European Parliament: Resolution on the situation of journalists in Turkey

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On 27 October 2016, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the "Situation of journalists in Turkey". The resolution was adopted following an attempted coup d'état in Turkey in July 2016, when more than 250 people were killed, and 2 100 injured. The European Parliament "strongly condemns" the attempted coup, and "deplores the high number of casualties".It also expressed its "solidarity with the victims and their families". The Resolution also acknowledges that the Turkish Government has the "right and responsibility" to respond to the coup attempt, and that Turkey faces a "real threat from terrorism".

However, the Resolution notes that, according to the European Federation of Journalists and the Turkish Journalists' Association, following the coup in July 2016, Turkish police "have arrested at least 99 journalists and writers, most of whom have had no charges brought against them to date, bringing the number of media workers detained on charges believed to be related to their exercise of the right to freedom of expression to at least 130". In this regard, the European Parliament stresses that the attempted coup cannot be used as an "excuse" for the Turkish Government to "prevent journalists and the media in their peaceful exercise of freedom of expression through disproportionate and illegal actions and measures". The Resolution states that the European Parliament is "seriously concerned" about the closure of 150 media outlets, and "calls for them to be reopened, their independence restored and their dismissed employees reinstated in accordance with due process". The Resolution also calls on the Turkish authorities to "end the practice of misusing provisions in the penal code to appoint trustees to private media organisations, and to halt executive interference with independent news organisations, including interference in editorial decisions, the dismissal of journalists and editors, and employing pressure and intimidation against critical news outlets and journalists". Moreover, the Resolution "condemns the attempts by the Turkish authorities to intimidate and expel foreign correspondents".

Furthermore, the Resolution calls on the Turkish government to "release those journalists and media workers being held without compelling evidence of criminal activity"; "to narrow the scope of the emergency measures"; and it states "that the broadly defined Turkish anti-terrorism legislation should not be used to punish journalists for exercising their right of freedom of expression". Finally, the Resolution calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the member

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States to continue to closely monitorthe practical implications of the state of emergency and to ensure that all trials of journalists are monitored. The Resolution is also to be forwarded to the President, Government and Parliament of Turkey.

European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2016 on the situation of journalists in Turkey (2016/2935(RSP))

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