

Message from Mr Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, on the occasion of the 10th international conference on 'The European Union, Turkey and the Kurds'

European Parliament
Brussels, 4-5 December 2013

Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, thank you for giving me this opportunity to share with you my hopes to see the current peace process between Kurds and Turks brought to a successful conclusion.

The European Parliament has expressed its opinion on the Kurdish question on several occasions, and has taken the view that apart from the political route, no other security or military approach would bring about a peaceful, fitting and lasting solution.

Political dialogue is probably the most painful and difficult path for old adversaries to take.

It calls for courage, determination and vision to overcome years of distrust, denigration and antagonism.

The European Parliament welcomed the decision to move forward to a negotiated solution meeting the legitimate democratic aspirations of the population groups affected by a conflict which has gone on for too long.

It is gratifying to see both Turks and Kurds supporting the peace process.

It is very much to be wished that this new feeling of hope will be also supported by a large consensus among the Turkish political class.

Europe has some experience of reconciliation, political dialogue and seeking compromises, which it can share.

All the European institutions must continue to give their strongest support to the current process.

The European Parliament has been playing its part for ten years now. This annual conference is one of the concrete contributions we hope to make to a negotiated solution.

So let me welcome the strong commitment of all those who work hard every year to provide a platform for dialogue and for listening with mutual respect.

I wish you a fruitful conference.