



Emergency Resolution

Save Freedom of Media in Turkey

Adopted on the YEPP congress in Rome, 04th of April 2009

The Turkish fiscal authorities currently are in a quarrel with the independent media group Dogan Yayin over the taxation of a capital transaction in 2006/2007. Next to demanding additional tax payments, the Turkish authorities imposed a discretionary fine more than five times higher than the disputed tax payment itself. The overall payment exceeds the company value of Dogan Yayin. An independent Turkish media enterprise is in immediate danger of bankruptcy.

The newspapers of the Dogan group – Huerriyet, Milliyet and Radikal among them – have exposed financial irregularities in the social network of the governing AK party in recent years and have criticized government policies undermining the separation of state and religion such as lifting the ban on head scarves in universities.

Recognizing that,

- Turkey is an important partner of the European Union in NATO and in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean,
- Turkey has committed itself to a long term reform process transforming Turkish society, politics and the state in order to develop and move closer to its European partners,
- some important reforms in this direction have been implemented in recent years.

Considering that,

- the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech are fundamental principles for pluralistic democratic societies,
- media independent from the government that provide public control of government action are indispensable for the functioning of a democracy,
- the separation of state and religion is a fundamental principle of the republic of Turkey and western nations alike,

- the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, recently denounced the practice of Turkish media policy.

YEPP calls on the Turkish government led by the Islamic AK Party:

- to accept independent media and media conglomerates eventually critical of government policy as part of a democratic society in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights that Turkey conformed to,
- to stop infringing the freedom of the press in Turkey with administrative means and immediately stop calling for the economic boycott of the independent publications of the Dogan group,
- to base the interactions between Turkish fiscal authorities and the Dogan Yayin media group on a solid and reliable legal ground.
- to safeguard the independence of the media from any interventions coming from military.