



## RESOLUTION

### **Condemning the Republic of Turkey's egregious invasion of Northern Syria**

*Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Kyiv, 7.12.2019*

#### **Recognising that:**

- The Syrian civil war has been waged for almost a decade with few steps made to end the conflict. Since the Arab spring of 2011 the whole Middle East-North Africa region has seen conflict after conflict where different regional and international players have backed different actors. The region has several power brokers and players. Some state actors such as Syria, Yemen and Libya lack control over vast areas of their own territory while the region also has a presence of non-state actors controlling large areas of land in the region.
- The Turkish invasion of northern Syria in early October of 2019 was made unlawfully and further hampers attempts to create a stable and peaceful region;
- The withdrawal of the United States from northern Syria and the region creates a power vacuum that risks seeing actors such as Russia and Iran getting a stronger foothold in the region and increasing their capabilities;
- The Middle East has several conflicts evolving crossing both power alliances, territories and time. Israel and its foes, the tensions caused by the Saudi-Iran-struggle and rivalling Sunni blocks represent some of the big potential conflicts in the region. The Turkish invasion into northern Syria further destabilises the region;



- The Republic of Turkey is a close neighbour to Europe, has several deep ties to the continent and plays a role in international partnerships where numerous Member States of the European Union are partners as well. A well-functioning relationship with Turkey is important and The Republic of Turkey should in the long term play an active role in the region helping to create a less fractured and more stable region and with a more democratic political structure;
- To bring about stable and democratic change to the North Africa-Middle East region, European-US cooperation needs to continue and deepen if a stable long-term solution is to be implemented.

**Acknowledging that:**

- The US leadership in the region is split, with President Trump and the United States Congress being on completely different sides at times. The Turkish-Kurdish-conflict is just one of those cases. United States secretary of defence Mark Esper has acknowledged that war crimes appeared to be committed under the Turkish incursion into northern Syria. Alongside the power struggles in the region there is now a potential risk of some 12 000 ISIS fighters and up to 40 000 of their family members breaking out of prisons that the Kurdish forces have left due to the Turkish invasion. If they were to roam free in the region, years of meticulous work would be undone. It also poses a security threat against Europe if thousands of terrorists escape from detention and make their way from the region to Europe;
- The invasion of the Republic of Turkey into northern Syria has allowed ISIS to reconstitute capabilities and resources in the region and strengthen its ability to plan attacks abroad;



- Europe and specifically the European Union needs to take a broader role in creating and maintaining a safe North Africa-Middle East region. The United States role and motives in the region have become blurred and with the threat of thousands of ISIS fighters escaping and possibly returning to or making their way to Europe, the European Union needs to take on a bigger role;
- The European Union has a responsibility and key role to play to create a safer, democratic and stable world. That includes the North Africa-Middle East region and the difficult and long road that must be taken in order to be a stable and well-functioning political region;
- That all future negotiations regarding the accession of the Republic of Turkey to the European Union needs to start over with clear democratic lines for continued talks at each stage;

**YEPP calls on:**

- The European Union to immediately terminate all negotiations regarding the accession of the Republic of Turkey to the European Union. The current state of the Republic of Turkey, both its internal political development and its egregious decision to invade northern Syria, rules out any possibility the Republic of Turkey accession to the European Union.
- The European Union to condemn the invasion into northern Syria by the Republic of Turkey. The invasion into northern Syria risks enabling ISIS to return to a stronger position of power when the main groups fighting against ISIS, the Kurds, are preoccupied being attacked by Turkish forces. At the same time Kurds are withdrawing from areas where they have held thousands of ISIS fighters captured that now risk escaping detention when the Kurds are forced to retreat in the aftermath of the Turkish invasion;



- The European Union to condemn the attacks on the Kurdish people executed by the armed forces of the Republic of Turkey. The United States secretary of defence Mark Esper has acknowledged that war crimes appear to have been committed under the Turkish incursion into northern Syria. Footage circulating what appears to be summary executions of Kurds by Turkish proxy forces is one example emerging of what appears to be war crimes.
- The Republic of Turkey to immediately withdraw its armed forces from northern Syria;
- The European Union to consider sanctions against the Republic of Turkey if the country continues its military operation in the region with little or no consideration for human rights. In addition to the high risk of benefiting jihadist groups with thousands of extremists at risk of escaping their detention station.
- The European Union to recognise the Armenian genocide that occurred between 1915 and 1923 within the Ottoman Empire. Several member states of the European Union have already made such a recognition of the genocide and it is necessary that the European Union recognise such a blatant crime against humanity.