**Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution of 13 March 2019 on the 2018 Commission Report on Turkey**

(2018 Commission report on Turkey)

1. **Rapporteur:** Kati PIRI (S&D / NL)
2. **Reference numbers:** 2018/2150 / A8-0091/2019 / P8\_TA-PROV(2019)0200
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 13 March 2019
4. **Competent Parliamentary** Committee: Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution closely follows the Commission's findings as provided for under the 2018 Report on Turkey as well as the EU position regarding the next steps towards Turkey.

The resolution notes that while the EU accession process was at its start a strong motivation for reforms in Turkey, there has been a stark regression in the areas of the rule of law and human rights during the last few years.

It mentions the state of play and challenges in Turkey, addressing in particular detail the need for progress on rule of law issues. It condemns the increased executive surveillance and political pressure affecting the work of judges and prosecutors and stresses that a serious reform of the legislative and judicial branches of power is needed for Turkey.

The resolution notes that the prolonged state of emergency, despite having been terminated, has led to an erosion of the rule of law and to the deterioration of human rights in Turkey, which may have long-lasting implications for the country’s institutional and socio-economic fabric.

The resolution expresses great concern at the shrinking space for civil society and the promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms, and points in particular to the case of Osman Kavala, as well as the withdrawal of journalists’ accreditations. In this regard, the resolution reiterates the importance of media freedom and independence as one of the core values of the EU and a cornerstone of any democracy.

In light of this continued deterioration in the areas of rule of law and human rights, the resolution calls on EU funding to be redirected towards civil society.

It stresses that the upgrade of the Customs Union would provide a valuable opportunity for democratic conditionality and positive leverage. The resolution calls on the Commission to make human rights and fundamental freedoms a key conditionality in a modernised Customs Union.

It recommends that the Commission and the Council of the European Union, in accordance with the Negotiating Framework, formally suspend the accession negotiations with Turkey, but remains committed to democratic and political dialogue with Turkey. It asks the Commission to use the funds currently allocated under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance to support, through funds directly managed by the EU, Turkey’s civil society, human rights defenders and journalists and to increase opportunities for people-to-people contacts.

1. **Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission**

The Commission acknowledges the position taken by the European Parliament on Turkey’s continued backsliding on key issues and encroachment on fundamental freedoms. The Commission intends to continue a close monitoring of the internal developments in Turkey, notably in the context of the enlargement package and the accompanying report on Turkey. The Commission emphasises the need for significant reform on the Turkish side, as expressed during the EU-Turkey Association Council of March 2019, and concurs with the call to direct EU funding towards Turkish civil society and people-to-people contacts. In this respect, the Commission has already increased the resources directed to civil society since 2017 and has taken the responsibility of the direct management of this assistance. Nevertheless, the Commission emphasises that Turkey remains a candidate country, and therefore is entitled to assistance under the pre-accession framework.