

To the EUTCC annual conference

I extend my greetings to the participants and organisers of your 20th Conference, entitled "The European Union, Turkey, the Middle East and the Kurds."

You are undoubtedly engaged in very valuable work, and I would like to express my gratitude and respect for your efforts.

On 15 February 1999, I was brought to İmralı as a result of an international conspiracy. I am here today because of the influence of NATO's Gladio network. At this point, I will not refrain from voicing my criticism. They had said of me that "there is not a single inch of land in Europe where he can set foot." This conspiracy and these manoeuvres were carried out in secret from the peoples of Europe, in the spirit of Gladio. Undoubtedly, you are struggling against this approach and working to expose and overcome its consequences.

The European Union, which adopted this approach at the time, must today act in accordance with its own laws and democratic principles. It is of vital importance that it adopts a constructive approach both to the democratisation of Turkey and to the resolution of the Kurdish question. The struggle against the rise of the far right and the growing trend towards authoritarianism in Europe must begin with an unwavering commitment to democratic values and their active defence.

In particular, the support expressed through civil and political initiatives such as your Conference, within the framework of the Peace and Democratic Society Process, is a meaningful contribution to peace and democracy. However, solidarity must go beyond expressions of support and translate into sustained, concrete action. Your work and this Conference must become more enduring, develop new avenues of cooperation and help build a stronger common political will for peace and democracy. New steps are needed. There is an urgent need for internationalist cooperation that brings together democratic forces across borders. Such cooperation can unite the democratic achievements of our regions and peoples and pave the way for a new paradigm of democracy and socialism.

The work we are carrying out in Turkey is valuable and important. We have initiated a serious process aimed at finding political, just and legal solutions to social problems, rather than resorting to war, massacres and marginalisation. I invite you to discuss these issues at your Conference and to consider how you can contribute more actively to this process. There are still many unanswered questions and significant challenges ahead. Yet, despite these uncertainties, we are putting forward a comprehensive model for a solution. This undertaking represents a historic step for both Europe and the Middle East.

The success of the Peace and Democratic Society project we propose could open the way to peace, stability and democratisation throughout the Middle East. This is not a responsibility that can be fulfilled by us alone. It requires the active engagement of democratic forces, civil society, political actors and international institutions. You, too, have an important role to play. I call on you to strengthen your solidarity, broaden your cooperation and turn the discussions at this Conference into concrete initiatives that advance peace, democracy and a just political solution to the Kurdish question. I believe that valuable friends and comrades such as yourselves can help carry this vision beyond the Conference and turn it into a stronger, more widespread international effort.

Once again, I congratulate everyone involved in the Conference and extend my greetings and respect.

Abdullah Öcalan
İmralı
9 October 2026