



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt

EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo

EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme

EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

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Bologna, Donostia, Düsseldorf, Vienna, 15 August 2026

Turkey – Statement Welcoming the New Legislation as a First Step Towards Peace

We welcome the approval of the new legislation on disarmament and reintegration as an important and long-awaited first step towards addressing the Kurdish question and consolidating the emerging peace process in Turkey. For the first time, the current process has reached the stage of concrete legislation, creating a basis on which a broader and lasting settlement can be built.

This legislation must, however, be understood as a beginning rather than an endpoint. Lasting peace requires a comprehensive reconciliation process throughout Turkey that goes beyond disarmament and reintegration and addresses the political, legal, democratic and social causes and consequences of the conflict. The present security-based framework must therefore be followed by measures that provide legal certainty, equal treatment and meaningful democratic participation.

No prisoner, defendant or exile connected to the conflict and peace process should be left behind. Measures for release, amnesty, reintegration and legal resolution should be comprehensive and should also cover people prosecuted under criminal-law provisions other than anti-terror legislation, including speech-related and other politically motivated proceedings. The same principle should apply to those forced to remain outside Turkey.

Abdullah Öcalan's situation remains relevant to the credibility and effectiveness of the process. In view of his central role in initiating and advancing the current process, his role should be formally recognised and he should be provided with the conditions necessary to participate fully and effectively in its further development. The question of the right to hope, for him and for others serving comparable sentences, must also be addressed in accordance with Turkey's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

A durable peace must also be a positive peace. This requires recognition and protection of Kurdish identity, language and cultural rights, equal citizenship and political participation, stronger protection of freedom of expression and association, reform of anti-terror legislation and judicial practice, and effective implementation of judgments of the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights. These reforms should form part of a wider reconciliation process capable of rebuilding trust across the whole of Turkey.

The European dimension of the conflict must likewise be addressed. Kurdish activists imprisoned or facing criminal proceedings in European countries in connection with political activity related to the Kurdish question

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should benefit from a review of their cases consistent with human rights, due process and the objectives of the peace process. The European Union, to the extent permitted by its legal competences, and EU member states as well as non-member European states should consider appropriate amnesty or equivalent legal measures capable of resolving conflict-related prosecutions and sentences.

Turkish and European authorities should also review administrative and security measures imposed on individuals on the basis of alleged support for, or association with, the PKK. This should include entry bans, restrictions on residence or movement, deportation or exclusion measures, and comparable administrative restrictions imposed by Turkey as well as by European states. In light of the PKK's decision to disarm and dissolve and the development of a formal peace process, such measures should be individually reassessed and, where their underlying security justification is no longer applicable, lifted or revised, with full respect for due process and effective remedies.

We therefore welcome the legislation as a significant but fragile first step. Its promise will depend on whether it is followed by inclusion, legal certainty, reconciliation, democratic reform and concrete measures in Turkey and Europe that transform the end of armed conflict into a sustainable and just peace.

We therefore urge:

- The Turkish authorities and Parliament to develop a comprehensive reconciliation process throughout Turkey, accompanied by democratic and legal reforms protecting Kurdish identity, language and cultural rights, equal citizenship, political participation, freedom of expression and association, and the rule of law.
- The Turkish authorities to establish comprehensive and fair measures for prisoners, defendants and exiles affected by conflict-related or politically motivated proceedings, including appropriate release, amnesty, reintegration and legal-resolution mechanisms, and to address the right to hope in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights.
- The Turkish authorities to formally recognise Abdullah Öcalan's role in the peace process and ensure the conditions necessary for him to participate fully and effectively in its further development, as part of the broader framework applicable to prisoners and participants in the process.
- The European Union, within its legal competences, and European states, including EU member and non-member states, to support the peace process through concrete legal measures, including consideration of amnesty or equivalent mechanisms for imprisoned Kurdish activists and persons still facing conflict-related or politically motivated proceedings.
- European and Turkish authorities to review administrative and security measures imposed on individuals on the basis of alleged support for, or association with, the PKK. This should include entry bans, restrictions on residence or movement, deportation or exclusion measures, and comparable administrative restrictions imposed by Turkey as well as by European states. In light of the PKK's decision to disarm and dissolve and the development of a formal peace process, such measures should be individually reassessed and, where their underlying security justification is no longer applicable, lifted or revised, with full respect for due process and effective remedies.
- Democratic forces, civil society organisations, lawyers, trade unions and human rights defenders in Turkey, across Europe and internationally to support measures that genuinely advance peace, reconciliation, equality, democracy and the rule of law.