the changes to the legal framework regarding political parties and election campaigns, which now permits political campaigning in languages other than Turkish, legalises party co-chairmanship and eases the rules governing the local organisation of political parties; reiterates the importance of lowering the 10 % electoral threshold, which would give all components of Turkey's society opportunities for political participation;
7. Stresses that a new constitution based on provisions promoting a pluralistic, inclusive and tolerant society would underpin the reform process and provide a solid base for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law; commends the work done by the constitutional conciliation committee, which reached consensus on 60 constitutional amendments before being dissolved; reiterates its call for the constitutional reform process to continue and underlines the need for a new constitution to be based on widespread consensus across the political spectrum and in society as a whole; encourages Turkey to consult with the Venice Commission in the framework of the constitutional reform process;
8. Welcomes the new strategy devised by the Government of Turkey to channel all new legislation through the EU Affairs Ministry, aiming at increasing the Ministry's coordination role and enhancing compliance of draft legislation with EU standards; recommends, in this regard, whenever possible, close consultation with the Venice Commission and a more intensive dialogue with the European Commission on new legislation under preparation and on the implementation of existing laws, in order to ensure compatibility with the EU acquis;

9. Stresses the importance of adequate consultation of civil society in the legislative process; recommends, therefore, that structured civil society consultation mechanisms should be developed as part of the legislative and policymaking processes and in the implementation process of new legislation; praises the vibrant civil society in Turkey; underlines that consistent reforms are urgently needed to guarantee freedom of association and expression, to allow civil society organisations to operate freely without restrictions and to improve their access to funding;
10. Strongly supports and encourages efforts by the Government of Turkey and all other stakeholders to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable conclusion to the peace process with the Kurdish community on the basis of negotiations with PKK, which is on the EU's list of terrorist organisations, and a process of socio-economic and political integration of the Kurdish community; strongly supports the announcement by the HDP of an extraordinary congress of the PKK to lay down arms and promote democratic politics as a method; strongly encourages the Government to continue to give priority to and enhance the social, cultural and political rights and equal treatment of citizens of Kurdish origin; welcomes the law 'to bring a stronger legal foundation to the settlement process', adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 11 June 2014, which encompasses measures to eliminate terrorism, strengthen social inclusion, reintegrate those who leave the PKK and lay down their arms, and prepare public opinion for the return of former fighters; takes the view that a successful resolution of the Kurdish issue is of primary importance and would make a substantial positive contribution to democracy, peace, stability and the protection of human rights in Turkey; therefore encourages all political parties to support this process; calls on the Commission to provide technical support and to dedicate resources available under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), inter alia, to programmes of socio-economic integration and education in the south-east of Turkey as a way to reinforce the Kurdish settlement process; notes that negotiations on Chapter 22 (Regional Policy) could assist Turkey in defining an effective programme of cohesion for the south-east;
11. Regrets the decision by the Turkish State Hydraulic Works to continue works on the Ilisu Dam, which will have devastating social, environmental and political effects; recalls that this particular region is mainly inhabited by Kurds and that the construction will have severe effects on the Kurdish population and culture;
12. Expresses concern at the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index released by Transparency International on 3 December 2014, which points to a perceived stark increase in corruption in Turkey during the past year and now ranks Turkey as 64th in the index; regrets deeply the way in which the Turkish Government and the Turkish Parliament reacted to the allegations of corruption, including against former members of government, made in December 2013 and the fact that there was no follow-up to the very serious corruption investigations; expresses concern at the criminal prosecution of investigative journalists who followed the corruption cases; calls for a transparent and independent investigation into the accusations made in December 2013; stresses the need for greater political will to develop an adequate legal framework for the fight against corruption, which not only erodes the democratic functioning of institutions and people's trust in democracy, but can also harm economic development and a favourable investment climate;
13. Expresses concern at the recent amendments to the Law on the High Council of Judges

and Prosecutors (HCJP) and the subsequent numerous reassignments and dismissals of judges and prosecutors, and at the arrests, reassignments and dismissals of police officers, which raised serious and justified concerns about the independence, impartiality and efficiency of the judiciary, the separation of powers and the respect for the principle of the rule of law, which remain the core of the Copenhagen political criteria; is concerned at the frequent changes made to key legislation without due consultation of relevant stakeholders; welcomes the abolition of Article 10 of the anti-terror law; is concerned, however, that very broad definitions make the scope of the anti-terror law still excessive and allow for exceptionally broad interpretations; recalls the need to reform Article 314 of the Criminal Code, so that only those who are members of or contribute to the activities of a terrorist or armed organisation can be prosecuted; calls for a judicial reform strategy in line with EU standards to be adopted in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders; welcomes the initial step taken towards the reduction of the maximum length of pre-trial detention from 10 to 5 years, but strongly emphasises that further reduction is needed to avoid pre-trial detention becoming a de facto punishment; underlines the importance of setting up regional courts of appeal and adopting all relevant measures to ensure due process; encourages Turkey to further the reform of the justice system and to ensure fair and effective access to justice for all children;

14. Expresses serious concern at Law 6532, which came into force on 26 April 2014 and which dramatically increases the powers of the National Intelligence Agency (MİT), undermining the freedom of the media, freedom of expression and the right to access information of public interest, rendering the staff of the Agency virtually immune to legal proceedings and violating privacy rules by making it possible for the Agency to procure personal data without a court order; considers that these provisions violate Turkey's obligations in respect of international humanitarian law and its own national laws;
15. Welcomes a number of important decisions taken by the Constitutional Court of Turkey protecting the rule of law and fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression, which has illustrated the resilience of the constitutional system; notes, in addition, that the Constitutional Court's rulings highlighted the mishandling of the investigations and subsequent trials in the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer cases; welcomes the fact that the Constitutional Court continues to receive individual applications; expresses concern at the amendments to the Criminal Code, and particularly the use of the term 'reasonable suspicion', which opens the door to arbitrary attacks on the opposition; points out that these amendments were adopted without the Commission being consulted, contrary to what was agreed during the negotiations;
16. Expresses serious concerns about the high degree of political polarisation in Turkey; recalls that pluralism should be at the core of any democratic regime; urges, therefore, the promotion of dialogue across the Turkish political spectrum; stresses that as regards key, long-term reform processes, a new constitution and the Kurdish settlement talks, such a dialogue is indispensable; calls on the ruling party and the opposition to strive to cooperate and reach consensus, and to actively include civil society in decision-making processes;

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms

17. Welcomes the adoption in March 2014 of the Action Plan for the Prevention of Violations of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as a significant step towards

aligning Turkey's legal framework with the jurisprudence of the ECtHR, and expects the Government to take further steps to implement its recommendations; underlines that Turkey's membership of the Council of Europe commits Turkey to pursuing high political and legal standards and asks Turkey to engage fully with the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission on its reform process; recalls that progress in the negotiations depends on respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights;

18. Notes with concern that most investigations into the events that occurred in Gezi Park in May and June 2013 and allegations about the disproportionate use of force and police abuse are still pending, and that little progress has been made in identifying the alleged perpetrators; underlines that, following a number of complaints received on the use of force by police officers during the Gezi protests, the Ombudsman issued a report in which it found the use of force to be disproportionate; calls on the Turkish authorities to make amends to all those victims who were non-violent protesters, or who were not amongst the protesters but were only accidentally on the site of the events; calls for the completion of effective and impartial investigations into all cases of alleged ill-treatment by state officials and for those responsible to be brought to justice; underlines the need for subsequent adoption of clear rules on the use of force and the role of the police in line with international standards; strongly urges the lifting of restrictions on peaceful assembly and stresses that other laws, such as anti-terrorism legislation, should not be used to prevent people from exercising their right to peacefully protest and that peaceful demonstrations should not be a reason for arrest; calls on the Turkish Government to provide for adequate, objective and transparent checks and balances on the power of law enforcement agencies; recommends that the Turkish authorities set up an independent and effective police complaints mechanism; expresses deep concern at the domestic security package, which goes against the principle of judicial oversight of police activities and is excessive in scope;
19. Underlines the need to revise the law on the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of Turkey in order to make it an independent body which is adequately resourced and accountable to the public and which includes the participation of civil society groups; takes note of the recommendations in the report issued by the Ombudsman, including the demand for the gradual and proportionate use of force by police, and only as a last resort and under supervision; stresses the importance of reinforcing the right of initiative of the Ombudsman, its capacity to conduct on-the-spot checks, and guarantees for adequate follow-up to the Ombudsman's decisions;
20. Commends Turkey on a growing Roma civil society; hopes that the new Roma organisations will be given support and time to enable them to take a meaningful part in cooperation initiatives to devise and implement measures at local and national level; recommends that the government combine existing accommodation projects with social and long-term aspects such as healthcare and education; welcomes general action plans to combat discrimination, which could give Roma people greater access to the labour market;
21. Urges the Government of Turkey to guarantee media freedom as a matter of priority and to provide an adequate legal framework guaranteeing pluralism in line with international standards; condemns the efforts made by the Turkish Government to ban access to social media and websites or close down the latter without a court order, its restrictive approach to freedom of expression and the pressure put on media outlets and journalists, which

- often results in the intimidation, dismissal or arrest of journalists and widespread self-censorship; points out that violations of freedom of expression increased after the corruption scandal of December 2013; considers it necessary for a legal framework to be established to enable full transparency on media group ownership; reiterates the EU's commitment to freedom of expression in all its forms and calls on the EU Delegation to Turkey to continue to monitor trials of journalists and human right defenders;
22. Condemns the recent police raids and the detention of a number of journalists and media representatives on 14 December 2014; recalls that a free and pluralistic press is the core principle of any democracy, as are due process and judicial independence; stresses, therefore, the need, in all cases, (i) to provide ample and transparent information on the allegations against the defendants, (ii) to grant the defendants full access to the incriminating evidence and full defence rights, and (iii) to ensure the proper handling of the cases in order to verify the veracity of the accusations without delay and beyond reasonable doubt; calls on the authorities of Turkey to review and address these cases as soon as possible and to adhere to international due process standards in cases where it insists on pursuing the proceedings;
 23. Asserts that the Turkish Government's recent action against freedom of the press and plurality of opinion is incompatible with the fundamental rights of the EU and thus conflicts with the spirit of the negotiation process;
 24. Takes the view that, in keeping with the EU commitment to the rule of law and fundamental values, reforms in the areas of the judiciary and fundamental rights and of justice, freedom and security are urgently needed in Turkey; believes, furthermore, that delivering the official opening benchmarks for Chapters 23 (judiciary and fundamental rights) and 24 (justice, freedom and security) is an important step to promote truly effective reforms and to ensure that the reform process in Turkey is shaped on the basis of EU values and standards; reiterates its call for the Council, as soon as the set criteria have been fulfilled, to start negotiations on the judiciary and fundamental rights and on justice, freedom and security; calls on Turkey to cooperate as much as possible to this end; calls on the Commission to promote without delay further dialogue and cooperation with Turkey in the fields covered by chapters 23 and 24 to promote a common understanding on the reforms needed;
 25. Welcomes the decision that reforms related to the rule of law and fundamental rights, home affairs and civil society are to receive increased funding under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) II for the period 2014-2020; points out that the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and fundamental freedoms are key principles governing pre-accession support; reiterates the Council's December 2014 conclusion that enhanced coherence between financial assistance and the overall progress made in the implementation of the pre-accession strategy, including full respect of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, will be introduced; calls, in addition, on the Commission to closely monitor the implementation of IPA II in all candidate countries and to dedicate resources available under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) to supporting freedom of expression, including media freedom, media pluralism, freedom of association and assembly, trade union related rights and freedom of thought;
 26. Takes note of the fact that Turkey contributed to the coming into force on 1 August 2014 of the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against

women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention); expresses concern, however, at the persistent high levels of violence against women and the lack of implementation of domestic law protections to prevent violence against women; calls on the Turkish authorities to provide sufficient shelters for the protection of women and minors who are victims of violence; recommends that the Government promote gender equality in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field; calls on the Government of Turkey, in cooperation with civil society and relevant business associations, to facilitate women entrepreneurship and reduce obstacles to women's access to economic activities, and urges the Government of Turkey, in this regard, to set itself an ambitious target regarding women's access to employment; points out that Turkey ranked 125th out of 142 countries in the 2014 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap report; regrets deeply the remarks made by certain officials and government representatives about the role of women in Turkish society and stresses the importance of combating stereotypes and biases in society against women;

27. Stresses the importance of continuing the process of reform in the area of freedom of thought, conscience and religion by enabling religious communities to obtain legal personality, by eliminating all restrictions on the training, appointment, legal residence and succession of the clergy, and by ensuring adequate implementation of all relevant ECtHR rulings and the recommendations of the Venice Commission; stresses, in this regard, the need to promote dialogue with the Alevi community, to give proper recognition to Cem houses as places of worship, to allow the reopening of the Halki Greek Orthodox Seminary and lift all obstacles to its proper functioning, and to allow the official use of the ecclesiastical title of the Ecumenical Patriarch; asks Turkey's relevant authorities to address all outstanding issues related to the restitution of land belonging to the Mor Gabriel monastery and other Syriac church land claims; recalls the importance of adequately implementing the Venice Commission recommendations on Imbros and Tenedos with regard to the protection of property and educational rights; underlines the need to fully respect, in line with EU values, the right to different lifestyles, both secular and faith-based, and to maintain the separation of state and religion; underlines the importance of protecting the rights of minorities; expresses regret about the fact that, after the abolition of the previous law two years ago and due to the existing legal vacuum, it is not possible for non-Muslim charitable foundations to elect their governing bodies;
28. Stresses the need to recognise the right to conscientious objection to compulsory military service;
29. Calls on Turkey to undertake serious efforts to protect the rights of the LGBTI community, and takes the view that the creation of a specific body to combat discrimination, hate speech, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance would reinforce individual rights in Turkey; calls on Turkey to enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, including the prohibition of discrimination and hate speech on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, and to include the prohibition of such discrimination in a new constitution; expresses concern at the frequent attacks on transgender persons and the lack of protection provided to LGBTI persons against acts of violence; strongly regrets that hate crime against LGBTI people often remains unpunished or that offenders' sentences are reduced for the victim's 'unjust provocation'; reiterates its call on the Government of Turkey to instruct the Turkish Armed Forces to end their classification of homosexuality and transsexuality as a 'psychosexual illness';

30. Expresses regret over the loss of many lives in the Soma and Ermenek mine disasters; welcomes the ratification by Turkey of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention on safety and health in mines and calls for its swift implementation; stresses the importance of addressing the issues of occupational health and safety in all sectors and urges the Turkish authorities to make the monitoring of fatal workplace accidents more transparent; takes the view that trade union freedom, social dialogue and the involvement of social partners are vital to the development of a prosperous and pluralistic society, and underlines the importance of further progress in the areas of social policy and employment, based on adequate and timely implementation of the conventions of the ILO; takes note of legislative shortcomings on labour and trade union rights; stresses that the right to organise, the right to enter into collective bargaining and the right to strike for private sector employees and civil servants will have to be aligned with the EU acquis and international standards; urges the Government of Turkey to prepare a roadmap to improve legislation and bring it into line with ILO standards; stresses the importance of Turkey meeting the opening benchmarks on social policy and employment; calls on the Commission to provide adequate technical assistance to Turkey in the field of labour reform and promote EU standards;
31. Calls on Turkey to legislate on the working conditions of part-time workers, for example, who are currently subjected to substandard conditions, lack of job security and problems with joining trade unions; notes that the mining and construction sectors are the most dangerous industries in Turkey and calls for transparent investigations into fatal accidents at work;
32. Calls upon the Turkish Government to halt its plans for the construction of the Akkuyuy 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 to the Mediterranean region; accordingly, requests that the Turkish Government join the Espoo Convention, which commits parties to notifying and consulting each other on major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries; to this end, asks the Turkish Government to involve, or at least consult, the governments of its neighbouring countries, such as Greece and Cyprus, during any further developments in the Akkuyu venture;

Shared interests and common challenges

33. Underlines the important benefits of the Customs Union (CU) between the EU and Turkey; recalls that, since the start of the CU in 1996, the value of bilateral trade between Turkey and the EU has increased more than fourfold, with a parallel significant rise in foreign direct investment from the EU to Turkey and deeper integration between Turkish and European firms for the benefit of both sides; stresses in this connection, however, that any increase in the positive impact of the CU is closely linked to compliance with its rules and requirements, and is therefore greatly concerned by the growing problems for European companies trading with Turkey; points to the recent evaluation of the CU by the World Bank, which stresses the need to introduce a number of reforms to maintain an environment conducive to close economic cooperation, including in the future; points, in particular, to the need (i) to extend the scope of the CU to agricultural products, services and public procurement, (ii) to create favourable conditions for continued growth in trade, including the facilitation of visas for business travellers, and (iii) for consultations between the EU and Turkey on the impact on Turkey of Free Trade Agreements signed

by the EU with third countries to be intensively pursued;

34. Takes the view that political dialogue between Turkey and the EU should be complemented by a regular, structured high-level economic dialogue on issues of common concern, including trade relationships with third countries; underlines, in this regard, the interaction between the proper functioning of the rule of law and economic development; believes in the importance of developing and reinforcing Turkey's economic, institutional and legal framework in the area of economic and monetary policy, with particular regard to the independence of the Central Bank, and believes that this could contribute to Turkey's alignment with the *acquis*; notes that economic cooperation would be greatly enhanced by Turkey complying sufficiently with EU standards on public procurement, competition and employment and social policy;
35. Reaffirms its support for the readmission agreement with the EU, which entered into force on 1 October 2014; encourages the Commission to continue to monitor progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap; welcomes the effective efforts made to meet the criteria identified in the visa liberalisation roadmap; recalls that the visa liberalisation dialogue is a merit-based process and that Turkey should meet all the requirements set out in the visa roadmap, including, particularly, the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the readmission agreement; reiterates Turkey's obligation to fully and effectively implement the readmission agreement and the visa liberalisation vis-à-vis all Member States, including non-discriminatory visa-free access to the Turkish territory for the citizens of all EU Member States; calls on Turkey to implement the existing bilateral readmission agreements fully and effectively; recalls that Turkey is one of the key transit countries for irregular migration to the EU and calls for the improvement of Turkey's cross-border cooperation with neighbouring EU Member States in this respect; welcomes the entry into force of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and the establishment of the General Directorate for Migration Management (GDMM) in April 2014 as substantial steps towards alignment with EU standards on international protection of regular and irregular migrants; notes that cooperation between Turkey and all EU Member States, aiming in particular at reinforcing the management of the common borders with all EU Member States, needs to be increased; emphasises the need for Turkey to further strengthen border security in order to combat irregular migration to EU countries;
36. Recalls Turkey's strategic importance for the EU's energy security and regards Turkey as an important partner in the energy sector; points to the three Southern Gas Corridor projects approved at the end of 2013, which will enhance the security of gas supply for Turkey and access to the EU as the main energy market; takes the view that in a context of increasingly competing energy markets and the need for diversified energy sources and supply routes, Turkey, with its huge potential of renewables, could provide an important contribution to the EU's energy security and its ambitions regarding energy diversification in line with international law; is concerned about closer energy cooperation between Turkey and Russia and therefore believes that the EU should speed up the negotiations on energy;
37. Recalls Turkey's strategic position as a partner of the EU and a member of NATO, and therefore its crucial geopolitical importance and its relevance for a comprehensive strategy seeking to address security and stability in its eastern and southern neighbourhoods, with particular reference to Syria and Iraq; points to the fact that the

very serious developments in the region and the attacks carried out on European soil make it crucial that dialogue and cooperation with the EU on foreign policy issues is increased within the framework of EU-Turkey political dialogue; calls on Turkey to play an active role in the international coalition against terrorist groups such as ISIL, and to use all the resources at its disposal to this end; calls on Turkey to increase measures to prevent so-called foreign fighters, money or equipment from reaching ISIL and other extremist groups via its territory; stresses the need to continue and strengthen the regular EU-Turkey counterterrorism dialogue and to take concrete measures and action as part of our common efforts to fight terrorism in all its forms; calls on Turkey to ensure effective border control while continuing to provide the necessary assistance through humanitarian aid means to refugees entering from Syria and to ensure the safety of the victims of the Syrian civil war; underlines the importance of more frequent high-level dialogue and consultation between the EU and Turkey on foreign and security policy issues in order to ensure that our policies complement one another and that Turkey progressively aligns its foreign policy with that of the EU;

38. Is of the opinion that the Turkish Foreign Minister should be invited to attend Foreign Affairs Council meetings whenever relevant; is of the opinion that a framework for structured dialogue, cooperation and coordination on foreign, security and defence policy issues is needed;
39. Regrets the fact that the *casus belli* threat declared by the Turkish Grand National Assembly against Greece has not yet been withdrawn, despite a good track record of dialogue and cooperation between Greece and Turkey;
40. Praises Turkey for its continued assistance to the estimated 1,6 million refugees from Iraq and Syria, and for maintaining an open border policy for humanitarian purposes; welcomes the Temporary Protection Directive adopted in October 2014, granting a secure legal status for refugees and enabling them to receive identity cards and access the labour market; calls on the EU to continue its financial support for humanitarian aid to Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Turkey; points out that refugee camps have attained their maximum capacity and that having to find a dwelling puts a tremendous strain on refugees' lives and resources; takes the view that the EU should provide active support to the Government of Turkey in defining long-term assistance programmes for refugees and to promote access to education, health care and (legal) employment; calls on the Commission to increase the resources available under IPA II and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) to help provide adequate assistance to the local communities affected by the large inflows of refugees; calls also on the Member States to provide (temporary) resettlement places for the most vulnerable refugees, in the spirit of genuine responsibility-sharing;
41. Calls on Turkey, with the technical and financial support of its partners, to provide access to education for the growing number of Syrian children living in Turkey;

Building good neighbourly relations

42. Urges the Turkish Government to end the repeated violations of Greek airspace and territorial waters, as well as Turkish military aircraft flights over Greek islands;
43. Calls on the Turkish Government to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which has been signed and ratified by the EU and its 28 Member States, without further delay, and underlines the Republic of Cyprus' lawful

right to enter into bilateral agreements concerning its exclusive economic zone; reiterates its calls on Turkey to respect the sovereign rights of all Member States, including those relating to the exploration and exploitation of natural resources when in line with the EU acquis and international law; calls on Turkey to refrain from any action damaging good neighbourly relations and a climate conducive to the peaceful settlement of bilateral disputes;

44. Deplores Turkey's refusal to fulfil its obligation of full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the EC-Turkey Association Agreement vis-à-vis all Member States; recalls that this refusal continues to have a profound effect on the negotiation process;
45. Reiterates its strong support for the reunification of Cyprus, on the basis of a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement for both communities, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the values and principles on which the EU is founded, for a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with single sovereignty, single international legal personality and single citizenship, with political equality between the two communities and equal opportunities for all its citizens; welcomes the announcement by the UN Special Envoy Espen Barth Eide that the leaders of both communities are to resume negotiations under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General at the earliest convenience, and expresses its strong support for the efforts made by the UN Special Adviser on Cyprus to create the conditions for the resumption of talks; expresses hope that the message of reunification and reconciliation by the recently elected Turkish Cypriot leader will open a new window of opportunity in the negotiation process; calls on Turkey and all parties concerned to actively support the negotiations on reunification and to take the necessary steps towards the normalisation of relations with Cyprus; calls on Turkey to begin to withdraw its troops from Cyprus and to transfer the sealed-off area of Famagusta to the UN in accordance with UNSC Resolution 550(1984); calls, in parallel, on the Republic of Cyprus to open the port of Famagusta under EU customs supervision, in order to promote a positive climate conducive to the successful resolution of the ongoing reunification negotiations, and to allow Turkish Cypriots to trade with the EU in a legal manner that is acceptable to all;
46. Reiterates relevant ECtHR decisions and calls on the Turkish Government to immediately stop the violation of the human rights of the Cypriot citizens and stop depriving them of the enjoyment and exercise of their property, religious and other human rights stemming from the constitutional order of the Republic of Cyprus and the *acquis communautaire*, as well as the fundamental principles and values of the EU;
47. Deplores Turkey's policy of settlement and calls on Turkey to refrain from further settlement of Turkish citizens in the occupied areas of Cyprus, which is contrary to the Geneva Convention and the principles of international law; urges Turkey to terminate all actions that alter the demographic balance on the island thus impeding a future solution;
48. Calls on Turkey to allow the Committee on Missing Persons full access to all relevant archives and military zones in the northern part of Cyprus for exhumation and to provide all relevant information that will lead to the discovery of relocated remains; calls for special consideration for the work done by the Committee on Missing Persons;
49. Urges Turkey and Armenia to proceed to a normalisation of their relations by ratifying, without preconditions, the protocols on the establishment of diplomatic relations, by

opening the border and by actively improving their relations, with particular reference to cross-border cooperation and economic integration; welcomes the ongoing dialogue between Turkey and Armenia;

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50. 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 Affairs and Security Policy, 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.