

Brussels, 9 January 2017

Dear Prime Minister, *Dear Alexis,*

The authorities of your country are soon going to decide about an extradition request by the Turkish government concerning eight Turkish army officers who sought asylum in Greece following the failed military coup of July 15 last.

I am aware of the political complexity and sensitivity of this case and have of course no possibility to judge whether these officers are guilty or not of being involved into the military coup.

Nevertheless, I would like to stress the vital importance of fundamental principles that form the legal order we share across the European Union - and which oblige all EU Member States not to extradite anyone, independent from his guilt, to a state where he or she would risk facing torture or any other inhuman or degrading treatment (Art. 19 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union).

Unfortunately, in the past five months following the coup we have seen several dozens of thousands of Turkish citizens arrested. The way the post-coup emergency laws are being implemented leaves serious concerns about the respect of inviolable rights guaranteed by the Turkish constitution, including the right to life, integrity of corporal and spiritual existence, the presumption of innocence and also the right to a fair trial.

Concerns about serious violations of these rights by the Turkish authorities have been articulated both by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and by the European Commission in its last progress report issued in the context of enlargement policy in October 2016.

Therefore, I hope that you share my view about the need to preserve and fully respect the fundamental European values and principles, which Greece helped shape throughout the European history and which it decided to abide by through its membership in the European Union and in the Council of Europe.

I sincerely hope that Greek authorities will be guided by these principles when deciding about the fate of the eight Turkish officers.

Sincerely yours,



Guy Verhofstadt,

President of the Group of Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe in the European Parliament