



Brussels, 14 April 2015

## **Friends of Turkey statement ahead of the vote on the "Motion for Resolution on the Commemoration of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide"**

On Wednesday 15th of April the European Parliament will vote a "Motion for Resolution on the Commemoration of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide".

As Co-Chairs of the Friends of Turkey Group in the European Parliament, we would like to call upon the members of this chamber to adopt a balanced resolution.

The massacres, deportations and other atrocities committed against the Armenian citizens of the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the twentieth century are incontestably a terrible human tragedy that must not be forgotten.

However, the impact of external pressure for the 'recognition of the Armenian Genocide' in Turkey hasn't helped so far to bring reconciliation between Turks and Armenians. On the contrary, external interventions have fuelled reactionary nationalism and hindered dialogue between Turks and Armenians.

In recent years, Turkey has started a more open and free debate on the Armenian issue. We should therefore encourage the Turkish government to continue its process of reconciliation allowing for a frank and open discussion of past events.

EU accession negotiations have undoubtedly contributed to more honest and open discussions of historical events in Turkey. In this regard, the accession process remains the most effective tool in influencing Turkey's democratization course.

We believe that as members of the European Parliament we should adopt a language of reconciliation and focus our efforts on issues which would create bridges between the two societies, by encouraging freedom of speech, rule of law and free discussion in both countries.

Mr. Artis Pabriks

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Co-chairs of the Friends of Turkey group in the European Parliament