

**A REPORT ON THE
PLATFORM OF KURDS IN EUROPE
(PKE – PLATFORM)
AND TURKEY’S MEMBERSHIP
OF EUROPEAN UNION**

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Background

Kurdistan is a country in the Middle East, covering an area of more than 500. 000km² and has a population of between 35-40 million. Kurdistan is divided between three oppressive countries: Turkey, Iran and Syria. Today Southern Kurdistan is today, free from Iraq’s oppressive regime and the Kurdish people who live there are viewing this freedom as a way of owning this land. The Kurdish population in Southern Kurdistan has successfully shown that they can govern themselves.

Today, throughout all the countries of the world, the Kurdish population is the largest nation without a recognized country. As a consequence of this they do not have any national or democratic rights. Anyone who is reading this letter and belongs to a peace-loving and democratic society needs to think seriously about the plight of the Kurdish people and support them in their fight to gain recognition for their national and democratic rights.

The Kurdish nation is one of the oldest and largest in the Middle East. Kurdish people like citizens of any other nation have the right to determine their own future and live freely in their own homeland and govern themselves.

Despite the fact that there have not been any major changes in respect of the Kurdish people’s aims and demands in relation to their national and democratic rights (apart from developments in South Kurdistan), the Turkish State is (with the beginning of the “**Imrali procedure**”) trying to get Kurdish people to give up their independence and (de-politicize, passivise) them by adopting policies like “Democratic Republic Projects and Basic Citizenship”

But the Turkish Government cannot deceive the Kurdish people with its dirty policies because they have never surrendered to or been obedient to these policies in the past and will never do so in the future.

No government (Western or otherwise) who has a major say in world politics have taken serious steps towards developing a solution to the Kurdish issue.

With regards to the Kurdish problems, the people who it directly affects the Kurds, are seen as the third party and are not consulted. It is also known that the Kurdish issue is regarded at a low level on the EU Members’ Agenda and EU members make the mistake of classifying the problems of Kurdish people and Kurdistan (Northern Kurdistan) as being restricted to: human rights, cultural rights and language problem.

We wish to highlight once more that the Kurdish People are not an ethnic minority but a nation in own right with a long established history and culture. Therefore, Kurdish people should be treated as a nation in their own right and be recognised accordingly. If this does not happen, the question of Kurds and Kurdistan (Northern Kurdistan) will remain an unsolved

problem in the European Unions agenda, which won't go away. **In this respect history will just repeat itself, as in the years of 1639 and 1923.**

The solution to these problems cannot be addressed in relation to the interests of the Turkish State and the European Union, as our issues are separate. We are hoping that the European Union will act according to its values and principles and not allow the Turkish Government to undermine these principles and values.

The Turkish Government has denied the very existence of the Kurdish people as a nation from the very beginning and whenever Kurdish people struggle for their national and democratic rights, the response of the Turkish Government has been oppression and genocide.

The Turkish Government finds the federation insufficient but supports confederation and even an independent country for 100,000 Cypriot Turks but does not recognise the rights of over 20 million Kurds in northern Kurdistan. The policy of the Turkish Government concerning Kurdish issues has always been denial, assimilation and genocide.

We, The Platform for Kurdish People in Europe, see the Kurdish issue as being two fold: a) a country, which is occupied, and b) a national political issue. We see the solution to the problem as being an acceptance of our nation's national and democratic rights. Therefore ideas such as: "Democratic Republic" and "Basic Citizenship" will not resolve the issue but can only be regarded as part of the Turkish Government's dirty policies.

Kurds' Identity Problem:

In Turkey, Kurds are not recognized by their own identity. Even within the legal framework, Kurds are not recognized through their national identity. The Kurdish identity should be acknowledged and all Kurdish rights to freedom should be guaranteed within a legal framework of The Republic of Turkey. Kurdistan, its identity and language should take its deserved place within the Turkish Constitution and should be guaranteed. All ideological, fanatical and other similar sections should be removed from the Turkish Constitution and a new Constitution should be drafted.

- Turkish governments have changed the original names of Kurdish cities, towns and other geographic places and replaced them with Turkish names deliberately. For this reason these changes should be reversed under the supervision of The European Union and civil Kurdish organisations.

Status of the Kurdish Language and the Right of Education:

The Kurdish language should be given official status just like the Turkish language. Therefore the Kurdish language would be protected under a special program. The Kurdish language should be legalised with the help of EU funds and under the supervision of the EU and NGO's.

Kurdish teachers should be trained and citizens should be allowed to be educated in their mother tongue from primary education through to university. A specialized institution should be founded with the Kurdish language being protected and improved upon. The Turkish

Government should acknowledge their responsibilities and implement the necessary changes. Throughout the transitional process there would be no place for ideological and racist beliefs.

- The whole process would take place without any government interference and Turkey's application to join the EU should not be accepted until all these changes have been accepted and taken place.

Expressional and organizational rights:

Since the Turkish Republic was formed, the rights of expression, freedom of speech and organizational rights were banned under strict laws. Thousands of people were sentenced, tortured and imprisoned according to these laws. This situation continues today, with only a couple of small insignificant changes in the laws.

- Expressional rights, political organization and recognition of Kurdish identity should be guaranteed under the Turkish Constitution. The legitimate right to speak out and protest using the Kurdish language should be legalized and recognized.

The international conventional agreements signed by the Turkish Government.

The Justice and legal system should be changed according to EU regulations. Within this process, the legal system should be changed so that it is translated into both Turkish and Kurdish.

- The Turkish Republic should remove all the conditions, which have been placed on the Kurdish nations rights and freedoms and act according to the international agreements they have signed.

The Turkish Republic should encourage and provide financial help towards publishing books for adults and children in both languages (Turkish and Kurdish), and printing daily Kurdish newspapers in an official and systematic way.

- With regards to the different types of media in Turkey, for example: children's programs, language, cultural, history, news and magazine programs they should be presented in Kurdish alongside Turkish.

The state of Asylum Seeker's and the right of return, financial compensation

The EU, civil Kurdish organizations and Turkish officials should identify people who want to return to their homeland and support them financially. All the villages and towns, which have been destroyed, should be rebuilt prior to people returning under the direct supervision of the EU. Individuals and families who were forced out of their homes and villages should be identified through official means and compensation should be paid.

- The Turkish Republic should obey these conditions under the supervision of the EU and the civil Kurdish organizations.

The differences between the Turkish and Kurdish regions;

Since The Turkish Republic was formed, any region where Kurds live or have lived, no new development projects have taken place, unlike the Turkish regions. This is a deliberate Government policy, which is still on going. There are significant differences between the Kurdish and the Turkish regions.

- The EU and Turkey should develop special programs for the Kurdish regions, identifying where development is needed and bring these plans to fruition as soon as possible.

Special Programs for children and women rights:

Within The Turkish Republic and Kurdistan, there are two social groups in particular, who are deeply affected by the ongoing assimilation policy, and they are women and children. Kurdish children are deeply affected by the assimilation policy.

Many women and children are victims of the system and due to lack of interest from official departments they often end up in a life of prostitution. A large number of children are involved in criminal activities. Thousands of Kurdish women are victims of violence, which results in many of them committing suicide.

Kurdish women and children require a special program to help them.

- The EU, Kurdish civil organizations and specialized women and children organizations should supervise these plans.

Economical problem:

- The EU funds which will be given to the Turkish Republic should take into consideration the Kurdish population and some of this money should be set aside for projects relating to the development of Kurdistan, the Kurdish language, education, training and the return of the immigrant families. Kurdish and civil European organisations should supervise these funds.

The ways that Kurds can join the negotiations:

Despite the fact that a third of the Turkish population are Kurds, they do not have official status in the negotiations between the EU and Turkey. Turkish delegates see themselves as the representatives of both the Turks and the Kurds. The Kurdish people want to take their rightful place in the negotiations. The EU should take the appropriate steps to allow the Kurds to join the negotiations.

- To prevent any injustices occurring, whilst Turkey waits for a date to be admitted to the European Union, an independent group of commissioners should be deployed under the control of the EU.

Problems of the Kurds in Europe:

In Europe nearly a million Kurds have adapted their lives to the country in which they live. At the moment thousands of Kurds have migrated to European countries because of oppression and colonization.

The issue of integration revolves around the Kurdish people adapting to their new community and culture but also retaining their own unique identity. Kurds have a lively and organized structure in Europe, with hundreds of civil and democratic organizations

being formed, working in a pro-active manner helping their home country and also integrating into the communities in which they live. As Kurds do not have an official voice or government to represent them in solving issues and changing situations, the Kurdish people should have a special status conferred upon them so that their voice can be heard.

- In all European countries Kurds should have cultural and ethnic minority rights. Kurdish nation should be recognized as a nation that does not have a state.

More than 35 million Kurds live in Kurdistan. More than 30% of the Turkish population are Kurdish. Within the EU there are nearly 1 million Kurds living there.

Prior to negotiations between Turkey and the EU concerning Turkey's application to join the EU, these actions should be taken in order to provide a just solution to the Kurdish and Kurdistan issue. At the same time The EU should observe and supervise the process

1. Any organizations above the constitution and the basic laws should be removed and dissolved, such as MGK.
2. The Religious affairs Ministry should be abolished and all religions and beliefs should be treated equally and free. The government should stop intervening in all religions.
3. Turkey should get rid of its ageing structure. Its ageing, central, authoritarian structure should be abolished and replaced with a decentralized structure. Except for general administration and foreign affairs all other administrative work should be placed in the hands of Kurdish administrators and the local parliament.
4. All the necessary legal changes should be implemented so that all the Kurdish organizations can operate under their own names and identities. All the Kurdish organizations should be legalized and allowed to become politically active. Political parties should not be banned and closed down. In order to create a parliament, which represents the whole population and is elected through democratic regulations, a 4% or 5% share of the vote should be sufficient to gain election. The current 10% rule is not used anywhere else in the EU.
5. In considering Turkey's membership, The EU should take into consideration the demands of the Kurdish people.

In summary these are the aims and principles of the European Kurdish Platform

Kurdish nation is one of the oldest nations in the Middle East. Like all other nations the Kurdish people have a right to determine their destiny, live freely on their land and govern their own country.

Colonialist Turkey has denied the existence of the Kurdish nation from the start. Denial, racist and colonialist policies continue today.

Turkey should begin a dialogue towards finding a just solution towards the Kurds and Kurdistan. The solution lies in the acceptance of the Kurdish nation and its national and democratic rights. The Kurdish language should have official status just like the Turkish language. The Turkish Republic should develop the necessary projects to preserve the Kurdish language. The Kurdish language should be integrated into education, training and official government departments.

EU members should develop projects to solve the Kurdish issue. Kurdish organisations should be supported and solutions should be developed which the Kurdish people would accept. The Kurdish issue should not be left in the hands of the colonialist governments.

The Kurdish nation throughout its history has never accepted any surrendering policies and will continue with their struggle until their national and democratic rights are recognised. Turkey should accept this and take all necessary steps to bring about a solution to the Kurdish issue. Existence of the Kurdish nation should be accepted. The necessary legal actions should be implemented and Kurdish nations' democratic rights should be accepted.

As The European Kurdish Platform (PKE – Platform), we are addressing the United Nations, European Union, European solidarity and co-operation organisation and all government officials; Kurdish and Kurdistan issue should be placed on your agenda and you should strive to find a solution to this issue.

To the EU we make this plea: Please do not let Turkey degenerate the EU norms. Until Turkey takes the necessary steps towards finding a solution to the Kurdish problems, the EU should take great care when dealing with financial and military funds.

No other nation has suffered the oppression and terror, which the Kurds have and are still subjected to. Peace, democracy and comfort will not be achieved in Kurdistan, The Middle East or in colonialist countries such as Turkey, Iran and Syria until Kurds have their national and democratic rights.

We, The European Kurdish Platform believe that the negotiation process between Turkey and The EU will have a significant effect on Kurdistan's future. Despite this the Kurdish people will not have a say in the negotiation process. The Kurdish population should be given a say about the Kurdish issue and Kurdistan being recognised.

02.08.2004

European Kurdish Platform (PKE-platform)

PKE Platform consists of three sections

- 1. Northern Kurdish National Platform-PNK-B**
- 2. European Kurdish Initiative- IKE - INSIYATIF**
- 3. Europe Democratic Mass organisations Cooperation's-DEM KURD**

And was formed in Sweden's capital Stockholm in 20-21.07.2002

1. European Kurdish Platform-North - PNK-BAKUR

- Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Party - **PADEK**
- Kurdistan Islamic Party- **PIK**
- Kurdistan Socialist Party- **PSK**
- Kurdistan Social and Democratic Organisation- **RSDK**
- Kurdistan Liberation Party- **PRK-Rizgari**

2. European Kurdish Initiative - IKE-Initiative

- German Kurdish Initiative-**IKA**
- Denmark Kurdish Initiative-**IKD**
- France Kurdish Initiative-**IKF**
- Sweden Kurdish Initiative- **IKS**
- Switzerland Kurdish Initiative-**IGKS**

3. European Democratic Organisations-DEM KURD

Kurdish Association, Germany Kurdish Association-Koln, Kurdish voice-Duisburg, Hevkar Germany, IVK Mainz, International association of human rights in Kurdistan-Germany, KOMKAR-Germany, FKKS Kurdish Associations Federation-Sweden, Kurdish Library-Sweden, Kurdish Association-Belgium, Kurdish Workers Cultural Association-KOC KAK, Kurdistan workers Association-Switzerland, Kurdistan workers Association-Austria, Kurdistan workers Association-Denmark, Kurdistan workers Association-France, Kurdish Advice Centre-UK, XOYBUN-Denmark, XOYBUN-Berlin, Kurdistan workers association-Holland, Kurdish house-Bremen, Kurdish House-Lubeck, Kurdish House-Paris.