Ms GÜLEK (Turkey). I thank the rapporteurs, who have sincerely tried to understand
the reality of the situation in Turkey as well as the progress that has been made. Turkey is a
founder member of the Council of Europe, involved since 1949.

We, the members of the Turkish delegation, are members of the hardest working
Turkish Parliament ever. We often sit until six or seven in the morning, including weekends.
We have passed more than 200 laws in the past two years, including laws on economic
reform, human rights, agriculture and the reorganisation of the state and its internal structure.
Perhaps more importantly, we passed those laws and ensured their implementation under a
three-party coalition, involving people from opposite ends of the political spectrum. That
reflects a maturity of politics and the development of a culture of consensus.

Of course, much more needs to be done. That is what this Assembly is working
towards. However, one should not forget the consensus on the far-reaching changes to thirty-
seven of the articles of our constitution. Our commitments in the short and medium term
have been laid down in great detail in our national programme instituted in response to the
European Union accession partnership document. That is a sign of the sincerity of our
intentions.

A lively debate has begun in Turkey on many of the issues that have been mentioned
today. We have introduced revolutionary changes to more than 1 000 articles of our civil
code - in fact, it is a new civil code. We are witnessing the emergence of a genuine civil
society in Turkey. Women’s non-governmental organisations have made a tremendous
contribution, attending meetings and putting pressure on us, to the changes in a civil code that
was progressive in its day, giving Turkish women the vote in 1934, but that became
outmoded.

Many of those facts are mentioned in the report, but I have to draw attention to the
fact that far less progress than Turkey has made, and far fewer paragraphs welcoming such
progress, would in the past have led - and has done for certain countries, which I will not
mention - to the ending of the monitoring process. There is such a thing as a post-monitoring
dialogue. It would be far more acceptable for us if the monitoring ended and the dialogue
started.

It is important not to take issues out of context and present them in a one-sided way,
reflecting pre-conceived ideas. We are here not to represent our governments, but as
parliamentarians, working together under one roof to represent Europe.

It is important to note that we are implementing the reforms for the benefit of our
citizens, not because the Council of Europe or the European Union has imposed them on us.
When there is true dialogue, with constructive criticism and comments, we can achieve a
result and a good contribution is made to our work, but sensitivities must be respected. One
such sensitivity is the secular nature of my country. As a woman in the Turkish Parliament, I
am passionate about that and will defend it until the day I die. I am sorry to see that the
amendment drawn up by all the leaders of the political parties has omitted to pay any respects
to the secular nature of my country.

I am also disappointed to see that my colleague from the banned Virtue party - of
 course, we are not in favour of parties being shut down so easily - has conveniently forgotten
to mention that, when her party was a member of the leading coalition, it never proposed such changes.

I am a great believer in constructive dialogue, but it is important to respect the historical realities. One should not mention only one version of history and always talk about what happened after 1974, forgetting the events of the 1950s and 1960s and the sufferings of the Turkish Cypriot people, as well as the fact that the exchange of populations in 1975 was done under United Nations auspices, according to the third Vienna agreement.

The Loizidou decision is the only decision that Turkey has not been able to implement, because the land is not in its territory. Turkey even changed its constitution to be able to implement a decision of the European Court of Human Rights. One of the dissenting judges in the case said, "I feel unable to base a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights exclusively on the assumption that the Turkish presence is illegal and that Turkey is therefore responsible for more or less everything that happens in northern Cyprus."

I hope that some of our amendments will be accepted.

THE PRESIDENT.- Thank you, Ms Güleğ. The next speaker is Mr Kelemen.

Mr KELEMEN (Hungary).- The report adopts a balanced approach to Turkish obligations and commitments. I wholeheartedly agree with the statement in the draft resolution that Turkey is a key country in the western world and is deeply committed to European integration. That is extremely important to all Europeans.

Once, Mr Helmut Schmidt said that Turkey had failed to participate in many of the turning points of European history, mainly during the enlightenment. That statement applies only to the time before modern Turkey was founded by Atatürk. Since then Turkey has been a part of Europe, although its regions in western Asia can never be adjacent to the geographic heart of the continent as they are 2 000 kilometres from it.

The reports confirm the progress that Turkey has achieved. It is a continuing process, and the report was unable to reflect recent proposed amendments to the constitution. There is a genuine political will behind those reforms. Turkey is not merely going through the motions because the Council of Europe and the European Union are telling them to do so. The internal dynamics of Turkey demand reform, and those working for reform will not stop until that is achieved.

Our task is twofold. We must help Turkey to adopt European institutions in a working democratic society. That will enable Turkey to protect human and minority rights. At the same time, we must avoid imposing anything that will lessen Turkey's defence capacity. The Turkish National Programme for the adoption of the acquis communautaire is a sign of Turkey's determination to press on. I disagree with the approach implicit in the draft recommendation, in which the rapporteur complains that the wording of that programme is too cautious. The National Programme reflects a delicate compromise between the ruling political forces in Turkey. Its purpose is to maintain the stability of a state in a delicate geographic position. It stands on the edge of the area of north Atlantic values and faces the threat of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. Some of the nations neighbouring the country have dictatorial regimes that confront Turkish democracy.