



# **NEWS & VIEWS**

*A perspective from CHP*

21 December 2020, Issue: 15



**REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY**  
Foreign Relations Department

[www.chp.org.tr](http://www.chp.org.tr)   herkesicinCHP



**STATEMENT BY ÜNAL ÇEVİKÖZ, REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (CHP) MP OF ISTANBUL AND  
CHP SPOKESPERSON IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT  
THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY ON 16 DECEMBER 2020 .....3**

**STATEMENT BY ÜNAL ÇEVİKÖZ, REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (CHP) MP OF ISTANBUL AND CHP SPOKESPERSON IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY ON 16 DECEMBER 2020**

Members of the Press,

As we are nearing the end of the year 2020 Turkey has faced a number of sanctions introduced by the European Union and subsequently by the USA.

Neither the CHP nor any citizen would want the sanctions decisions to negatively impact the relations between Turkey and more broadly the West, which includes many institutions and organisations to which Turkey is a member of as well as the European Union with whom Turkey is currently engaged in accession negotiations.

We have witnessed intensified efforts on the part of some EU member states before the EU Summit held in Brussels on 10-11 December to introduce heavy sanctions against Turkey. We were pleased to also observe that there are some EU member states which work towards maintaining constructive, sustainable cooperation with Turkey on the basis of mutual interests.

As the CHP, we expressed our view that efforts to avoid a further widening of the rift between Turkey and EU would benefit both sides in our dialogue with the Embassies of EU member states in Ankara. We received positive feedback regarding this issue. We were pleased to hear that the EU decided to keep the positive agenda on the table as a result of the Summit, which we also expressed in our press statement of 11 December 2020 on this issue.

Our citizens are gravely concerned about the risk of a disruption in Turkey's relationship with the EU. Such a development would not only push Turkey away from the West it would also sever the significant ties between the West and the East. This is not an outcome desired by our western, southern or eastern neighbours. Therefore, Turkey has a significant responsibility to ensure that those ties are maintained. On the other hand we know how strategically significant Turkey is for the EU to reach neighbouring regions to the east and south of Turkey to maintain a constructive and sustainable relationship with those regions.

The initial steps to be taken in the upcoming period to reinvigorate the positive agenda between Turkey and the EU are clear. As the ruling party has also promised and often

expressed, Turkey needs to implement serious, credible, lasting and reliable reforms. As the CHP, we will closely follow how the commitments of the government particularly in the area of the justice reform and structural economic reforms proceed to ensure that they are developed in a realistic manner. This issue is not just any area the government will handle, it is a concern shared by all citizens who believe in universal democratic values in Turkey.

A similar situation is emerging in the relationship between Turkey and the USA. The U.S. decision (CAATSA 231) to introduce sanctions regarding Turkey's purchase of S-400 missile system from Russia was announced on 14 December 2020. I would like to reiterate that we condemn this decision which is not only unilateral but also unjust. The sanctions decision adopted by the USA goes against the principle of common sense and mutual respect between two allies.

It has been known for a long period that Turkey needed a strong air defence system given the region it is located. Despite efforts made in this regard, the outcome forced Turkey to choose the S-400 missile defence system. The debate as to whether Turkey's decision was right or wrong, rational or irrational would not produce any outcomes in the current circumstances. The issue that needs to be addressed at this point is the future of the relationship between Turkey and the USA.

I would like once again to strongly emphasize the fact that the sanctions decision implemented against Turkey is an unjust, degrading decision which requires a common stance at the national level.

Members of the Press,

This decision deals a heavy blow to the decades-old alliance between the USA and Turkey. Recently, Turkey-U.S. relations have unfortunately been uprooted from their institutional basis. It is therefore vital to reestablish the institutional structure in bilateral relations.

The US government has never followed such a path over the 40 year period since the arms embargo which the USA implemented against Turkey for three years in the aftermath of the Cyprus Peace Operation in 1975. Without doubt, we would have expected to see efforts to seek a solution to the issue through dialogue instead of a sanctions decision. Nevertheless, we believe that the sanctions decision will not close avenues for dialogue and that diplomacy and reason will prevail. As the CHP we stress that we stand ready to do our part regarding this matter.

As the CHP, we are aware that other NATO member states would not welcome such sanctions targeting a leading member of the Alliance let alone its defence industry. After all, the decision will not only impact Turkey, it will also negatively impact NATO's

strategic defence capabilities. Therefore, although this decision seems to be specifically relevant to Turkey, it concerns all NATO member countries and the entire Alliance.

Members of the Press,

We think that the public is aware of the process followed for the procurement of S-400s. We think that it is not necessary to once again bring this issue to the public agenda and we do not consider the previous debates to be part of the current agenda.

We believe that the sanctions introduced against our defence industry risk causing an equally significant security gap as the decision to sell the national Military Tank Factory to Qatar. We would like to take this opportunity to once again express our strong commitment to support all efforts to lift the sanctions and resolve this crisis.

Both the EU and the USA hold a significant place in Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey is a strategic actor for both the EU and the USA. Reestablishing the constructive nature of these relations must be a national goal for Turkey. As the CHP we are aware of our responsibility in this regard and we will continue to work towards this end. We call on the government to act with the same awareness, sense of responsibility and common sense.