

# IKV BRIEF

## COUNTDOWN TO THE 2014 EP TURKEY REPORT

**Melih ÖZSÖZ**

*IKV Deputy Secretary General and  
Research Director*

**Büşra ÇATIR**

*IKV Junior Researcher*

**Deniz SERVANTIE**

*IKV Junior Researcher*



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### **WHY IS THE EP PREPARING A TURKEY REPORT?**

EP reports for each EU Candidate State analyse the latest developments with regards to the negotiations process and can be described as the EP's evaluation of the regular Progress Reports regularly published by the European Commission. Although these reports are not legally binding, considering that the Parliament represents 500 million people from 28 Member States, one can easily say it does hold a significant place.

### **FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND FEATURES OF THE 2014 TURKEY REPORT**

The 2014 Turkey Report will be the EP's 16<sup>th</sup> report on Turkey.

This report is the first report prepared by Dutch MEP Kati Piri who was elected to the Parliament in May 2014. Kati Piri took over the rapporteurship from Dutch MEP Ria Oomen-Ruijten who was part of the former legislature.

Apart from its new rapporteur, this year, the EP's 2014 Turkey Report will be the first Turkey Report to be voted in the new Parliament elected on May 2014. To recapitulate, European elections on the 22-25 May 2014 renewed 751 seats of the Parliament while the major parties, although they experienced some decrease in their shares kept their presence compared to the last term. Extreme parties on both sides have managed to gain seats in the Parliament following the 2014 European elections.

### **ONE OF THE EP'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL REPORTS**

The 2014 Turkey Report, bringing together a combination of a new rapporteur and a new legislature, will undoubtedly be once more one of the most controversial reports to be discussed at the Parliament. There have been a total of 442 different proposed amendments that have been presented to the 10 pages-long original report which shall take its final version after months' long discussions at AFET Committee of the Parliament (The Committee on Foreign Affairs).

The proposed amendments to the report that have been published in 2 different parts on February 5, 2015 by the Parliament has a total of 285 pages, approximately 30 times longer than the original report.

In the last years, the numbers of proposed amendments to Turkey Reports were as follows: 338 in 2013; 415 in 2012, 461 in 2011; 315 in 2010 and 243 in 2009. This year it is possible to say that the number of proposed amendments has increased.

As for the 2014 EP reports with regards to other Candidates States such as Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia, the numbers of proposed amendments are 188, 222 and 196, respectively.

In contrast to other reports, the Turkey Report can be described as being “one of the most controversial reports of the Parliament”. For example, the 2014 Report on European Energy Security Strategy had 52 proposed amendments; the 2014 Report on Common Security and Defence Policy 160 proposed amendments and the 2013 Annual Report on Human Rights 486 proposed amendments, respectively.

## **WHAT IS IN THE 2014 EP TURKEY DRAFT REPORT?**

### ***Criticisms***

Generally speaking, the main area where one may find the most criticism in the EP 2014 Turkey Draft Report is fundamental rights and freedoms. In addition, the Parliament criticises Turkey in areas regarding Turkey’s democratisation process and its judicial system. Furthermore, the EP underpins that political polarisation is significantly increasing and that the level of concern regarding the state of law, fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of the press and of expression and the latest developments on internal security in Turkey raised in Europe.

### ***Positive Developments***

In contrast, the report expresses its satisfaction regarding a series of legal amendments and of international agreements which have been enacted by Turkey in the last years.

In that context, the entry into force of ILO’s convention regarding the safety and health of mine workers and of the Istanbul Convention on violence against women are coming to the forefront. As in the latest years, the Parliament welcomes Turkey’s approach regarding 1.6 million refugees flocking from Syria and Iraq and further describes as positive the latest legal regulations in that area. Moreover, the report also welcomes the developments happened in 2014 regarding the resolution of the Kurdish issue.

### ***Recommendations***

Same as each year, the Parliament provides for several recommendations to the parties in addition to explaining clearly its views regarding further progress to be made in the process.

The report reiterates its recommendation to start negotiations on 7 different chapters – still blocked by some Member States – which are as follows: Public Procurement (Chapter 5), Competition (Chapter 8), Economic and Monetary Policy (Chapter 17), Social Policy and Employment (Chapter 19), Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (Chapter 23), Justice, Freedom and Security (Chapter 24) and Foreign, Security and Defence Policy (Chapter 31). Furthermore, the report also recommends to pursue the visa liberalisation dialogue which aims at granting visa-free travel to Turkish citizens travelling to EU Member States and to make the necessary dispositions towards the revision of the Customs Union between the parties.

## **FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS: LEADING AREA FOR PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

Looking at the 442 proposed amendments that were submitted for the report; the proposed amendments are in harmony to the areas where the draft report focuses most its criticisms.

In that respect, the area where the largest number of proposed amendments is given is precisely fundamental rights and freedoms. Democratisation and the Turkey-EU Negotiations Process are second and third, respectively.

### ***Number of proposed amendments to the EP Turkey Report on the basis of subjects***

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proposed Amendments</b>
Fundamental Rights and Freedoms	97
Democratisation	83
Turkey-EU Negotiations Process	74
Cyprus Issue	72
Foreign Policy	61
Judicial System	38
Kurdish Issue	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>447</b>

## **GREEK MEPs: TOPPING THE LIST FOR NUMBER OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

Looking at the nationality of MEP's who proposed amendments to the report, it is possible to say that the amendments are given by nationals of 15 Member States. 30% of the proposed amendments are given by Greek MEPs. France, Germany, Sweden and Southern Cyprus are following Greece, respectively. The proposed amendments given by MEPs from these 5 Member States constitute 75% of the total of proposed amendments.

### ***Number of proposed amendments to the EP Turkey Report on the basis Member States MEPs***

<b>Country</b>	<b>Proposed Amendments</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Greece	120	27
France	70	15
Germany	52	12
Sweden	36	12
GCASC	32	8
Italy	30	7
the UK	22	7
Bulgaria	18	5
Netherlands	17	4
Romania	16	4
Estonia	9	2
Spain	8	2
Croatia	6	1
Portugal	3	1
Latvia	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>100</b>

## **EPP: TOP POLITICAL GROUP FOR NUMBER OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

In parallel to the distribution of seats at the Parliament, the political group that gave the largest number of proposed amendments is the EPP. With a small margin, the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group - of which rapporteur Kati Piri is a member of - is following the EPP. These two political groups make up nearly half, which is 52% of the total of proposed amendments.

### *Number of proposed amendments to the EP Turkey Report on the basis of the EP political groups*

<b>Political Group</b>	<b>Proposed Amendments</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Number of Seats in the Parliament</b>
EPP	157	36	221
S&D	72	16	191
Non-attached Members	57	13	52
ALDE	50	11	67
GUE/NGL	31	7	52
ECR	27	6	70
Greens/EFA	26	6	50
EFDD	22	5	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>751</b>

As for the non-attached Members, although they have fewer seats than the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) and the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), they come to the forefront by the number of proposed amendments they gave. One of the main reasons might be the anti-Turkey Enlargement attitude that is shared by the members of far right parties which essentially compose the EP's non-attached members. The non-attached members occupy 52 seats, of which 23 are members of the French Front National (FN) which are well known for their opposition to Turkey's EU membership.

## **FRANCE TOP COUNTRY FOR NUMBER OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BE DELETED**

Out of the 442 proposed amendments that were given to the Turkey report, 42 of them have been proposed to be deleted partly or totally. In that context, it is important to note that, among the 42 proposed amendments to be deleted, 20 of them came from French MEPs.

As for the amendments that were proposed to be partly or totally deleted, the following areas are coming to the forefront:

- Support towards Turkey's EU accession process;
- Opening of new chapters in the negotiations process;
- Support towards the Turkey-EU Visa Liberalisation Dialogue;
- Revision of the Customs Union.

**THE EP 2014 Turkey Report will be voted in the Parliament's Plenary Assembly on the 29 April 2015.**