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Answer given by Ms Kos
on behalf of the European Commission
(1.7.2025)

The arrest of the mayor of Istanbul on 19 March 2025 has given rise to questions regarding Türkiye's adherence to its long-established democratic tradition¹. The EU has been continuously expressing serious concerns over the situation in the area of rule of law in Türkiye. In 2018, the Council took an extraordinary measure to put the accession negotiations at a standstill due to Türkiye moving away from the EU.

At the same time, Türkiye is a candidate country and a key partner for the EU. The European Council of April 2024 reconfirmed² the EU's strategic interest in a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Türkiye.

The re-engagement efforts with Türkiye are recalibrated considering the developments in the country. Nevertheless, there are sectors where interests converge, and cooperation can be mutually beneficial, including the Customs Union, migration management, the green and digital transitions, agriculture and rural development, investment and connectivity, and crucial regional issues such as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Leaving avenues for engagement open provides a broader platform for promoting stability and addressing shared challenges in a complex geopolitical landscape.

The Commission doesn't maintain a list of the like-minded countries. In a more general context, like-minded partners of the EU share the same or similar values, standards, vision and/or commitment for engagement in specific policy areas.

¹ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/joint-statement-high-representativevice-president-kallas-and-commissioner-kos-recent-events-2025-03-19_en.

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/m5jlwe0p/euco-conclusions-20240417-18-en.pdf>.