

---

## **TURKEY WARNS GERMANY AHEAD OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VOTE**

-

31.05.2016

---

31.05.2016

EurActiv

Germany's parliament votes Thursday (2 June) on a resolution that qualifies the massacre of Armenians by Ottoman forces as genocide, despite a strong warning from Turkey.

Drawn up by the ruling left-right coalition and the opposition Greens, the resolution entitled Remembrance and commemoration of the genocide of Armenians and other Christian minorities in 1915 and 1916 also carries the contested word throughout the text.

The vote comes just over a year after President Joachim Gauck became Germany's highest ranking official to describe the massacre as a genocide, drawing a fierce response from Turkey.

## **GERMAN RESOLUTION ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE EXPECTED TO SOUR TURKEY RELATIONSHIP**

Turkey has long opposed the international recognition of the Armenian genocide and the German parliament's plans to finally grant it could spell trouble for Berlin's relations with Ankara. EurActiv's partner Der Tagesspiegel reports.

Its timing is also awkward, as Germany and the European Union need Ankara to help stem a migrant influx even as tensions are rising between both sides over a string of issues, including human rights.

Cautioning against the vote, Turkey's deputy prime minister and government spokesman Numan Kurtulmus said: Germany must be careful concerning its relations with Turkey.

I do not think that the German parliament will destroy this relationship for the sake of two or three politicians who had put the resolution before the Bundestag, he added.

Turkey and Armenia have long been at loggerheads over the World War I-era massacre.

Armenians say up to 1.5 million of their kin were killed between 1915 and 1917 as the Ottoman Empire was falling apart and have sought to win international recognition of the massacres as genocide.

Its about rendering historical justice, its an obligation of the entire international community towards the memory of the victims of the genocide, Armenian foreign ministry spokesman Tigran Balayan told AFP.

He added that recognition is important for the prevention of genocides in future.

Modern Turkey, the successor state to the Ottomans, rejects the claim, arguing that 300,000 to 500,000 Armenians and as many Turks died in civil strife when Armenians rose up against their Ottoman rulers and sided with invading Russian troops.

More than 20 nations, including France and Russia, have recognised the Armenian genocide, but Germany has not.

### **Partial responsibility**

The resolution, which had been in preparation since last year, refers to the atrocities against the Armenians clearly, saying: Their fate exemplifies the mass exterminations, the ethnic cleansing, the expulsions and indeed the genocides that marked the 20th century in such a terrible way.

It also states that the German Empire bears partial responsibility for the events, a point that Gauck had also made last year.

Germany was then allied with the Ottomans, and deployed soldiers who participated in the deportations of Armenians, Gauck had said.

But a day after Gaucks speech, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier rejected the use of the term genocide, warning that reducing the issue to the use of the word genocide would not help overcome the silence between Turks and Armenians.

The issue is particularly sensitive in Germany, as it has special ties with Ankara not least due to its three-million-strong ethnic Turkish population which settled there following a massive guest worker programme in the 1960s and 1970s.

### **Wrong path?**

Ahead of the vote, around 1,000 people marched Saturday in a protest organised by Turkish

groups.

Turkish organisations also sent letters to lawmakers to campaign against the vote, warning of consequences for peaceful coexistence between Germans and Turks here but also in Turkey.

Kurds in Germany launched a counter-campaign, flooding Bundestag lawmakers with emails that urged them to withstand Turkish pressure, national news agency DPA reported.

Yet the vote is also divisive within party lines.

The governments top official in charge of integration, Aydan Oezoguz, has herself warned that it is the wrong path to take.

Those who think that such a move would lead automatically to a rehabilitation in Turkey are wrong. Through this vote, that aim would be pushed further away.

Nevertheless, party leaders shrugged off any potential impact on relations with Turkey.

The aim is not to put Turkey in the dock, Franz Josef Jung, who is the deputy chief of the Christian Democrats group in parliament, told Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung daily.

We are not asking the Turkish government to admit its guilt in the genocide, but for it to recognise its historical responsibility.

---

Kaynak/Source: