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Turkey - Erdoğan visit

Talks useful but overall fail to convince

The Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan, currently on a state visit to Brussels, today met with a delegation of the European Parliament.

Greens/EFA MEP **Hélène Flautre**, Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, commented after the meeting:

"Prime Minister Erdoğan showed a willingness to listen to MEPs' criticism. In fact, he interacted extensively with the MEPs present and reaffirmed his country's commitment to the EU."

However, when faced with specific questions pinpointing the dramatic restructurings that recently occurred in the police and judiciary, Erdoğan's responses failed to convince MEPs: he interprets the cases of corruption as resulting from deliberate external activity aimed at destabilising the country, a line of argument which was already used to dismiss the events in "Gezi Park", and justified his reorganization of the judiciary in the name of the sovereignty of the parliamentary majority.

The government's plan to place the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors under the supervision of the executive clearly goes against its commitment to respect the separation of powers.

After Erdoğan's visit to Brussels, the EU must stand firm and defend the rule of law and European principles with respect to the reforms currently underway in Turkey.

We hope that the Prime Minister's commitment to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and European standards will form the basis of parliamentary debates in Turkey."

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