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GERMANY AT THE FOREFRONT OF ANTI-TURKISM

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Analyst (2015-2017)

Germanys pro-Armenian attitude behind the scenes have come to the open in recent times. Especially in 2015, the centennial of the events of 1915, the number of statements against Turkey have increased.

As it is known, a parliamentary session to commemorate the centennial of the events of 2015 was held in the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag). In his opening speech, the President of the Bundestag Norbert Lammert said, "What happened before the eyes of the world in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War was a genocide."[1] Many lawmakers from the coalition and the opposition also made statements characterizing the 1915 events as genocide. Also a motion saying The fate of the Armenians serves as an example of the history of mass extermination, ethnic cleansings, expulsions and ultimately the genocides that so dreadfully characterized the 20th century" prepared by coalition parties was submitted to the parliament but was not agreed on due to the opposition finding it unsatisfactory and disagreements on the wording.[2] A new motion characterizing the events of 1915 as genocide is expected to be voted again sometime this year.

Unfortunately, this anti-Turkish attitude is also reflected in Germanys highest office. Also known for his past harsh criticisms against Turkey, German President Joachim Gauck attended a mass commemorating the genocide of Armenians, Assyrians and Pontic Greeks held at the Berlin Cathedral on 23 April 2015 and described the 1915 events as genocide.[3]

Moreover, Germany also expresses its biased views to its neighbors as well as in the EU organs where Germany assumes a lead. In her speech on European Parliaments Resolution Regarding the 2014 Progress Report on Turkey, the fact that EPP member and German MEP Renate Sommers labeled 2015 as the jubilee year of Turkey with regard to the EU is one of the latest examples of this.[4]

The fact that a majority of Turkish writers and historians who support the Armenian views originate from Germany or Germany-based institutes is also a significant detail to take into consideration.

Probably with a view to impeding Turkeys EU membership process, Germanys opposition

against Turkey and Turkish views regardless of the feelings and views of the Turks in Germany damages relations between both countries and communities. It is our earnest hope that Germany will abandon its anti-Turkish approach in its domestic and foreign policy, will give the priority to developing relations between both countries and treat the Turks in Germany in a manner taking their sensitivities into consideration. However, a recent development aggravate the concerns that these hopes are not to materialize in the near future.

On 22 November 2014, Tuğçe Albayrak, a 22-year-old student of Turkish descent was attacked and fatally injured by a Serbian while defending two teenage girls who were being harassed by a group of men and died while in coma on November 28, 2014. A petition signed by more than 300,000 thousand people calling for the German President to posthumously award her the Federal Order of Merit for her courage.[5] However a statement from the Presidents office said that Joachim Gauck was deeply saddened by the death of Tuğçe Albayrak but detailed examinations showed that the necessary requirements was not met to award her the Order of Merit.[6] Considering the fact a German by the name of Dominik Brunner was posthumously awarded the Order of Merit after he was killed in a similar situation in 2009, one cannot help but wonder: if this case involved a person of German or Armenian heritage instead of Tuğçe Albayrak, would Gauck have taken the same decision?

[1] http://www.dw.com/tr/alman-meclisi-soyk%C4%B1r%C4%B1m-dedi/a-18406062

[2] http://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/499069--german-parliament-s-genocide-motion-remains-undecided

[3] Ömer Engin Lütem, Joachim Gauck and Turkey, *AVİM*, http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/en/JOACHIM-GAUCK-AND-TURKEY/4075

[4] Ali Murat Taşkent, The European Parliaments Resolution Regarding The 2014 Progress Report on Turkey, *AVİM*, http://www.avim.org.tr/analiz/en/THE-EUROPEAN-PARLIAMENT%E2%80%99S-RESOLUTION-REGARDING-THE-2014-PROGRESS-REPORT-ON-TURKEY/4116

[5] https://www.change.org/p/joachim-gauck-l%C3%BCtfen-cesur-gen%C3%A7-tu%C4%9F%C3%A7e-albayrak-a-liyakat-ni%C5%9Fan%C4%B1-verin-tu%C4%9F%C3%A7e-herkese-insanl%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1-g%C3%B6sterdi

[6] http://www.dw.com/tr/tu%C4%9F%C3%A7eye-liyakat-ni%C5%9Fan%C4%B1-verilmeyecek/a-18522885

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