

Brussels, 29/09/2021
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Ms Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou MEP

Honourable Member of the European Parliament,

Thank you for your letter of 16 August 2021, in which you express your concerns over incidents in Turkey involving Greek citizens of Pontian origin.

In the framework of the annual enlargement package and the individual country reports, which is due to be published in October, the European Commission assesses the overall situation as well as the concrete results achieved by each country, with the rule of law, justice and fundamental rights being a top priority. In this context, the report on Turkey will look very thoroughly into the fundamental rights situation, and respect for minorities and fundamental freedoms in Turkey, and issue its recommendations.

As regards some of the specific cases mentioned in your letter, the EU has no competence to examine actions of third countries conducted as part of security checks at the airports and is therefore not empowered to intervene.

Consular protection remains primarily a national competence. The Treaty (Article 35 of the Treaty on European Union) contains an obligation for EU Delegations to facilitate consular protection for citizens of the Union only in third countries in which the Member State of which they are a national is not represented.

Reconciliation is a core foundation of the European project. Good neighbourly relations and reconciliation are also essential elements of the Enlargement policy.

It is vital that partner countries are able to face their past through open and serene debates and, in this context, the EU encourages meaningful dialogue between Turkey and its neighbours, paving the way towards full reconciliation.

Yours faithfully,



Josep Borrell Fontelles