

The 20th conference was held on 14–15 October at the European Parliament in Brussels, organized by the European Union Turkey Civic Commission (EUTCC) in cooperation with The Left Group, the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA), and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D).

The final resolution, titled *20 Years of EUTCC Conferences – 20 Demands for Peace and Democracy*, reads as follows:

"The Annual International Conference on the EU, Turkey, the Middle East and the Kurds, hosted by the EU Turkey Civic Commission (EUTCC) in cooperation with the Left Group, the Greens-European Free Alliance (GREENS/EFA) and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), was successfully held on 14th and 15th of October 2026 in the European Parliament in Brussels.

The 20th EUTCC Conference looks back on two decades of continuous work for democracy, human rights, the rule of law, a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish question and a European future for Türkiye. Founded in 2004 to provide critical monitoring of Turkey's EU accession process, the EUTCC's mission remains as relevant as ever twenty years on.

The conference notes that Turkey continues to face a fundamental democratic choice. At the same time, the current process aimed at ending the armed conflict and finding a political solution to the Kurdish question presents a historic opportunity. Abdullah Öcalan's statement of February 2025, the subsequent developments surrounding the dissolution of the PKK and the call for a democratic society have opened up a new perspective.

The EUTCC therefore calls on the European Union, its Member States, the Council of Europe and the Turkish institutions to implement the following 20 steps:

1. Peace through political dialogue: The peace process must continue on a democratic and legally secure basis.
2. An end to the isolation on Imralı: Unrestricted access to Abdullah Öcalan must be guaranteed.
3. Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan: Abdullah Öcalan must be granted his fundamental political, legal and communication rights without delay. His free participation in the peace process is of central importance to its success.
4. Implementation of the ECtHR judgments: Türkiye must implement all relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights fully and without delay, including the right to hope.

5. Removal of the PKK from the EU's list of terrorist organisations: In order to strengthen a sustainable peace process, the European Union should review the inclusion of the PKK on its list of terrorist organisations and remove the organisation from the list.
6. Legal foundations for the peace process: The Turkish Government and Parliament must immediately establish the legal and constitutional conditions necessary for a lasting political solution.
7. Release of political prisoners: All individuals who have been persecuted and imprisoned for carrying out political, journalistic or human rights activities must be released.
8. Protection of democratic parties: The right to political organization and parliamentary representation must be guaranteed. Parties must not be forced out of the political arena through bans, criminal proceedings or administrative measures.
9. End to state-appointed trustees: Democratically elected mayors must be able to carry out their duties freely. The systematic appointment of state-appointed trustees must be brought to an end.
10. Strengthening the rule of law: The independence of the judiciary, fair trials, the separation of powers, and the independence of public prosecutors' offices and courts must be restored.
11. Democratic constitutional reform: Türkiye needs a new democratic social contract that guarantees the equality of all citizens, the plurality of society, and the political, cultural and linguistic rights of all population groups.
12. Kurds as citizens with equal rights: Kurdish identity, language and culture must be fully recognised and protected. A lasting solution to the Kurdish question can only be based on equality.
13. Women as agents of peace: Women must be involved on an equal footing at all levels of the peace and democratisation process. The conference particularly recognises the central role of Kurdish women in the region's democratic and peace movements.
14. Protection of civil society and the media: Journalists, academics, human rights defenders and civil society organisations must be able to work free from state repression.
15. End to cross-border military presence: Türkiye must end its military presence in Syria, as well as in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and fully respect international law.

16. A democratic solution for Syria: The European Union should support a political process that recognizes and safeguards pluralism and the participation of all sections of the population in Syria's future political order.

17. Recognizing the Kurds as political actors: The EU and its Member States must involve the Kurds and their political representatives as legitimate actors in the search for peace and stability in the Middle East.

18. A new European policy on Türkiye: The EU must not priorities strategic interests – such as migration, trade, security or energy – over democracy and human rights. Relations with Türkiye must be conditional on tangible progress in the rule of law, human rights and democratic participation.

19. Keeping the European perspective open: The EUTCC reaffirms its fundamental support for a democratic European future for Türkiye. A credible EU perspective remains an important lever for reform, peace and democratization.

20. European support for peace and democracy: To mark its 20th anniversary, the EUTCC calls on the European Union and the Council of Europe to support a comprehensive international initiative for peace, democracy and the rule of law in Türkiye and the Middle East.

20 years of the EUTCC – a commitment to the future

The conviction with which the EUTCC was founded twenty years ago has lost none of its significance. Today's historic situation offers a new opportunity: decades of conflict can give way to a process of peace and democratic transformation. This requires political courage in Türkiye and an active, credible and principled European Union.

The 20th EUTCC Conference therefore calls on all democratic forces in Turkey, Europe and the Middle East to seize this historic opportunity together.

Peace requires dialogue. Democracy requires freedom."

