Press release | 03.06.2013

Turkey demonstrations

Spirit of compromise must prevail to prevent further regression of democracy

Commenting on the public demonstrations in Turkey and the violent response of the authorities, Green MEP and co-chair of the EU-Turkey joint parliamentary committee **Hélène Flautre** said:

"The massive peaceful demonstrations in Turkey, the silence of the Turkish mainstream media and the excessive use of force by the Turkish police are symptoms of wider problems within the political system in the country. The violent, heavy-handed response of the police authorities against the peaceful demonstrators should stop and all those arrested should be released.

"The original protests against the construction of Gezi Park were indicative of growing concern over excessive commercialisation, with little regard for social and environmental impact or public will. The widespread public support for the demonstrations is a source of major encouragement for democracy and the prospects of sustainable development in Turkey. Instead of wrongly treating the protesters as criminals, dialogue should be re-established and their legitimate grievances should be addressed.

"There is a need to restore the spirit of compromise, beginning at the local level; failure to do so would be a blow for historic opportunities in Turkey as regards the peace process, constitutional reform and the relaunch of the EU accession process."

Co-president of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament **Dany Cohn-Bendit** added:

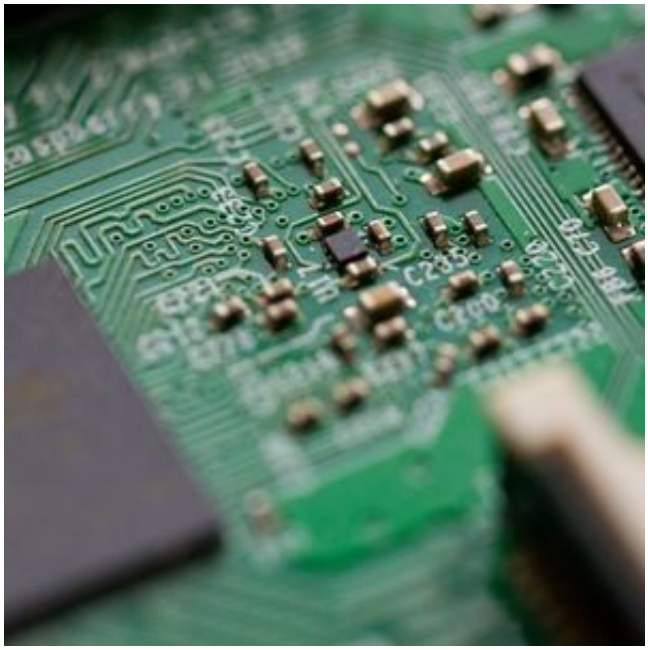
"There has been a worrying shift away from respect for minorities, plurality and other basic freedoms in Turkey in recent years. After having taken its eye off Turkey in recent years, the EU must pay closer attention to the events in the candidate country. If the EU is to have some influence, it must enter into direct dialogue with the Turkish government on how to address the problems in the country. Opening accession negotiations with Turkey on the crucial chapters concerning justice and fundamental rights (chapters 23 and 24) would be particularly relevant and timely to this end."

Greens/EFA co-presidents Dany Cohn-Bendit and Rebecca Harms, together with Hélène Flautre, have invited representatives of the Turkish protest movement (including from the Taksim platform) to address the Greens/EFA group next week in Strasbourg on Tuesday, 11 June. The group has also called for the issue to be put on the agenda of next week's plenary session.

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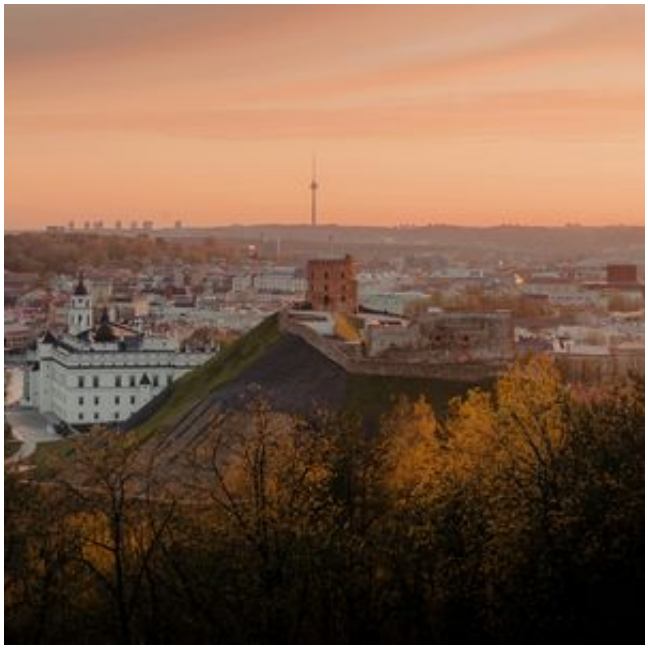
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