

EPP PRESIDENT WELCOMES RESOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON TURKEY; EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN ON AKP CLOSURE CASE

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The President of the European People's Party (EPP) **Wilfried Martens** welcomed the Resolution on Turkey, as a conclusion of an outstanding report by EPP MEP **Ria Oomen-Ruiter**, which was adopted yesterday by a large majority of the European Parliament and in particular, the need for the country to deepen and expand the reform process.

*"Now, more than ever, the Turkish government must take brave steps to reform its institutions - despite the difficult internal obstacles **Prime***

***Minister Erdogan** is facing, he must rise to the occasion and leave behind him the forces of regression,"* stated the EPP President.

President Martens also welcomed the positive recommendation of the Resolution with regard to bringing the Turkish Constitution in-line with European standards on the prohibition of political parties.

At the same time, the EPP President expressed his deep concern with the Turkish Constitutional court's handling of the AKP closure case: *"in all the years of my European political engagement, this is the first time that I have ever witnessed the judiciary of an EU candidate country actually contemplating to outlaw its own governing party - a party that enjoys 50% of the support of the electorate; a party that belongs to the largest European political family. I am afraid that if the court follows through with this case, it will put the entire reform process of the country in jeopardy,"* underlined Martens.

According to the Resolution, the European Parliament *"is concerned about the implications of the AK Party closure case; expects the Turkish Constitutional Court to respect principles of the rule of law, European standards and the Guidelines on prohibition and dissolution of political parties and analogous measures, adopted by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe on 10-11 December 1999; asks the Turkish parliament to bring the Constitution into line with these standards on the prohibition of political parties."*

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