



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

A - Strategy and Turkey
A.5 - Turkey

Brussels,

Subject: Enforced disappearances allegations in Turkey

Dear Petitioner,

Thank you for your email of 5 January addressed to President von der Leyen, in which you share your concerns regarding human rights and rule of law in Turkey and the growing number of cases of enforced disappearances. I have been asked to reply.

The European Commission is concerned about the worrying ongoing enforced disappearances in Turkey. In its latest annual report¹, the Commission highlighted that the Turkish authorities have yet to investigate effectively the cases of at least two dozen people allegedly abducted by state agents for many months. It also encouraged Turkey to sign the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

During her recent visit to Turkey in April 2021, President von der Leyen expressed to President Erdogan the Commission's concerns about the continued backsliding of Turkey on the rule of law and fundamental rights – against the international commitments it has taken. She particularly focused on the situation of human rights defenders and on Women's rights. She explicitly underlined that progress as regards the rule of law is an integral part of the EU-Turkey relationship².

The EU has repeatedly stressed that Turkey, as a candidate country, needs to abide by the highest democratic standards and practices, and needs to guarantee human rights in line with the European Convention on Human Rights. It is the responsibility of the relevant political and judicial authorities in Turkey to ensure that these rights are respected.

Unfortunately, the Commission does not have the formal competence to follow up on individual cases. However, we will continue to raise these concerns with the Turkish authorities as part of our ongoing dialogue.

Please rest assured, that the Commission and the EU Delegation in Ankara will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/turkey_report_2020.pdf

² <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/pr/statement-president-von-der-leyen-joint-press-conference-president-michel-following-their>

Yours faithfully,

(e-signed)
Bernard BRUNET
Head of Unit