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HDP and democracy in Turkey

Statement from EFA MEP Jordi Solé (Catalonia)

EFA MEP **Jordi Solé**, a member of the European Parliament's Turkey delegation, has praised the performance of the pro-minority HDP party in Turkey's recent presidential and parliamentary elections.

The party was able to increase its parliamentary representation, and field a candidate in the presidential election, despite intimidation and the imprisonment of the party's leader and presidential candidates.

The HDP, or People's Democratic Party, won 11.4 per cent of the vote in the 24 June parliamentary election, crossing the controversial 10 per cent threshold and winning 67 seats in the Turkish parliament, up from 59 previously.

At the presidential election on the same day, the party's candidate who had campaigned from prison, came third with 8.4 per cent of the vote.

The party is a Turkey-wide pro-minority party which draws especially strong support in Kurdish areas, which have long sought greater recognition of their rights.

Jordi Solé MEP said

"In the circumstances, it is remarkable that a pro-minority party was able to perform as well as it did in Turkey's recent elections.

"Regrettably, the ongoing state of emergency in the country made it impossible to for all parties to campaign effectively and on a level playing field. The European Union's High Representative made it clear that freedom of assembly and expression, including in the media has as a result been restricted. This is totally unacceptable.

"The Turkish government must not use the state of emergency as an instrument of political repression. The state of emergency must be removed so that Turkey can return to the normalisation of the political situation in the country and pave the way to restarting efforts to find a comprehensive settlement to the Kurdish question.

"Equally the European Union must be true to its values, and should not turn a blind eye to repression by the

Turkish regime, in return for its acquiescence on the question of migration.

"European values, respect for democracy and human rights, are not optional, or at least they shouldn't be."

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