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TÜRK DELEGASYONU ÜYELERİNİN YAPMIŞ OLDUĞU KONUŞMALAR

Free debate- 23 NİSAN 2012

Şaban DİŞLİ

Mr President, I would like to talk about the crisis in the global economy, which remains in a difficult phase. The downside risks are still present. Growth is slowing in both advanced and emerging economies. Among the advanced economies, debt problems, financial system stresses and deleveraging pressures are increasing tensions in the euro area. Meanwhile, emerging economies are facing capital outflows, currency depreciation and growth deceleration. The European crisis affects these economies through trade and finance, as well as through lower expectations and confidence. We see contraction in trade and a decline in the volume of trade financing and foreign direct investment.

It is clear that the global economy will grow less in 2012 and that some regions will stay in recession. We are all aware that the crisis in Europe is going through a critical stage and that the global repercussions could be painful if things get worse. This increased uncertainty amplifies the need for strengthened policy actions. Focusing on rebuilding confidence may require bolder action than has been contemplated. The danger is that due to the crisis, many political parties are losing support. Instead of planning structural reforms, political leaders are taking populist actions, and in many countries the extremists are gaining ground through protest votes. Public trust in European values is deteriorating. While fiscal and monetary measures are key to starting the recovery, it is structural reform that will be the main ingredient of global rebalancing in the medium and long term.

I have a few moments left to speak, so I should like to make one statement about the Kurdish situation. Our slogan for the Kurdish question is and should remain, "Fight the terror and negotiate with legitimate representatives." We did that in the past and we will continue to do so, but the first issue is putting down arms and coming to the negotiating table.

Equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring- 24 NİSAN

Tülin ERKAL KARA

Ms ERKAL KARA (*Turkey*) thanked the rapporteur and the committee for the report. She noted from paragraph 77 that Turkey had abolished polygamy in 1926.

The protest movement had taken place across the Mediterranean and there had been calls for democracy, new democratic institutions, free elections and freedom of association. A high price had been paid, and people must now be allowed to build the future. For decades women had been closely involved in reform through trade union action. Women had helped to throw dictators out of power. They must not now be excluded from an active role and they had to be represented in new governments. However, low numbers of women had been given civil service posts and women were being excluded from new cabinets. Women often seemed to be given

less important committees and responsibilities. All of that gave the impression that only men were considered capable of handling serious business.

Nursuna MEMECAN

Mr President, I congratulate Ms Saïdi on her excellent but sobering report about women in Arab Spring countries. After reading the report and listening to the debate today, I believe that we should keep the issues of Arab women on the Council of Europe agenda, to remain informed and take action when necessary.

Recent developments have proved again that the removal of a repressive patriarch is much easier than the removal of patriarchy in society. We should unite against that form of oppression. Women, who represent half the population in the region, need to be an integral part of the reform process. However, the decreasing number of women in transitional councils, parliaments and governments is alarming. Many such bodies are responsible for drafting new constitutions and creating political systems for their countries. They will not be complete without the input of women.

Arab women will need to create systems of alliances and negotiation tactics to work out viable solutions for social and political participation. Women and men in this Assembly support our counterparts in the struggle through sharing tactics and skills. As Ms Bergamini mentioned in her speech, the North-South Centre is one of the venues that can provide that opportunity. The first meeting, held in Rome last year, was appropriately entitled “Women as agents of change”, and it brought together a wide range of women from north and south to share experiences and learn from each other. A network of women was established after the meeting in Rome to stay connected and keep the dialogue going.

The next North-South Centre meeting will take place in Istanbul at the beginning of November this year. Its focus will be on increasing participation of women in political and social life. It is easier said than done, but progress can be achieved through co-ordinated support. The empowerment of Arab women is the vital issue in maintaining their participation in the decision-making process in political and social life.

Women’s issues are not the same in each and every Arab society; their ways are not the same and the realities are not the same. We therefore have to listen to them carefully before we offer our hand. The conventions that bring western and Arab women together are excellent opportunities for listening, learning and mutual experience-sharing. Arab women impressed all of us with their heroic efforts to end the repressive regimes in their countries and step into a new phase. We are all confident that they will continue their struggle and succeed in taking charge of their own lives. They should know that they will always have our encouragement and support in their endeavour.

*The protection of freedom of expression and information on the Internet and online media-
25 NISAN*

Nursuna MEMECAN

Dear colleagues, I would like to thank the rapporteur, Ms Postanjyan, for her report. It draws attention to important challenges in the modern era of information and technology. Information and communication technologies have become indispensable tools of our lives. We can talk about life before the Internet and life after it. It is really difficult to keep up with the technological advances, and it is equally difficult to foresee the implications of such inventions in our social and private lives. It is also difficult to keep that under control.

The Internet, and especially social media, have for ever changed how we interact with each other. Our so sacredly kept private lives and personalities are on display on Facebook pages, on LinkedIn connections and so on. From moment to moment, we report about ourselves by tweeting and spread news by re-tweeting. We upload and download videos of ourselves and others. In a way, we are now much more open and transparent.

The ethics and etiquette of yesterday will need to be revisited and revised in our societies, which will have more open and transparent individuals. Unfortunately, due to our human nature, there will be abuses in the virtual world, just as there are in the real world. We will have to fight against those abuses in the virtual world, just as we will always have to fight against abuses in the real world. Laws, rules and regulations are the means of fighting against such abuses and crimes.

It seems only logical to have rules and regulations against cybercrime and online abuses such as defamation, hacking, stealing and using personal information. But the fine line between freedom of speech and respect for privacy and security should be very well calculated. There will be individual crimes as well as organised online crimes.

The protection and security of our information are in the hands of intermediaries who store and transmit such information. So much of the information at hand is sometimes considered an asset to be marketed and profited from by the intermediaries. So much information on citizens being so easily accessible makes it attractive for governments to go after their citizens for security reasons – or so-called security reasons, which are abuses of privacy and violations of basic human rights.

The Internet is a medium whereby freedom of expression is so easily and widely exercised. The revealing of information, as well as access to information, are basic rights. The introduction of laws, rules and regulations to limit what one can do on the Internet is limiting freedom of expression, which is a violation of a basic human right. There is definitely a need for ongoing research and debate on the relationship between privacy, freedom and security, and for advances in technology to address these complex issues.

The liberal way to tackle the issue is to adopt a value-based approach. We should encourage the creation of a system of online ethics that respects human rights, basic freedoms and privacy concerns – just as we do in real life. We should persistently call for the support of such liberal values in the online world, rather than trying to devise complex legal tools for each development.

Debate under urgent procedure: the situation in Syria - 26 NİSAN

Thank you, Mr President. The report is balanced and comprehensive, but the Syrian conflict can be better understood if it is placed in the context of the sweeping change caused by the Arab revolutions that started with the uprising in Tunisia on 17 December 2010, extending from the Maghreb to the Mashriq and eventually leading to the collapse of western-backed Arab regimes.

The Arab Spring concocted by the mainstream US and European media in order to separate the social change in north Africa and the Middle East from this revolutionary content is what remained after the Arab people were robbed of their revolution by the major political allies of imperialism in those countries, namely the armed forces and the political establishment. The massive emancipation movement of the workers, the urban poor, students and women has shaken the old regimes and opened the path to elections. Nevertheless, the forces of repression have gained power under the guardianship of the armed forces whose absolute authority has remained intact even after all the civilian popular upheavals.

In Libya, the central link in the chain of north African countries, where such a mass movement did not occur, the US-led international community – NATO – brought about joint military intervention to push local reactionaries to power and replace Gaddafi's dictatorial regime. The imperialist domination of the Arab world occurs through various types of intervention and is constant. It is hypocritical and profit-oriented. The Libyan leader Gaddafi was one of the best friends of the Turkish Prime Minister as well as being a friend of Italy, but there was no mercy for him once the US decided to start a military attack on Libya and there were attempts to bring about regime change. In Bahrain, Yemen and Qatar masses of people are out in the streets fighting for democracy but we do not hear about US or Turkish backing for them because those countries are not of strategic importance.

We are, after the Libyan example, totally against US and foreign intervention in Syria. Obviously the Assad regime is a ruthless dictatorship, but it always has been. It was a dictatorship even when the Turkish Prime Minister called him a brother in 2010, so it is hardly convincing when we hear that the major concern of the west is democracy rather than strategic interests. Therefore, we urge that the Council of Europe use its influence to help bring about a peaceful outcome to the Syrian crisis and that Turkey refrain from supporting the Free Syrian Army, which commits human rights violations and crimes against humanity. We urge that the Council of Europe help to bring about a new Syria based on multi-ethnic, multireligious democracy with pluralism, rights for women and labour rights and so that the Syrian people, including the Kurds, can enjoy the right to self-determination.

Mevlüt ÇAVUŞOĞLU

We are having this urgent and timely debate on Syria because we believe that the humanitarian crisis there requires prompt and decisive action by the international community. The resolutions of the UN and the League of Arab States have provided the road map to overcome this crisis.

The Syrian Government has failed to fulfil its obligations according to the six-point plan of the joint special envoy and the UN Security Council's presidential statement. As a result of that failure, the UN Security Council adopted [Resolution 2042](#) calling for the establishment of a supervision mission. The subsequent Security Council decision to increase the number of observers up to 300 is encouraging, but not sufficient. Many more observers, perhaps

numbering thousands, should be sent to Syria to ensure that the UN mission can monitor the entire country.

Reports emerging from the country so far oblige us to be cautious about the implementation and sustainability of the cease-fire, as the shelling of civilian areas and attacks by government forces continue. If Syria does not fully co-operate with the supervision mission, it will be necessary to expect the Security Council to take more serious measures to end the bloodshed once and for all.

The Council of Europe cannot remain indifferent to the flagrant violation on its borders of the very principles for which it stands. We must continue to be vocal in demanding that the Syrian Administration end all violence against the civilian population and co-operate with the international community to overcome the humanitarian crisis.

I believe it is of the utmost importance that we acknowledge the humanitarian consequence of the uprising in Syria. Tens of thousands of Syrians have taken refuge not only in my country, Turkey, but in neighbouring countries – mainly in Jordan, and to some extent in Iraq and Lebanon – as a result of the atrocities committed by government forces. During my presidency of the Assembly, I visited refugee camps in Turkey with colleagues and we witnessed camps of a high standard providing housing, food, health services, social and educational facilities, places for religious worship, translation services and communications facilities. Although such camps provide safe havens for Syrian refugees, we found that they all wanted to return to their home.

Dear colleagues, the future of Syria must be determined by the Syrian people and we must stand firmly by them until their rightful and legitimate aspirations for democracy and freedom are fulfilled.

Şaban DİŞLİ

Thank you, Madam President. I, too, welcome this timely debate and I thank the rapporteurs for their detailed work. Despite the efforts of the international community, the situation in Syria remains a source of grave concern not only from a hard security standpoint but in relation to basic rights and freedoms.

The ongoing escalation of violence in Syria has led to a grave humanitarian crisis and Turkey has adopted an open-door policy for every Syrian fleeing from the atrocities of the regime. Turkey has set up eight different camps that now accommodate about 24 000 Syrians. Indeed, as a result of the ever-increasing numbers of Syrians seeking temporary protection within Turkish territories, new camps have been built and the living conditions in the others have been improved. About \$150 million have so far been spent on the daily maintenance of these camps. I must note one issue that is not raised in the report – recognition of the good will and the efforts of countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq, which are taking the refugees. This should have been mentioned in the report, as Mr Santini and others have said.

The figures I have mentioned indicate two things. First, the continuation of the hospitality provided to the Syrians who have had to flee their homes calls for fair burden-sharing, as many colleagues have said. This is a time for solidarity. We hope to continue providing relief to the Syrians who have taken shelter on our soil, with the support of the UN, the Arab League, the EU and NATO. Secondly, and more importantly, these alarming numbers show the magnitude

of the problem we might face if the crisis and violence in the country escalate further. Therefore, this is a time for determination and for speaking loudly with a single voice.

The resolution adopted on 14 April by the UN Security Council sends an important message. The international community should continue to hold the Syrian regime accountable. We need to see visible, verifiable and indisputable signs of change on the ground. For this, a capable monitoring mission with an adequate number of observers is a must, as Mr Çavuşoğlu has said. In order to remedy the situation, a process of political transition must be started immediately. Syrian people should be given a chance to build their own future through a process that embraces all ethnic, religious and political groups in the country. The final objective in Syria should be to achieve a fully democratic system that guarantees fundamental rights.

We have to take a stand against violence and oppression. We have to support the legitimate demands of the people for democracy. May I make one simple point to Mr Kürkçü? If our friends commit deadly crimes, it is a basic humanitarian requirement to be against those friends.

Pelin GÜNDEŞ BAKIR

I congratulate the rapporteur on this constructive and balanced report. It provides many insights into the current situation in Syria and draws a road map for the steps that the international community should take to stop the violence and maintain some form of stability in Syria. We all condemn the violence of Assad's regime.

I want to underline the fact that those who express the view that the Syrian crisis is not a European problem, or that the Syrian people can deal with it through their own social dynamic, does not reflect the truth. We cannot isolate ourselves from these ongoing human rights violations. Quite the contrary, the crisis is on our doorstep. Further, there are associated expenses resulting from this instability in the form of providing for an increasing number of refugees. The Turkish-Syrian border is also the Council of Europe's border with the Middle East. If the atrocities being committed by Syrian military forces on innocent civilians continue, the flow of refugees into Turkey will quickly increase to the hundreds of thousands. So far, Turkey has spent \$150 million of its own national resources on sheltering some 24 000 refugees from Syria, and the numbers are constantly rising. The Council of Europe should look at the situation in Syria from a humanitarian point of view. From that angle, it can be seen that it is essential to shoulder the burden along with the other member states of the Council of Europe. That is imperative for the future sustainability of humanitarian aid in order to shelter these refugees.

I also agree with the rapporteur that in order to achieve these goals we should widen the coalition of states that are seeking a resolution, with particular reference to the Group of Friends of the Syrian People. We should use all the remaining channels of communication and promote active diplomacy between the Council of Europe and the Syrian Government to lead Syria to an end to violence and the maintenance of stability. In this context, Russia can play a positive and constructive role by using her influence on the ruling government in Syria and encouraging it to stop all violence and bloodshed. We need to reach a peaceful political solution that includes all the political forces operating in Syria.

The final goal is that of building a pluralistic and democratic society in Syria in which its cultural, ethnic and religious minorities can live side by side in peace and tolerance, along with the provision of full human rights for women. It is essential that the international community is

unified in its effort to exert diplomatic pressure on the ruling government in Syria in order to achieve this goal. Syria must end all violence. It must protect its civilians and withdraw all military forces from its population centres. The free movement of journalists and the immediate release of those who have been detained is of paramount importance to the member states of the Council of Europe. Kofi Annan's peace plan must be implemented in full.

Sanctions are an important factor in forcing Assad to act in accordance with the international community. However, we must be certain that any sanctions that are imposed do not target Syrian civilians. Their human right to self-defence has to be respected.

***The situation of internally displaced persons and returnees in the North Caucasus region-
26 NISAN***

Tülin ERKAL KARA

Ms ERKAL KARA (*Turkey*) thanked the rapporteur for his detailed report. Turkey played host to a substantial population of Caucasian internally displaced people whose political importance and unity led the Turkish Government to consider closely such problems as low living standards, security and stability. Those people required attention. They needed resources. The Assembly should appreciate what Russia had done in recent times, but there remained much still to do.

The balanced and constructive report had been unanimously adopted by the committee.

Finally, the Assembly needed to maintain its interest in the tragic situation of the 1 million Azeris who had been displaced by Armenia.

Promoting an appropriate policy on tax havens – 27 NISAN

Pelin GÜNDEŞ BAKIR

I congratulate the rapporteur on an excellent report that promotes an appropriate policy on tax havens. Tax evasion is a crime and one that we as member states of the Council of Europe strongly condemn.

A country can be identified as a tax haven if it satisfies a number of conditions. In tax havens there is either no tax or only a symbolic tax on relevant income. Tax havens have legislation that guarantees secrecy and protects investors from exchange of information and tax scrutiny. There is lack of transparency, so investors can hide the source of their income and may not declare it in their country of origin. National funds illegally looted by political leaders or dictators can easily find a safe haven in offshore financial centres, where they are laundered or invested.

Investors usually do not undertake any substantial business activities in these tax havens because many of them are small islands where there is little business productivity. Self-promotion as an offshore financial centre is also characteristic of a tax haven. In the past, we have heard arguments in favour of tax havens. Some have argued that as they are independent countries, why should it not be possible for them to control their own tax regimes? Along the same lines, it has been advocated that this could decrease the inefficiencies associated with tax systems and perhaps benefit investors.

There is a crucial response to these points. Tax havens work on the principles of secrecy and a lack of transparency. In the past, they have been used for money laundering and to facilitate the funding of terrorist activities. It is this aspect of activities in tax havens that requires very special attention because society has to pay the greatest cost. In a globalised economy, money can be moved very swiftly and anonymously between different countries, and thus can be used to finance the activities of terrorists, drug traffickers and others undertaking illegal activities.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe should urge the Committee of Ministers to set up an international set of standards that ensure transparency and the free exchange of information regarding tax matters. These principles of transparency and the free exchange of information are essential to ensure that all economic activity is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. We must fight fraud and tax evasion. In that context, participation in the Global Forum on Taxation should be encouraged. Offshore tax havens have declared economic war on honest taxpayers in the member states of the Council of Europe. Transfer pricing, undertaken with the involvement of offshore centres, leads to multinational companies evading their responsibilities by diverting their tax burden on to smaller market players or taxpayers. This inevitably results in a decrease in public investment. I strongly believe that if our aim here is to present a unified Council of Europe and to achieve greater unity between its members, our first step should be to develop a harmonious set of tax policies in order to prevent harmful tax evasion practices.

Decent pensions for all – 27 NISAN

Pelin GÜNDEŞ BAKIR

I thank the rapporteur for this excellent report, which has the best intentions, and aims to provide a road map for maintaining a sustainable pension system and to guarantee adequate pensions for all, with special emphasis on groups that require special protection.

I strongly believe that, if our aim is to be a united Council of Europe and to achieve greater unity between our members, one of the first steps that we should take is securing a common and harmonised social security system that includes all less-advantaged groups, such as dependent elderly parents, people with disabilities, migrants or women, who are almost always underpaid and seldom have managerial positions throughout their careers. Common European legislation should be worked on in order to facilitate these risk groups' social progress. It is therefore imperative to look at pension and social security systems in a broader context.

My country, Turkey, is one of the eight countries in Europe that have signed and ratified the treaty of the European Convention on Social Security along with Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Belgium and Austria. Since 1977, the treaty has not been signed and ratified by many European countries, including those with a gross domestic product per capita four times higher than that of Turkey. It is essential that the European Convention on Social Security and the associated treaty are updated to reflect today's work situations and lifestyles. A revision that degrades people's social and human rights to a level below that of bilateral agreements is by no means acceptable. The revised convention should include all risk groups in relation to social security and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe should call on all member states to sign and ratify the updated treaty of the European Convention on Social Security. Unless that is done, we cannot really talk about having a united Europe with adequate human rights.

Many countries in Europe have not signed bilateral social security agreements, either. That is another example of the violation of basic human rights. Multilateral co-ordination of social security legislation is one way of achieving greater unity between Council of Europe member states.

I also strongly believe that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe should call on all member states to guarantee and provide all social rights without any reductions for immigrant workers. Many immigrant workers in Europe work in risky or difficult work conditions such as in coal mines or construction jobs. There are many reported cases of permanent disabilities arising from injuries sustained at work. Member states of the Council of Europe should guarantee to immigrant workers who are citizens of another Council of Europe member state and who are disabled and entitled to the invalidity pension the same pension rights as native citizens.