Press release | 16.10.2013

EU-Turkey

New impetus needed for accession negotiations

The European Commission today adopted its progress report on Turkey, as part of the annual enlargement package. Commenting on the report, Green MEP and chair of the EP's Turkey delegation **Hélène Flautre** said:

"The Commission report paints a mixed picture of the situation in Turkey. While there is clear progress on issues such as the Kurdish question, minority rights and judicial reform, the Commission correctly highlights problems in the field of fundamental rights and freedom of the press as the weaknesses of Turkish democracy.

"This report comes after harsh police repression during the Gezi protests and mounting cases against journalists. Two weeks ago an Amnesty International report documented serious human rights violations during the June demonstrations.

"Lasting democratic reforms in Turkey are intrinsically linked to the success of peace negotiations on the Kurdish question. Turkey should speed up the process of constitutional reform. It should also strengthen other democratic institutions, like the Court of Accounts and the Parliament, which act as a check on the executive.

"EU governments are set to decide next week whether they will open the next 'chapter' of accession negotiations (chapter 22 on regional policy). However, there is a need to go further on fundamental freedoms: the EU should open the negotiating chapters on the judiciary, fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security (chapters 23 and 24) as soon as possible and offer a credible negotiating timetable.

"Turkey must also be praised for its role in accommodating Syrian refugees and be encouraged to maintain open borders."

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