



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

A - Strategy and Turkey
A.5 - Turkey

Brussels,

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter dated 31 August 2020 and sent to Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen, Vice President Vera Jourova, Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi and HR/VP Josep Borrell Fontelles. I have been asked to reply.

I would like to inform you that, in the context of the EU enlargement policy, the European Commission monitors closely developments and reports on the progress achieved by Turkey in a number of policy areas. Democracy, rule of law and protection and respect of human rights are among the so-called fundamental political criteria, which are of primary importance for us. The pressure exercised upon members of the Turkish Judiciary, as described in your letter, falls under these priority areas.

In October 2020, the European Commission published its latest annual report on Turkey's preparations for EU accession, where it:

- Expressed its serious concerns on the continued negative developments in the rule of law, fundamental rights and the judiciary in Turkey.
- Emphasised that these concerns, expressed during the previous years too, have not been credibly addressed by Turkey.
- Reiterated that, with this serious backsliding, Turkey has continued to move further away from the European Union.

Additionally, judiciary, fundamental rights and freedoms are part of the regular bilateral technical dialogue between the European Commission and Turkey in the context of the relevant Association Sub-committee. We attach particular importance to these technical level discussions as a means of maintaining dialogue and receiving up to date information.

I would like to re-assure you that the European Commission will continue monitoring developments in Turkey, while maintaining its call to Turkey to reverse the negative developments as a matter of priority.

Yours faithfully,


Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission


Johannes Hahn
Executive Vice-President of the European Commission
Responsible for Turkey and the Eastern Partnership