



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen
The President

Brussels, 31 MAI 2021
Ares (2021) 2334554

Dear Honourable Members,

Thank you for your letter.

My visit to Turkey on 6 April 2021, together with the President of the European Council, followed the European Council of 25 March 2021. There, EU Leaders had recalled our strategic interest in the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Turkey, and expressed the Union's readiness to engage with Turkey in a number of areas in a phased, proportionate and a reversible manner. It is now critical that Turkey seize this window of opportunity.

EU Leaders also welcomed the recent de-escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean through the discontinuation of illegal drilling activities, the resumption of bilateral talks between Greece and Turkey and the forthcoming talks on the Cyprus issue under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). The EU's strategic interest remains a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The open discussion we had with President Erdoğan, in line with the EU Leaders' statement of 25 March 2021, focused on areas of shared interest, where both sides stand to benefit. A comprehensive Cyprus settlement would be beneficial for Cyprus and the EU, and for wider security and stability in the region. During the face-to-face discussion with President Erdoğan, it was clearly reiterated to the Turkish President that any long-term progress in the EU-Turkey relations will depend on the resolution of this issue. In recent months, we have witnessed a de-escalation. This is a positive development, which must be sustained and enhanced.

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*Mr Emmanouil Fragkos, MEP
Mr Tom Vandendriessche, MEP
Mr Demetris Papadakis, MEP
Ms Eva Kaili, MEP
Mr Gianantonio Da Re, MEP
European Parliament
60 Rue Wiertz
1047 Brussels*

E-mail: emmanouil.fragkos@europarl.europa.eu

Turkey's commitment and contribution in concrete terms to this comprehensive settlement remains crucial. Turkey is expected to actively support the negotiations on a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles, on which the EU is founded and the EU acquis.

The Cyprus issue is clearly an EU issue as Cyprus is a Member State of the Union. At the same time, the settlement, including its external aspects, is to be discussed under the agreed UN framework. The European Union's vision and top priority in this context remain none other than to reunify the island on the agreed basis of a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation with political equality in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions (notably 550(1984), 789(1992), 1251(1999)). In this respect, the EU encourages the resumption of negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations in which the EU should participate as an observer and play an active role in supporting the negotiations, including by appointing a representative to the UN Good Offices Mission.

For the EU, it is of the utmost importance that the settlement solution safeguards the integrity and decision-making capacities of the EU. It is also for this reason that the EU expects to be involved as early as possible in the renewed settlement process.

The EU is aiming for an honest partnership with Turkey that enables us to strengthen what brings us together and address what divides us. The future course of action will depend on Turkey's clear commitment to maintain the recent positive momentum. Should the situation reverse, the EU is ready to use instruments and options to defend the EU's interest as stated in the Statement of the Members of the European Council of 25 March 2021 and detailed by the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative to the European Council on the state of play of EU-Turkey political, economic and trade relations. EU Leaders will revert to the issue of the EU-Turkey relations in June 2021.

Yours faithfully,



Ursula von der Leyen