

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

SPEAKER OF THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY

Ankara, 24 November 2020

Dear President,

I've learned with dismay that a resolution titled "Situation of EU-Turkey Relations in the aftermath of the killing of a teacher in France" was approved by the Danish Parliament on 12 November 2020. I would like to bring to your attention our following views regarding the different components of this odd resolution.

Firstly, it is incomprehensible that Denmark falls into the error of positioning Turkey, her NATO Ally, a partner in European institutions and a country that is cooperating in fighting terrorism, as an opponent while expressing solidarity with France for the terrorist attacks in this country. Turkey is also stricken by attacks of terrorist groups such as DAESH and Al-Qaeda which claim acting in the name of religion. Turkey is the leading country in the fight against these organizations as well as a member of the "Global Coalition Against DAESH" together with Denmark. As a country struggling with different forms of terrorism for decades, Turkey has also condemned the recent and past terrorist attacks in France and expressed solidarity with French people.

On the other hand, I would like to emphasize that we reject all kinds of rhetoric such as "militant Islamist terrorist attacks" mentioned in the resolution which establishes link between Islam or any other religion and terrorism. Likewise, it is not acceptable that freedom of expression is used, such as in France and in some other European countries, as a reason to attack Islam, its symbols or any other sacred values or believes.

Using freedom of expression irresponsibly will only cause polarization of societies, radicalization, tendency to violence and serve for the purpose of far-right and radical fractions.

Turkey, a founding member of the Council of Europe, is in solidarity with France in protecting the freedom of expression and in fighting all kinds of terrorism. However, Turkey has reacted to offensive, provocative and irresponsible approaches of some government officials and circles in France, with a view to responsible understanding of freedom of expression and considering the Turkish community living in that country.

H.E. Henrik Dam Kristensen
President of the Danish Parliament
Copenhagen

I am in the view of the fact that instead of fuelling differences among Turkey, France and Denmark which actually tied with strong alliance and bilateral bonds, it will be beneficial for all of us if the Danish Parliament would refrain from approving prejudged and immediate reactions and display a constructive approach and listen to Turkey as well.

Furthermore, it should be noted that calls for boycott and even suspension of the EU-Turkey Customs Union were in the first place voiced by French officials. Consequently, H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in response that should there be any boycotting of Turkish goods, French goods could be boycotted as well. It is inconsistent to refer to a boycott that has not been carried out by any of two countries as parties to the Customs Union.

Mr. President,

Turkey prefers the path of dialogue and reconciliation in her relations with the EU. It does not make a positive contribution to Turkey-EU relations to allow or support some member countries to take the Turkey-EU relations hostage for their narrow self-interests under the name of EU solidarity or by means of abusing their veto rights. It also casts doubt on the coherence and credibility of the EU. It is clear that our common interests and the interests of the EU are greater than the egoistic interests of a few countries. An EU of which Turkey is a member could have stopped several conflicts as well as civil wars around us and could have prevented tensions between civilizations and terrorist attacks, if Turkey had not been impeded in its EU accession process for the sake of narrow interests of a few countries. Therefore, it is beneficial for everybody that EU and Turkey work very closely on all these matters.

I still believe in the fact that creating a positive agenda that can serve interests of both sides, will not only contribute to Turkey – EU relations, but also to regional stability and peace. The European Union has got the capacity and necessary tools to break the vicious circle it is already in and create positive agenda. The best way to achieve this is not sanctions or to threat with sanctions, but to work on updating the 18th March Agreement with its' all dimensions and strengthening the full membership perspective.

Turkey sincerely desires to develop its relations with the EU through membership perspective. We expect Denmark continues to support these efforts by her principled stance.

Mr. President,

Those allegations that claim Turkey's operations to fight DAESH and PKK/YPG/PYD terror emanating from Syria, target Kurdish populated areas show that baseless anti – Turkey propaganda of these terrorist organizations is unfortunately also owned by the Danish Parliament. As previously stated on every occasion, Turkey's operations in Syria have been being undertaken in accordance with Article 51st of the UN Charter on Self Defence Right as well as UN Security Council Resolutions concerning the fight against terrorism. These operations have also been helping prevent demographic changes in the region and contribute to protecting territorial integrity of Syria. As a result of three operations conducted, more than 411 thousand Syrian refugees including those with Kurdish origin have been able to return to their

country. Moreover, thanks to the ceasefire reached on March 5th, three million Syrians that could flee to Europe remained in Idlib by receiving humanitarian aid from the UN and other organizations.

I invite Danish Parliamentarians to notice the fine difference precisely made by Turkey between Kurdish origin citizens of Turkey, as well as Kurdish groups in the region, and terrorist organization and support their NATO and European Ally, Turkey by showing full solidarity.

Mr. President,

I regret to observe that Resolution of November 12th and the way Turkey was subjected to discussions at your Parliament were contradictory to relations of our friendship and alliance. I do believe that taking steps towards mutual understanding and dialogue by increasing contacts between our Parliaments will be constructive and serve the aim. In this framework, I kindly request your good offices that respectful Danish Parliamentarians would be correctly and sufficiently informed by our Embassy in Copenhagen as well as through bilateral contacts.

I will appreciate it if you could forward this letter and my request to all the Parliamentarians in the Parliament.

Taking this occasion, I would like to convey my best wishes for the health and prosperity of Your Excellency and all members of the Danish Parliament.

(Signature)

Prof. Mustafa ŞENTOP
Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey