THE PERINÇEK CASE

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The Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights hearing in the case of Perinçek took place last Wednesday. In accordance with the practices of the Court, the judgment will probably be declared in several months. The general opinion is that Doğu Perinçek will win the case.

The parties of the case are Doğu Perinçek and the Swiss government. Turkish and Armenian governments participated in the proceedings as interveners.

Allowed to speak first, Perinçek and his attorneys - in their defense - emphasized freedom of speech and stated that Perinçeks rejection of the Armenian genocide allegations was not due to him being against Armenians or in other words, it was not a racist behavior.

On the other hand, the Swiss government made their defense by long technical statements indicating that the ruling of the Swiss courts regarding Perinçek was in conformity with the Swiss regulations. However, in our opinion, the problem is that the implementation of Swiss regulations resulted in the restriction of freedom of speech. On the other hand, the Swiss representatives failure to give a satisfactory answer to a judges question was also noticeable.

Representatives of the Turkish government also based their defense on freedom of speech and had brief but to the point statements, and in our opinion, they were effective.

In the case of the Armenian delegation, the situation was completely different. Ms. Amal Alamuddin - who is British of Lebanese descent and who caught the attention of the media due to being the wife of the famous actor George Clooney - stated that there were many lawsuits against Turkey on freedom of speech and tried to accuse Turkey by mentioning Armenian genocide claims, Talat Pasha, the murder of Hrant Dink and other subjects that have no direct relation with the Perinçek case. The British attorney Geoffrey Robertson who recently became prominent with a book on the Armenian genocide which has no value other than repeating the same known allegations made aggressive remarks blaming Turkey.

It is possible to explain the deeds of these two experienced attorneys as such: with the full awareness of Perinçeks future victory, they tried to satisfy the expectation of the Armenian public opinion by talking against Turkey.

As we mentioned above, it would be normal for Perinçek to win the case. But, it is also necessary to remember that Turkey - like in the Loizidou case can be confronted with unexpected outcomes.

As we predict and hope for, if Perinçek wins the case, the late verdict will be in favor of Armenia. This is so because an earlier announcement of the verdict will negatively affect Armenias anti-Turkey campaign for the 100th anniversary of the Armenian relocation. On the contrary, if the verdict will be announced for instance in autumn, it well have a lesser effect.

Lastly, the attendance of the representatives of some of the main political parties in Turkey that are in dispute with each other should be emphasized. This action shows their solidarity with the aggrieved Perinçek. It is also a sign of their reaction against Armenian smear campaign and their ability to collaborate against such a campaign when necessary.

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