

3 Ekim 2011

Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee

Ms MEMECAN (*Turkey*) – I thank the election observation delegation and the rapporteur for her report on the elections in Turkey. This is the bottom line: in free, fair and democratic elections, 84% of people participated; 95% of people are now represented in the Turkish Parliament; and the governing AK Party got 50% of the votes and formed a government for a third consecutive term. That landslide victory clearly indicates the people's appreciation of the AKP's democratic reforms. Through co-operation within the Turkish Parliament, a new and improved constitution is the priority, which will improve the quality of life of people in Turkey.

The elections were conducted in an orderly and professional fashion. The results were published online in real time by various television and internet media, and the final results were established within a couple of hours. The campaign rallies attracted cheerful crowds. The violence that the rapporteur, Ms Lundgren, has mentioned was conducted by the PKK, and it is still continuing. I call on this Assembly to condemn the ongoing terrorist attacks against Turkish and Kurdish people in Turkey. On behalf of the Turkish delegation, I condemn the attacks in Norway and repeat our sympathy for the Norwegian people.

The political parties that nominated candidates who were in prison in the hope that those candidates would be released, if elected, were disappointed after the elections, because the lower and higher courts rejected the appeals for the release of detainees. The two opposition parties wanted to make a statement by boycotting parliament, but later they both realised that the only solution in a democratic society is through parliamentary work. They ended their boycott, took the oath and returned to parliament. Their confidence in the parliamentary system is the result of years of democratic experience in Turkey.

The media in Turkey is diverse. Through state channels and the large number of privately owned local and national TV channels, newspapers, magazines and news websites, people are exposed to different news and political perspectives in Turkey. The media in Turkey is as free as in any other developed democratic country, and, as in any other developed democratic country, there is room for improvement.

Mr KOÇ (*Turkey*) extended his condolences to Norway and thanked Ms Lundgren for her work.

In Turkey, after the election, the Supreme Board of Elections had determined that one candidate could not take their seat because they had allegedly engaged in

propaganda activities. Two more elected deputies representing CHP and six from the BDP had also been refused their seats. Individuals had been held on remand for two years without evidence being produced or charges made. As a result, all 135 CHP members and 35 BDP members had refused to swear the oath and take their seats after the election. The CHP members eventually took their seats after a joint declaration was issued, emphasising the important role of parliament. The rule of law and judicial independence were vital to upholding democracy in Turkey.

Mr Marty was to be thanked for all his work for the Assembly.

Ms BİLGEHAN (*Turkey*) said that one of the positive results of the election was that she had been re-elected and was back at the Council where she had spent a pleasurable five years.

As Turkey had had a multi-party system since 1950, elections were ordinarily carried out in a free and fair fashion. The Council had not needed to send a monitoring delegation because it was confident about how elections were conducted.

The fact that the Council had sent a 30-strong delegation to monitor the recent elections could be construed as a change in attitude towards Turkey's democracy. That provided a positive opportunity to develop relationships between Turkey and the Council of Europe. Turkey had made strides over the last few years towards democratisation and it was to be hoped that that would continue.

Although there had been a 10% threshold at the 2011 election, the end result was acceptable. Turnout, at 84%, was exceptional in Europe. Certain political parties in Turkey had not reached the 10% threshold, but had been able to have candidates elected through independent lists. Turkey would continue to eliminate barriers to political participation, and her own party was discussing that issue with opposition parties.

Some journalists had engaged in censorship. In addition, religion and ethnic origin had on occasion been exploited for propaganda purposes. However, the use of languages other than Turkish during the election campaign had been a sign of progress and women had made headway by increasing their representation from 9% to 14%. The need to strengthen internal democracy remained a priority.

4 Ekim 2011

Request for Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Palestinian National Council

Ms MEMECAN (*Turkey*) – Mr President, dear colleagues, it is a great pleasure to attend this historic debate to honour the request from the PNC to become a Partner for Democracy. I congratulate Tiny Kox and members of the Political Affairs Committee for making that possible, and I welcome members of the PNC to our Assembly.

I am wholeheartedly in favour of the proposal. I congratulate the PNC on its courage, vision and its strong commitment to improving Palestinians' quality of life through the principles espoused by the Council of Europe. Close co-operation between the Council of Europe and the PNC will boost the confidence of the PNC and help to restore the dignity of Palestinians. The expertise of the Council of Europe will empower the national council in its efforts to unite with Gaza and improve its relationship with Israel.

PNC expectations are high, and it should be aware that we are keen on our demands. However, we should remember that, according to the prevailing rules, every aspect of Palestinian existence and movement depends on Israel. Whether Palestinians can travel from town to town, open new business ventures, and visit friends and relatives are things that are up to the Israelis. With all due respect for Israeli concerns about security and safety, which should not be ignored, we call on the Israeli side to create favourable conditions so that the Palestinians can fulfil their commitments to partnership status. It is a pleasure to hear the positive response from the Israeli delegation to Mr Kox's proposals on this issue.

It is time to urge Israel to remove the inhuman blockade on the people of Gaza in a new beginning. That positive move would resonate well with the dynamic and change that the Arab Spring has brought to the region. It would help the PNC to resolve issues and facilitate unity with Gaza. If we are to support people's aspirations in this region we must not fail to address the Palestinians' legitimate call for a state of their own. It is almost 65 years since the UN agreed to the creation of two states, and the solution has been delayed for far too long. I hope the Partner for Democracy status will be the beginning of a new and peaceful era in the Middle East. I also add that Turkey will continue to contribute to peace and stability in the Mediterranean and will not be aggravated by futile, irresponsible provocations.

Mr KOÇ (*Turkey*) thanked Mr Kox for his work on his report, which concluded that the request made by the Palestinian National Council for Partner for

Democracy status conformed with the requirements of the Assembly. It recommended that the status should be granted to the Palestinian National Council, and that was welcome. The Palestinian National Council's request was a legitimate one in the present context. The events of the Arab Spring had shown a great thirst for democracy in the region and that the people of the countries concerned were prepared even to lay down their lives for democracy. A resolution to the conflict between Palestine and Israel remained necessary.

The Council of Europe had a responsibility to grant the Palestinian National Council's request in order to strengthen democracy and the rule of law in the region. The report listed specific issues that had to be addressed if progress were to be achieved towards democracy and consolidation of the rule of law. It did not, however, mention one issue: the importance of Israel's being part of the process. Negotiation should be resumed with a clear timetable and on the basis of the 1967 agreement. The release of Gilad Shalit would demonstrate good will on the part of the Palestinians, but it was necessary to emphasise the inhumane situation in the Gaza Strip.

A delegate from Greece had spoken about relations between Turkey and Israel and the Greek-Cypriot community. That was another issue and should be debated at another time. It was not relevant to the debate.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had agreed that the Palestinian National Council was able to function as a state. Some 10 days ago, Mahmoud Abbas had said at the UN that there was no rule of law in the Middle East because there was a state that was missing. Mr Abbas had said that the legitimacy of the state of Israel was never questioned, but that the Palestinian state was missing from the region. Any peaceful settlement should be made on the basis of the resolution of the UN Security Council, which was in accordance with the principles of the Council of Europe. Following the Arab Spring, the wind of change should also blow on Ramallah, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the emerging democracies in the Arab world

Mr KOÇ (*Turkey*) congratulated Mr Gardetto on his excellent report. In Europe, the 20th century had seen a long search for freedom. In the 1970s, that quest for freedom had happened in countries in the south, while in the 1980s and 1990s it had taken place in countries in the east. Europe could not remain indifferent to events in its own neighbourhood. In the past, European countries had concentrated on short-term aid to countries and had not offered assistance for long-term development. It was not possible to foresee the outcome of the present revolutions, but some catalysts for change were already in place, such as inequality of economic

distribution and violations of human rights. In the eyes of western democracies, it had once been acceptable to co-operate with unacceptable leaders.

The revolutions in the Arab world had taken place on the basis of the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe. That made its role and responsibilities all the more important. Europe should contribute towards full transitions to democracy. The revolutions offered a great hope for the future, but the countries concerned remained fragile. Avoiding the establishment of theocracies or military regimes was vital. Secular states should be established in order to prevent religious fundamentalists from taking power. Otherwise, the Arab Spring could turn into a winter. It was necessary for member States to support those countries in their post-revolutionary periods in order to establish true democracies with strong and stable institutions. Before people could vote, however, they needed to be able to eat. In offering aid, European countries should respect the dignity of states. Relationships with Arab countries should not be based only on the question of migration.

Ms BİLGEHAN (*Turkey*) congratulated Mr Gardetto on his report. There had been important changes in world history since the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. Unassailable regimes had fallen and difficult conflicts had been resolved. New problems had emerged, though, even if those changes had been expected to lead to more human rights and democracy.

The Council of Europe had been based on those principles since 1949 and it was in an excellent position to assist the countries of the Arab Spring without repeating the errors of the past. Help should be given by investing more in people than in trade. As a Muslim state, Turkey proved that Islam was compatible with democracy.

The separation of state and religious affairs was a central condition of democracy. Democratisation in Turkey had been of great benefit to women, who had had the right to vote since 1934. This had also enabled the country to take part in the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men at the Council of Europe.

Social media had had an important role to play in the Arab Spring and in facilitating the spread of information across borders. The Council of Europe would have a key role in the democratisation of the new Arab governments, and the report provided a good road map towards achieving that end.

Ms BAKIR (*Turkey*) – I thank the chairman for giving us the opportunity to exchange views and to listen to ideas and insight on emerging democracies in the

Arab world. The strengthening of pluralism, free elections, respect for human rights, decentralisation measures, the alternation of power, the rule of law, constitutional and institutional reform and the enhanced role of civil society in the decision-making process are priorities in the region. A more-for-more and less-for-less strategy should be enforced, which involves increased co-operation with Arab countries that achieve a higher standard of human rights and democracy and which take steps towards reform. It is equally important to extend dialogue and policy making to grass-roots level and not restrict the procedure to the official élite. It would not be appropriate to pursue a one-size-fits-all approach in the region, as every country is unique.

We should not expect Arab countries to copy our models exactly, but help them to find their own form of democracy. We must respect and recognise the values and belief systems of Arab people when devising policies for democratic transformation. Democracy is not an idea suited to one specific kind of culture. The view that says that Islam is not compatible with democracy is completely simplistic. Those prejudices reveal deep ignorance and even deeper disrespect for other cultures. Autocratic regimes in Arab countries do not stem from Islam, but from a failure to understand or practise Islam correctly. Southern Mediterranean countries should not be perceived as a source of fundamentalism, as extremism stems from poverty and decades of oppression under autocratic regimes, as well as low levels of education among citizens and provocative events in the struggle among powers to gain control over resources in the region.

European financial and civil support to promote democracy should not be restricted to western-style, activist non-governmental organisations but should extend to local groups connected to a mosque as well as faith-based groups that aim to practise their religion peacefully. We should also find ways to prevent autocratic regimes from cracking down on peaceful faith-based groups.

Permanent security and economic prosperity will be achieved only if the Arab-Israeli conflict is peacefully resolved. Sustainable security can never be achieved through military action, but through democracy, freedom, job creation and alliance building in the region, rather than by making enemies. We therefore expect an Israeli spring. Women's empowerment is a "must" if we are to achieve permanent stability and democracy in the region. Societies that oppress women cannot achieve progress. Europe should continue to provide assistance for women's equal representation at all levels of society in the region.

Equally, we should not forget that democracy cannot provide jobs, it cannot reduce poverty and it cannot provide economic growth on its own. If those things do not go hand in hand with democratic progress, the intended benefits of democracy will not be obtained. We must empower the people in the region so that they benefit from its wealth and resources. We can provide assistance to the region for a programme of sustainable growth and economic development. The problem of

illegal migration will not be permanently solved unless continuing economic growth, regional development and pluralism are generated in the southern Mediterranean countries.

Last but not least, Europe should provide technical assistance to prepare for the elections and assist institutional and constitutional reform. The revolution is not finished, so it is important to develop monitoring mechanisms so that new dictators do not replace the old ones. Europe should assist Arab countries in increasing civilian control over armed forces, setting the timetable for elections and embarking on constitutional reform to achieve more democratic constitutions in Arab countries as soon as possible.

National sovereignty and statehood in contemporary international law: the need for clarification

Mr KOÇ (*Turkey*) – Dear colleagues, the report deals with a critical issue. More and more, internal fighting, civil war and ethnic strife threaten world peace. The Council of Europe is rightly addressing the issue. We have to answer the question: under what conditions does the international community have a right to intervene in a state's domestic affairs? When massacres, ethnic cleansing and gross violations of human rights are committed, the international community cannot stand by and limit itself to well-wishing statements and strongly worded condemnations.

That is why chapter VII of the UN Charter provides a power to the international community to use force when world peace is at stake. Let us be clear: we are debating not whether there should be an intervention but what kind of intervention it should be. That is not an easy question. On the one hand, there is the cardinal concept of state sovereignty and, on the other, there is the sacredness of human rights. For the sake of respecting sovereignty, we cannot allow the undermining of the latter. The rapporteur's task, therefore, was not easy as there is no perfect answer to that tough question.

When trying to answer that question the rapporteur refers to a study carried out by the United Nations, "Responsibility to Protect," prepared by the high-level International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, on which the report is partly based. That is where the problem starts. The UN report did not once mention Cyprus – not once. Yet Ms Schuster's report is built on Cyprus, which the report uses as the primary example for almost everything. The impression is given that the UN report also dealt with Cyprus, which is certainly not the case.

The UN report's title was "Responsibility to Protect". In 1974, Turkey, as a guarantor power, protected the lives of hundreds of thousands of Turkish Greek Cypriots. It did so with a clear mandate based on international treaties and

international law. Dear colleagues, history is not a supermarket in whose lines and aisles you supply your needs or buy the things you want, but you do not see the other realities. That would not be truth. If Turkey had not intervened in a timely fashion in 1974, ending the bloodshed on the island, we would now be talking about how the guarantor powers failed to implement the obligations under Article IV of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee.

Unfortunately, the report and the draft resolution it contains fails to represent the realities in that respect. Inevitably that discredits the report. I say to the rapporteur that the truth cannot be changed by words.

Mr DİŞLİ (*Turkey*) – Thank you, Mr President. Dear colleagues, I also would like to start by thanking Ms Schuster for her report, which is on one of the most controversial issues that we may face.

The international community is under an obligation to respect the sovereignty of states, but sovereignty does not give carte blanche immunity to states to do whatever they may wish within their borders. There is a clear understanding today that once a state fails to prevent violation of human rights leading to violence and human loss within its borders, the international community will raise its voice, as is happening today. The greater the failure of the state, the more forceful the response of the international community will be. When the issue is about preventing atrocities or massacres, I think that everyone agrees that we cannot be onlookers so that the sovereignty of the state is respected. Sovereignty brings an obligation to a state to be the protector of the human rights of its citizens. It is the main responsibility of governments to ensure the protection and promotion of the fundamental rights and freedoms of their citizens. Protecting the rights of citizens and their wellbeing is the ultimate legitimacy for any sovereignty.

If that is the case, how is it that this report ended up condemning the peace operation that put an end to a military *coup d'Etat*, stopped a civil war and prevented massacres? That is exactly what happened in 1974 in Cyprus. In the report, particularly on Cyprus, facts are ignored and one side's arguments are presented as unquestioned truth. That is one of the main ambiguities that inevitably weakens the value of the report. Perhaps the distinguished rapporteur should have been better informed of the facts so that relevant issues could not be mixed with those that are totally irrelevant.

May I say to Ms Postanjyan, our friend from Armenia, that she did not recognise Turkey's border while complaining about the border being closed. I urge her to make such a call to her own government before lecturing us. Armenia should put an end to its occupation of 20% of Azeri lands.

5 Ekim 2011

The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2010-11

Mr DIŞLI (*Turkey*) – I thank Ms Vèsaitè and other rapporteurs for their extensive reports and Mr Angel Gurría for being with us today. Thanks to the report before us and the statement made by Mr Gurría we have now been further informed of the OECD's activities in 2010-2011. We have also heard some ideas about the organisation's future, on its 50th anniversary.

As mentioned by the rapporteur, it is indeed important to continue the OECD enlargement process, expanding to those countries which are ready to implement the OECD acquis as it would further strengthen the organisation and promote its values.

After the decision taken at the 2007 ministerial meeting, accession negotiations with four of the five candidate countries have been completed successfully. This is a welcome fact. We are also glad to see that the accession process of Russia is well under way. However, we deem it rather early to start considering the next wave of enlargement at this stage. We believe that the organisation needs first to absorb its new members. Secondly, my question to Mr Gurría is that since now you have large co-operation with other international institutions, would you think of developing a new rating system as well or at least start rating the rating agencies?

Thirdly, most of the countries under severe financial crisis – even some members of OECD or the European Union – now have confidence problems, confidence in markets, banks as well as in governments. Do you have any plans for a confidence-building process? I would very much like to have Mr Gurría's views on this.

6 Ekim 2011

Abuse of state secrecy and national security: obstacles to parliamentary and judicial scrutiny of human rights violations

Mr KOÇ (*Turkey*) thanked Mr Marty who had always sought consensus and raised pertinent points.

No breach of human rights could escape scrutiny and the rule of law must not be circumvented. Parliamentary and judicial channels were required both to protect the legitimate activities of security services and to uncover abuses. The global nature of the struggle against terrorism crossed boundaries, but there was no justification for undermining human rights.

The post-Second World War creation of constitutions across Europe had relied on the creation of individual rights vis-à-vis the state. Legal systems had also been created to protect fundamental rights. Governments had to be accountable and democratic institutions supported. The judiciary could prevent governments from overstepping the law. Governments could do a great deal in the name of national security, including sometimes murder or assassination. The role of the courts was to ensure that governments governed legitimately and respected democratic rules. It was at the most difficult times that people needed to be most wary of the secret police. A strong judiciary was necessary to protect human rights and hold government to account.

Current affairs debate: How can Council of Europe member States come to the aid of countries touched by humanitarian catastrophes such as those in East Africa?

Mr ÇAVUŞOĞLU (*Turkey*) – Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Dear colleagues, it is not our usual practice that the President of the Assembly introduces a debate, but, during its meeting on Sunday, Mr Gross suggested to the Presidential Committee that it propose to the Bureau that I be appointed as introducer of the debate. It is a pleasure for me to introduce such an important debate.

Dear colleagues, the growing number of humanitarian disasters, which have hit many regions around the world following natural catastrophes or conflicts, is a serious matter of concern for us all. This is not the first time that our Assembly has addressed such issues. In January 2005, we held a debate under the urgent procedure on the European response to the tsunami disaster in south-east Asia. In October 2007, we debated the issue of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, as well as

Europe's response to humanitarian disasters. These three debates provide a very good background.

Today's debate is focused specifically on the situation in East Africa where the humanitarian situation is extremely alarming. This region, also called the Horn of Africa, covers the territory of Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti. In this region, more than 13 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian aid due to drought, food crisis and conflict. The last two years have been the driest in the Horn of Africa. Consequently, harvests have failed, livestock mortality has soared and food and water have become extremely expensive.

Let me give you a few figures. The price of food, especially that of staple cereals, has increased by as much 240%. In most areas affected by the drought, malnutrition rates are over 30% – more than double the internationally recognised emergency threshold. In some areas, livestock mortality rates are between 40% and 60%, which dramatically increases food insecurity and decreases the population's ability to cope with the difficult situation.

The figures on the human casualties of the crisis are frightening. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, some 1.5 million Somalis are internally displaced, mostly in the south-central region of the country. There are more than 800 000 Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa. Thousands of Somali people are arriving at refugee camps every week in northern Kenyan and southern Ethiopia and the situation is not improving.

What has been the European response to this and to similar disasters? A 2007 report by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population comprehensively analysed the different ways in which European states participate in international responses to humanitarian disasters. The committee concluded that the variety and complexity of the mechanisms require extensive information-sharing as well as good co-ordination. At the same time, it is not just a problem of technicalities. As the Assembly stressed in [Resolution 1586](#) (2007), the problem that Europe has to face is primarily a political one: at present, there is no political agreement between the member States on how humanitarian assistance should be effectively organised.

Some harmonisation is achieved within the European Union through the European Union humanitarian aid department, or ECHO. For example, to date, the European Union has provided as much as €661 million of aid to the Horn of Africa, which represents nearly one third of the total assistance provided to the region in 2011. However, the EU's mechanism does not include all member States of the Council of Europe, so it cannot be used as a pan-European platform for co-ordinating our response to humanitarian disasters.

In that context, I stress that many European countries are engaged in huge bilateral humanitarian relief operations in the region. My country, Turkey, was among the

first to respond. A huge national campaign to help the Somalis affected by the drought and famine has enabled us rapidly to collect more than \$250 million in donations. The Turkish authorities have also provided material aid such as food and medical supplies, ambulances and two fully equipped and staffed mobile field hospitals. Furthermore, on 17 August 2011, Turkey hosted the emergency meeting of the executive committee of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation on Somalia. During the meeting, the member states of the OIC, including Turkey, pledged to provide some \$350 million in aid to the region. The visit of Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan to Somalia on 19 August provided additional political impetus to the process of co-ordinating the international humanitarian relief effort in the region.

Turkey is just one example. I am sure that in the debate many of you will talk about the specific initiatives of your national authorities in the region and the various co-ordination mechanisms that could be put in place.

Against that background, let me suggest three issues for discussion to launch our debate. First, the European and international mechanisms to co-ordinate the provision of humanitarian aid in eastern Africa, as well as in other parts of the world, must be improved. Europe needs a truly pan-European co-ordination mechanism, supported at the highest political level by all Council of Europe member States.

In that respect, the recommendations in [Resolution 1586](#) (2007) on Europe's response to humanitarian disasters remain fully relevant. I stress the importance of ensuring transparency and of broad information-sharing about the operations to avoid duplication of effort, competition for resources and overlapping initiatives.

Secondly, in our capacity as members of national parliaments, we must scrutinise the activities of governments and executive agencies that provide and co-ordinate humanitarian aid to ensure that their actions comply with this Assembly's recommendations.

Thirdly, most donors usually start dispatching humanitarian aid when the disaster has already happened. At the same time, the international community must be proactive in creating an environment in which the consequences of humanitarian disasters are minimised and the necessary aid can be delivered efficiently and effectively. Here, I see a clear role for the Council of Europe. The standards that we promote – democratic stability, human rights and sustainable development – make up that environment.

In that context, the situation in East Africa is not unique. I think of North Africa and the Middle East, where the problems that triggered the Arab revolutions – inequality, corruption, lack of political freedom, unemployment, economic downturns and lack of opportunities in the job market – have yet to be resolved. As

a result, many people in the region, especially the young, continue to live in precarious humanitarian conditions.

In [Resolution 1805](#) (2011) on the large-scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Europe's southern shores, which our Assembly adopted in April, we stressed that, in the medium and long terms, Europe will need to invest heavily in the countries of North Africa, both economically and democratically. We are already engaged in that process through Partner for Democracy status, election observation and the provision of support for institution and capacity-building.

I am sure that that new experience is useful in addressing the root causes of the humanitarian challenges in East Africa as well as in other parts of our neighbourhood. I hope that the Assembly will continue to provide political support to the Council of Europe's engagement in the region. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to make those comments and for your attention.

Ms KARA (*Turkey*) was pleased to make her first speech at the Council of Europe on a subject so important to Turkey. The Horn of Africa was enduring one of the most difficult periods in its history. More than 12 million people in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti were in dire need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Civil war in Somalia for the past 20 years had caused heavy human losses and the loss of many natural resources. As a result, the country faced its worst famine in 60 years, which was a tragedy.

There was, though, some cause for optimism. There were signs of limited progress towards reconciliation on the part of Somalian leaders. Humanitarian aid to assist reconstruction of the country would mean progress in the Horn of Africa. There remained, however, a lack of real awareness on the part of the international community, and awareness had to be raised among the peoples of Council of Europe member States.

Turkey had launched several initiatives. Donations had been raised from the people, who had been very generous. An international campaign had been launched, pre-fabricated field hospitals sent to Somalia and refugee camps built, for up to 2 000 people. The Turkish Prime Minister had visited the area, enabling Turkey's Government to take stock of the situation. He had also announced the imminent reopening of an embassy in Mogadishu. Turkey had been involved in the reconstruction of Mogadishu airport and in other public infrastructure works throughout Somalia.

The Council of Europe had a role to play to rebuild Somalia and could contribute to the training of a future administration there on such issues as constitutional and electoral reform.

Mr ÇONKAR (*Turkey*) – Esteemed colleagues, today I have the honour to take the floor at this distinguished Assembly for the first time. I am glad that my first contribution will be on a pressing humanitarian issue. The Assembly has proven its alertness to humanitarian crisis once more by opening a debate on catastrophes such as those currently plaguing East Africa.

As we speak, children, women and men are trying to survive the miserable conditions that engulf them due to drought, political instability and armed conflict in the Horn of Africa. In Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti, 12.4 million people are in dire need of aid. The worst conditions are in Somalia, where a two-decade long civil war has depleted resources, destroyed infrastructure, devastated agriculture and livestock, and prevented development. Exacerbated by drought, the biggest famine of the last half century is afflicting the people of Somalia. In the past three months alone, 29 000 children have starved to death. A total of 895 000 Somali refugees are in Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen, and a further 1.5 million Somalis are internally displaced persons.

The United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance has announced that \$1.6 billion is needed to provide aid for the affected people. So far, only \$477 million has been committed by the international community. In the meantime, Somali leaders have taken important steps towards reconciliation, with a view to ending the transitional period. It is imperative that such efforts are supported and supplemented by the international community. All possible assistance must be made available to help Somalia now while the Somali authorities have gained ground against destabilising forces. There is no time to lose, as the latest terrorist attack in Mogadishu in which more than 70 innocent people, mostly students, were killed, has shown that terrorists want to extinguish every hope of a normal and decent life for an already beleaguered people.

That is all the more reason for the international community to pay attention to the Horn of Africa. The humanitarian catastrophe in Africa requires urgent and intensive intervention. The Council of Europe must do all that it can. In that regard, the first step is to call on its members to step up individual and co-ordinated efforts to end the misery of the Somali people. As parliamentarians, each of us must also raise public awareness to the crisis when we return home. The international community must recognise its responsibility and own the problem.

For its part, Turkey has sent relief supplies worth \$30 million, deployed two mobile hospitals and built a refugee camp. Donations collected in Turkey have reached

nearly \$300 million. Turkish non-governmental organisations are present throughout the country, and are reaching out to the needy even in al-Shabaab-controlled areas, with the knowledge of the transitional federal government.

We also need to show the Somalis that they are not alone. They are feeling ostracised, and that must come to an end. A delegation of six ministers headed by Prime Minister Erdoğan recently visited Somalia, and Turkey is reopening its embassy in Mogadishu. More countries should follow suit. The international community must move its capacities to Somalia without further delay.

Although the Council of Europe might lack necessary logistical resources in the field, it can still contribute to relief efforts. Relevant bodies of the Council of Europe can look into what can be done in areas such as immigration and health. In that respect, a contribution by the Council of Europe Development Bank can be considered as its three sectoral lines of action are all relevant to the case of Somalia: strengthening social integration, managing the environment and supporting public infrastructure. Through its energetic and extensive youth sector, the Council of Europe can also initiate awareness-raising programmes about the situation of the Somali people.

Our Organisation can also provide expertise for the rehabilitation of the State in the long term. In co-operation with other international organisations and expert bodies, the Council of Europe can play a significant part in training Somali authorities initially to establish and subsequently to bolster the rule of law and sound governance. If we are to avoid a relapse into chaos and armed conflict, that is important. A stable Somalia can be a place for Somalis to live in peace and dignity.

I reiterate what a profound honour it is to contribute to the work of this esteemed body, and I express my commitment to serving the common good of our people.

Debate under urgent procedure: the political situation in the Balkans

Ms MEMECAN (*Turkey*) – Mr President, dear colleagues, I warmly thank the rapporteur, Mr von Sydow, for his report and his chairmanship of the Political Affairs Committee, of which I am a member.

Stability and prosperity in the Balkans are vital for stability throughout Europe. The memories of tragic events in the region are still fresh in our mind. The atrocities hurt not only our conscience but social, economic and democratic life in the region, threatening security and stability throughout Europe. Colleagues in the Assembly should not regret Europe's support for Kosovo's independence, and I suggest that they go back and review the records about what went on.

We are very pleased with the present dialogue and co-operation between Balkan states. Focusing on Kosovo, we condemn the recent violent attacks on KFOR that injured nine members working under the UN mandate. It is a pity that the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade has been suspended because of recent developments in northern Kosovo. Dialogue is the only way to solve problems and prevent violence. Our responsibility in the Assembly is to urge all parties to co-operate and participate in dialogue, instead of expressing regrets and praising the past.

The normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, and the historic reconciliation of Serbs and Albanians, are vital to the stability and prosperity of the Balkans. Serbia has taken courageous steps on regional reconciliation and on Kosovo. Its progressive approach will help it to get closer to European Union candidate status, which will further strengthen peace and stability in the region. The people of Kosovo, too, need some positive messages and encouragement from the Council of Europe and the European Union. Kosovo has made remarkable progress, given its limited capabilities, towards strengthening its democracy and institutions. However, it is a new State and a new democracy, with the potential to improve. People in Kosovo should enjoy good governance, democracy, the rule of law, and the same legal and human rights standards as other people in Europe, irrespective of their ethnicity and regardless of whether they live north or south of the river.

Sustainable peace and stability in the Balkans cannot be achieved without the integration of Kosovo in regional structures and initiatives. The Council of Europe can and should make itself more available for Kosovo, as the country's leadership and democratic institutions could benefit from the experience and guidelines drawn up by the Council of Europe. That would help to strengthen its democratic institutions, to institute the rule of law, to fight organised crime, and to build stronger relationships in the region.

We can guide Kosovo towards becoming a more stable, viable, peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic state. We should not just watch and criticise, but offer our hand sincerely. I hope that by taking up the situation in the Balkans as an urgent debate, the Assembly will more actively engage in establishing stability in the region. I am optimistic, specifically about Kosovo, because the report on its situation will be in the expert hands of Mr von Sydow in the Political Affairs Committee.

Human rights and the fight against terrorism

Mr DİŞLİ (*Turkey*) – I, too, congratulate Lord Tomlinson on the report.

Terrorism is the leading threat to international peace, security and stability. It also constitutes a blatant violation of the most fundamental human right, the right to life. Terrorism does not have a religion, race or country; it means blood and tears wherever it occurs. Since terrorism is an attitude against mankind, it is not possible to find rational behaviour in terrorist activity. Above all, terrorism is the enemy of freedom. The more individual freedoms are restricted, the more likely it is that terrorism will achieve its goals.

Turkey has been fighting against terrorism for years. As the draft resolution states, any counter-terrorism campaign is incomplete if it is not complemented by the human rights dimension. Turkey conducts its fight against terrorism in line with the rule of law and respect for human rights just like any other Council of Europe member State.

We all know how the balance between freedom and security changed to the detriment of freedom after the terror attacks of 11 September 2001. There is always the risk that the fear of terrorism can lead to the restriction of freedoms and open the way to repressive measures. Today, terrorism is not limited to a specific location or society. In a world that is experiencing an astonishing process of globalisation, all mankind is under that threat. That situation necessitates highly effective international co-operation.

I have a word for the Greek colleague who spoke earlier, who has just left the Chamber. If you describe terrorists as fighters for Kurdish minorities and the terrorists kill civilians, young girls, babies and the wife of a policeman who was watching her husband play football, how can we end terror in our land? I hope that you were just trying to find an excuse for your embassy's hiding the lord of terror, Ocalan. We will do everything that we can to solve that problem, including talking with the people involved. At the same time, we will protect Turkish and Kurdish civilians in Turkey.

I conclude by underlining that Turkey is committed to combating terrorism in all its forms and eager further to develop international co-operation against that scourge.