Press release | 10.11.2015

EU-Turkey

Decision to withhold report critical on Turkey's progress regretted

The European Commission today presented its annual progress report on Turkey's EU accession process in the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee today. Commenting on the report, Green foreign policy spokesperson and Turkey expert **Bodil Valero** said:

"Today's report confirms the backsliding on democratic norms, like the freedom of expression and the media, under the Erdogan regime. This is no surprise but it is a major source of regret that the Commission withheld this report until after the elections in Turkey. This has to be seen as part of a trend of the EU shying away from criticising the Turkish government in spite of major concerns about the latest developments in Turkey under Erdogan. The EU should not turn a blind eye to these concerns as part of some quid pro quo for Erdogan's support in addressing the refugee crisis.

"The Commission must now act on the criticisms it sets out via the accession process. In particular this implies engaging with Turkey on necessary reforms regarding the rule of law, the justice system and press and media freedom. The best manner for doing so is by opening negotiations on chapters 23 and 24 in the accession process.

"An overriding goal for the EU must be to ensure peace in Turkey. The EU must pressure the government to immediately restart the peace process with the Kurdish PKK. In the context of the growing instability in Turkey and the wider region, a peace agreement is clearly in the interest of all parties in Turkey and the EU."

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Bodil Valero

Vice-President

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