

Article – Debate: MEPs call for measures against Turkey following military operation in Syria



On 9 October Turkey launched a military operation in north-eastern Syria in order to create a buffer zone between the two countries where Syrian refugees living in Turkey could be moved to.

The move in the predominately Kurdish region was swiftly condemned by other countries for causing multiple deaths and the displacement of thousands of citizens as well as destabilising an already volatile part of the world.

During the debate in plenary on Wednesday, speakers also criticised Turkey for launching the operation, which could have many consequences.

Anna Fotyga (ECR, Poland) said: “While Turkey has legitimate security concerns, I expect the country to act with restraint.” “We have to find adequate tools to stabilise region and influence activities to ease the tension,” she added.

Germany’s Özlem Demirel (GUE/NGL) said: “The incursion of the Turkish army should be condemned unequivocally. No country can simply march into another country.” However, she added: “All world powers, including the EU, simply look to their own geopolitical and economic interests while international law

was broken and war crimes were committed.”

Christos Stylianides, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, said: “There can be no excuse for the civilian deaths, damage to civilian infrastructure, absent of protection of people and those who are there to help them. I’m particularly concerned about the horrific situation faced by healthcare providers.”

Tytti Tuppurainen, on behalf of the Finnish Presidency of the Council, said: “Turkey has made tremendous efforts in hosting several million refugees for many years – there is no doubt about that. Yet, Turkey’s military action is only making an already highly complex situation in the region even more difficult to resolve.” She added this is why EU leaders condemned Turkish incursion and decided to halt arms export licencing to Turkey.

Malik Azmani (Renew, Netherlands) said that the EU response has not been strong enough despite previous efforts to end violence. “Let us combine our strengths, show unity and bring an end to the violence now. We owe it to the people in the region and our European citizens. Please Commission, get off the sideline and act.”

Measures

Many of the other MEPs also called for measures against Turkey. Michael Gahler (EPP, Germany) reminded that the Parliament had called for the suspension of accession talks with Turkey already in March, but said further measures were needed: “We would like the Council to reflect on appropriate targeted economic measures that do not affect the civilian population.” Gahler added that as a final resort the customs union could be suspended.

Tineke Strik (Greens/EFA, Netherlands) said: “The Greens call upon the EU to take up the role as a proactive actor, to force Erdogan to withdraw its troops and refrain from deporting Syrian refugees back to Syria, by placing targeted sanctions on Turkish government officials, imposing a full arms embargo and by working on suspension of the trade agreement.”

Kurds

Members also called attention to the situation of the Kurds who played a crucial role in defeating Islamic State, the terrorist organisation also known as Isis or IS. S&D’s Kati Piri (Netherlands) said: “Beyond any legal and political consideration, I wish to underline that abandoning all those who suffered from Isis and who fought against Isis, making the ultimate sacrifice for our own security, is not and should never be an option.”

Lars Patrick Berg (ID, Germany) said: “Hundreds of people have been killed. The Kurdish people were betrayed. After the Kurds fought the IS for us, we left the Kurds to their own devices.” He added: “It’s clear that Turkey’s behaviour is contrary to peace and the rule of law. It’s weakening us all.”

Liaison Meetings on Trade Marks and Designs at EUIPO

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Liaison Meetings on Trade Marks and Designs at EUIPO



From 22-24 October, the EUIPO hosts the 22nd Liaison Meeting on Trade Marks and the 18th Liaison Meeting on Designs.

Experts from the national and regional intellectual property offices of the EU Member States, candidate countries and countries from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), as well as representatives from the European Commission and User Associations meet to discuss the latest developments in the area of trade marks and designs and exchange technical expertise.

Topics on the agenda include an overview of the **draft SP2025 development process** and the preliminary **outline of the new European Cooperation Projects' definitions**.

Participants will be also provided with an overview of the latest developments of the 'Support to the transposition' project. A presentation of the 'Guidelines 2019: main change of practice' and practice and case law on the 'Distinctiveness of names of colours' are also included in the agenda. Clarity and precision of the representation of the design in the light of the legal reform will be addressed during a panel discussion, following an outline of the current situation on the EU legislation on design protection.

The meeting also includes **round tables on the previously implemented common practices** on 'Black and White Marks' (CP4) and 'Harmonisation of product

indications' (CP7). The CP9 Common Practice ('Distinctiveness of shape marks containing other elements when the shape itself is non-distinctive') will be presented for acknowledgment by the Liaison Meeting on Trade Marks and CP10 ('Disclosure of Designs on the Internet') by the Liaison Meeting on Designs, and agreement will be sought to propose it to the Management Board.

The [Liaison Meetings](#) constitute an official forum to discuss technical and expert matters and therefore represent an important step towards the continuous development and sustainability of the **European Union Intellectual Property Network (EUIPN)**.

[Article – Verhofstadt: “We will only approve Brexit deal after UK has approved it”](#)



He made the comments during a live session with followers of our Facebook page in Strasbourg. The agreement has been negotiated in recent weeks by the EU and the UK government, but would need the approval of the Parliament before it can enter into force.

Verhofstadt said the deal agreed with the Johnson government respects the principles and values of the EU: "It safeguards the internal market, it avoids a border on the isle of Ireland because the controls will be done outside the territory of the island and most of the EU rules will still be applicable in Northern Ireland. That was very important, because we don't want a solution for Ireland that creates a border. Immediately when you establish a border on the island, there would be a return of the violence we have seen in the past."

However, before the Parliament's vote on the agreement is required, it will still need to be adopted by the UK first. Verhofstadt said: "We need the approval of the British parliament. And once that is done, it will return to the European Parliament. The European Parliament will scrutinise the agreement and finally give its consent."

It is key that EU citizens' right in the UK are guaranteed as there are several million EU citizens living [in the UK], said Verhofstadt (Renew Europe, Belgium). He said there were still a number of problems such as the UK not offering sufficient assistance to EU citizens to help them to fill out the required paperwork. "There are many people who don't ask something, because they don't know anything about these procedures and they could be deported."

During the live discussion there were several requests from people asking for the EU to stop granting extensions to allow the UK to stay in the Union for longer. Verhofstadt said: "The worst thing that can happen is that there is no deal. That would be a catastrophe, not only for Britain, but also for our companies and for our citizens. I hope there is no extension and therefore it is very simple. If the British parliament agrees in the coming days or coming weeks, then we could do our job and everything maybe can be done before the 31st of this month."

"Should the UK reject the current deal, then an extension should only be given under specific circumstances," said Verhofstadt. "In that case we would say an extension is only possible when there is a way out of this crisis. That means that on the British side they decide on something, for example an election or a second referendum. What we will not do is to give an extension without any purpose. They have to decide on a way out."

Press release – MEPs assess Juncker Commission



Mr Juncker reflected on progress in the Commission's priority areas, including growth, jobs and investment, giving a new impetus to Europe and engagement with citizens, the focus on big issues and cuts to the number of new proposals.

He expressed disappointment that the banking union was not concluded – which he sees as key to fighting future crises – but listed successes such as the pillar of social rights and posted workers rules as important steps in providing dignity to workers.

Relations with Africa and 15 new trade agreements were mentioned, among others, as successes. To him, however, the biggest success is that peace has been maintained in Europe. He called on MEPs to keep up the fight for Europe and against “stupid” nationalism.

A number of EP political group leaders thanked the Commission President for his efforts during the past five years on economic and migration crises and Brexit negotiations, for putting social issues on the agenda and for moving away from austerity. They also praised him for not compromising on freedoms and fighting tax evasion. Some also highlighted the Commission's efforts to boost investment, strengthen the single market and ensure security of energy supply.

Some MEPs criticised the Juncker Commission for not doing enough to tackle climate change, and condemned action to protect whistle blowers as too “timid” and said that social issues had not been sufficiently addressed.

You can watch the full debate [here](#)

Press release – Donald Tusk presents EU summit conclusions for last time



During his [introductory speech](#), his last in Parliament as European Council President, Donald Tusk condemned Turkish unilateral military action in north-east Syria and called on Turkey to withdraw its troops and respect international humanitarian law. He also confirmed the EU's solidarity with Cyprus, faced with Turkey's illegal drilling off its coast. On the Brexit deal, he stressed that "a no-deal scenario will never be our decision". On the "difficult debate on enlargement", President Tusk called the decision not to start accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania "a mistake".

The outgoing Commission President [Jean-Claude Juncker stated](#) that the Brexit deal provides legal certainty and complies with Parliament's wishes. On the EU budget, he highlighted that, despite imminent difficulties, the Council's latest proposals remain unacceptable: "you cannot shape Europe with 1% of GDP".

All political group leaders stressed that condemning Turkey is not enough and asked for the Council, the Commission or the member states to take specific action. A majority among them reaffirmed that having a Brexit deal for an orderly departure of the United Kingdom is a positive development, confirmed that Parliament should do its part only after the agreement is ratified in

the UK, and stressed the importance of enough time for elected representatives in the UK and the EU alike to review the deal.

Most speakers who talked about the EU's long-term budget asked the Council to confirm appropriate funding for the ambitious goals set by Parliament and President-elect von der Leyen. On the subject of enlargement in the Western Balkans, almost all speakers condemned the failure to reach unanimity in the European Council, despite overwhelming support across the EU.

In his closing remarks, President Tusk said that given what he "heard in this debate", he has "no doubt we should treat the UK request for extension with all seriousness".

Watch the video recording of the interventions (click on the name of the speaker)

[Opening statements](#) by Donald Tusk and by Jean-Claude Juncker

[MEPs debate](#), first round

[Closing statements](#) by Michel Barnier, EU Chief Negotiator for Brexit, and Donald Tusk