

EN

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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(13.3.2025)

The Commission has underlined in the latest Country report on Türkiye<sup>1</sup> that dismissal of the local mayors and their replacement with government appointed trustees is a source of serious concern, as it undermines local democracy and denies voters their preferred representation. The report also concludes that government's pressure on mayors from opposition parties continued to weaken local democracy.

The Commission has explicitly recommended that Türkiye should ensure the proper functioning of local democracy in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission and with Türkiye's commitment to the European Charter of Local Self-Government<sup>2</sup>.

Most recently in December 2024, the Council reiterated its serious concerns about the continued and deeply worrying situation in the areas of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights, highlighting as one of the particularly worrisome developments the dismissals and replacements of democratically elected municipal mayors. To this respect, the Council called on Türkiye to urgently reverse the negative trends in all these areas and credibly address the many serious shortcomings identified in the Commission's report<sup>3</sup>.

On 24 January 2025, the High Representative/Vice-President met with representatives of civil society in Ankara. She also referred to human rights situation in Türkiye during her local press conference<sup>4</sup>.

EU has been clear towards its Turkish interlocutors that while the Turkish government has a legitimate right to fight terrorism, it is also responsible for ensuring this is done in accordance with the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and Türkiye's international commitments.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/turkiye-report-2024\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/turkiye-report-2024_en)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16983-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/t%C3%BCrkiye-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-kaja-kallas-joint-press-conference\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/t%C3%BCrkiye-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-kaja-kallas-joint-press-conference_en)