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E-002433/2026

Answer given by Ms Kos
on behalf of the European Commission
(7.8.2026)

Türkiye is a candidate country and key partner for the EU. As reiterated by the Council and the European Council¹, the EU has a 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 Commission engages with Türkiye in areas of joint interest, while also addressing concerns over the deterioration of the rule of law and democratic standards in the country, as noted in the 2025 Enlargement Report on Türkiye². The Commission has expressed concerns regarding the imprisonment of politicians, journalists, business people and civil society activists in Türkiye, including the arrest of Istanbul Mayor³.

During the Commissioner for Enlargement visit to Ankara in February 2026, these concerns were raised in meetings with authorities and engaged with Members of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, including representatives from the opposition. The Commissioner also met civil society representatives during the February and June 2026 visits. While time constraints precluded parliamentary meetings in June, Directors from the Directorate-General for Enlargement and the Eastern Neighbourhood and the European External Action Service had engaged with Members of Parliament from all major political groups only days before the visit.

As an EU candidate country and long-standing member of the Council of Europe, Türkiye is expected to apply the highest democratic standards and practices and the Commission addresses these issues in all relevant contacts with Turkish authorities, including within the context of the sub-committee covering this area, established under the Association Agreement with Türkiye. The Commission will continue to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders in its outreach to candidate countries.

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16933-2025-INIT/en/pdf>.

² https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/turkiye-report-2025_en.

³ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/t%C3%BCrkiye/joint-statement-high-representativevice-president-kallas-and-commissioner-kos-recent-events_en?s=230; https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/t%C3%BCrkiye-statement-spokesperson-decision-%C2%A036th-ankara-regional-court-justice_en.