



THE CAUCASUS-ABKHAZIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE



Date : 10 January 2011
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Subject : A letter to the president of PACE

Dear Mr. ÇAVUŞOĞLU
The president of PACE

Dear Mr. President,

We've recently learned that at a meeting of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly which will be held at January 17th 2011 in Paris, the issue of Abkhazia is among the discussion topics. Council of Europe has been a major ground for democracy and peaceful dialogue for over 60 years. Thus, we appreciate the initiative as one of the most important actors of international community, Council of Europe would discuss Republic of Abkhazia at one of its meetings. However, regretfully not any representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia as the major party to discussions are invited to the meeting.

As Turkish citizens of Abkhazian descent, we strongly protest this attitude by the PACE, the term Presidency of which is held by a member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

The mistreatment by PACE - an international organization which assumed peaceful dialogue even during the Cold War years- of de facto and the de jure international status of the Republic of Abkhazia is a contradictory and alarming stance compared to its mission. In order to establish a productive dialogue, participation of all sides is of utmost importance. Thus, unilateral and one-sided approach by the international community would prove inconclusive and meaningless in hindering/affecting the inalienable right of self determination of the peoples of the Republic of Abkhazia.

Republic of Abkhazia clearly declared the intention to become a part of the international community and today is a fully independent state governed by the rule of law. Republic of Abkhazia has a Parliament fully elected in independent and free elections, an effective and grounded political party system, and a well-organized Civil Society. Despite the fact that political and social existence of Abkhazia exceed well beyond the life-spans of the established European nation-states, international community attempts to deprive Abkhazia of its inalienable right of self-determination as defined according to the principles of International Law and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is the primary source of regional problems.

Republic of Abkhazia continues to contribute for the normalization of relations with Georgia via its participation in the Geneva Talks. These negotiations are conducted under the supervision of the European Union, OSCE and the United Nations. Therefore, during the course of the negotiations in the international arena, the isolationist attitude of Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia is inexplicable., if the purpose of such a meeting within the framework of the European Council is exchange of ideas and information on the problems of the region, representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia should also be able to express their ideas to contribute to negotiation process. However, the exclusion and isolation of the Republic of Abkhazia and Abkhazian people creates obstacles today as well as it did in the past. The attitude of the Council of Europe contradicts with the principles promoted via Geneva Negotiations and ignores the attempts of the international society.

BELGE

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If and how this meeting that has been organized by PACE, Presidency of which is held by a member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, is claimed to be a base for discussion for the improving dialogue, Turkish parliamentarians representing Turkish citizens in PACE cannot ignore the efforts of international society, which shall damage the intentions of peace. It is the most natural right for us Turkish citizens of Abkhazian descent to demand learning the reasons behind this ignorance on the part of PACE by not inviting representatives from the Republic of Abkhazia. The meeting which will be held by PACE should be interrogated if there was a reason for not inviting the Republic of Abkhazia.

We strongly demand Your Respective Presidency and Turkish parliamentarian members of PACE to take into account the rightful demands of millions of Turkish citizens of Caucasian descent. It is regrettable that Republic of Turkey's institutions and the parliamentarians' interest for Meskhetian Turks is not shown at least equally to Turkish citizens of Abkhazian and Caucasian descent.

The biggest Abkhazian population living outside the borders of the Republic of Abkhazia lives in Turkey. Thus, with its 1 million citizen of Abkhazian descent, Republic of Turkey is expected to assume special responsibility concerning Abkhazia. Due to its well-organized structure and representative organization, Abkhazian Diaspora in Turkey is among the most effective Diaspora organizations in the world. However, the feelings and sensitivities of the Turkish citizens of Abkhazian origin have been disregarded by the Turkish authorities which continued an absurd embargo towards our motherland Abkhazia, while they supported militarily and politically the hostile neighbor Republic of Georgia. The results of these policies are self-evident. Embargo and isolationist policies, together with one-sided support for aggressive governments endangered regional stability and security; caused conflict that claimed civilian lives; and in the end hindered international attempts to establish peace and dialogue in the region.

Republic of Turkey became a regional power by assuming a pioneering, initiative regional role, and promoting the basic principles of international law and human rights; still it has no luxury of undermining the rightful demands of its own citizens. Therefore, we expect Turkish parliamentarians and its president to immediately take action so that Abkhazian demands are represented via its representatives. Any efforts on discussing democracy, peace and security in the Caucasus region must involve the participation of all parties in the region in order to be efficient and useful. We strongly demand from all member state and primarily from the Turkish parliamentarians to end the one sided and partial attitude towards the Republic of Abkhazia and Abkhazian people. Any meeting without the participation of Abkhazian representatives is against the basic principles of international law and would contradict international realities. Thus we will not acknowledge any conclusions that arose in the absence of Abkhazian participation. We expect PACE to immediately turn away from this error and invite Abkhazian representatives to present Abkhazian people's legitimate demands as well as their suggestions contributing to regional peace and stability. Otherwise, this meeting will serve no purpose other than deepening the disagreements already became inherent to interstate relations in the region.

On Behalf of the Caucasus-Abkhazian Solidarity Committee,
İrfan ARGUN
Head of the Committee