Ninth session
Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 13–17 December 2021

Conference room paper submitted by the Government of Turkey

* The present document was submitted by Turkey and it is reproduced in the form in which it was received.
Your Excellency, Dear Mr. Ambassador,

Turkey attaches utmost importance to the international cooperation in the context of combatting and preventing corruption. We believe that the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Conference of States Parties (CoSP) are valuable instruments to address this multidimensional and multinational problem. They indicate the determination of the international community to prevent and eradicate the corrupt acts.

On the other hand, I would like to register our objection to the participation of eight non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the 9th Conference of States Parties, which will be held between 13-17 December 2021, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

- Integrity Initiatives International
- Central Asian Research Institute on Corruption and Money Laundering
- Alliance on Civic Initiatives Promotion
- Transparency International Georgia
- Expert Forum (EFOR)
- Access Info Europe
- The Good Lobby Italia
- Eurothink-Center for European Strategies

We consider that some of the actions and also the executive officers of these NGOs are supportive of terrorism, namely the “Fetullah Gülen Terrorist Organization (FETÖ)”.

H.E. Ambassador Ghislain Jean D'HOOP
WEOG Chairman, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Belgium to the International Organizations in Vienna

Cc:
- H.E. Ambassador Hamad Alkaabi, Permanent Representative of United Arab Emirates to United Nations, President of the Conference
- H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Hamdy El Molla, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the International Organizations in Vienna, incoming President of the Conference
- Mr. John Brandolino, Director of the Division for Treaty Affairs of the UNODC
Since we did not receive the complete/final list of NGOs (with or without ECOSOC status) which are supposed to be invited to the 9th CoSP, we are not able to make a complete assessment. Therefore, I reserve the right of coming back to this issue during and after the Conference in accordance with Rule 17 (1) and (2) of the Rules of Procedure. Please also note that this issue constitutes a matter of substance which should not be addressed only against the background of procedural rules.

Mr. Ambassador,

I take this opportunity to stress that Turkey recognizes and values the contribution of NGOs to this process. Our objection is strictly limited to those conducting activities which are supportive of the FETÖ terrorist organization and terrorism in general.

FETÖ terrorist group organized the heinous coup attempt on 15 July 2016 in Turkey, killed 251 innocent citizens and wounded more than two thousand people, bombed the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the Presidential Campus, the Headquarters of Turkish National Intelligence Organization and Turkish National Police Department with air strikes.

FETÖ terrorist organization is one of the most relevant examples of the link between organized crime, notably corruption, and terrorism. FETÖ terrorists clandestinely infiltrated within the State, while their corrupted practices and activities including embezzlement and money laundering provided them necessary resources to exist. This dangerous structure also used illegal methods such as tax evasion, bribery and all other forms of corruption.

The presence of NGOs which are supportive of such a terrorist organization in the Conference cannot be considered as a contribution to the international cooperation on combating and preventing corruption. On the contrary, as far as we are concerned, it does not help my authorities in fostering our contributions to the international cooperation under the framework of the UNCAC.

I therefore kindly request, Your Excellency, in your capacity as the WEOG Chairman, to circulate this letter among WEOG members. I will also be grateful if you can bring this letter to the attention of the Extended Bureau at its next meeting and ensure that it is attached to the report of the said meeting.

For ease of reference, I copy this letter to the President of the CoSP, H.E. Ambassador Hamad Alkaabi, Permanent Representative of United Arab Emirates, to the incoming President of the CoSP, H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Hamdy El Molla, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to the Director of the Division for Treaty Affairs of the UNODC, Mr. John Brandolino.
Your Excellency, I take this opportunity to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

Bien Ámicalement,

Ahmet Muhtar GÜN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Vienna
H.E. Ambassador Hamad ALKAABI
Permanent Representative of United Arab Emirates
to United Nations in Vienna,
Presidency of the Conference

Vienna, 24 November 2021

Dear Ambassador,

I feel compelled to explain our views in response to some of the points raised by H.E. Ambassador Stephan Klement, the Head of the EU Delegation, in his letter of 16 November 2021.

In my letter of 28 September 2021 concerning the participation of some of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the 9th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC-CoSP) to be held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, I made it clear that my country “recognizes and values the contribution of NGOs to the process of UNCAC and our objection was strictly limited to those conducting activities which are supportive of the FETO and terrorism in general”. Therefore, I cannot accept any allegation or insinuation to create the impression that my country was against the NGOs’ participation in principle. This is wrong and unfair.

On the other hand, while recognizing the valuable role of the relevant NGOs, I reiterate our belief that UNCAC-CoSP is, by definition, a forum for cooperation between States Parties, which are the main players and this focus should not be deviated.

In my letter, I also recalled the heinous coup d’etat attempt perpetrated by FETO against the democratically elected Government of my country, which caused the death of 251 innocent citizens and wounded more than two thousand. The Turkish Parliament, Presidential Palace, Headquarters of the Turkish National Intelligence and Turkish Police were attacked. The Turkish People is still very sensitive on it and strongly condemns its perpetrators. That also needs to be borne in mind.

Highly relevant in the context of UNCAC, I also recalled the corrupted practices of the said terrorist organization and shared our view that the presence of the NGOs referred to in my previous letter cannot be considered as a contribution to the international cooperation against corruption. We maintain this view. More details are presented in my letter, which I will not repeat.

I also need to highlight that my country will continue its fight against terrorism and this will always be in accordance with the Rule of Law, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Measures undertaken by my country will continue to comply with all our obligations under International Law. Proportionality is another principle which we always bear in mind. However,
it is not completely clear to me how the said principle should be applied to NGOs which are supportive of a terrorist organization. In the context of the UNCAC-CoSP, we have simply registered our objection against their participation and we maintain our objection.

A quick research from different sources, including those open to public, several supportive messages of the said NGOs can be found. I am sure that UNCAC States Parties have additional means to investigate them, where they exist. In a more general context, investigation and legal action are required against those who committed the crimes I have mentioned above and those who provide any support to them. To this end, our efforts will continue to cooperate with all UNCAC States Parties. Furthermore, we are not blacklisting any entity, but we are raising our concerns on a highly sensitive issue both for my People and my Government in the specific context of UNCAC. These concerns remain alive.

We will continue our preparations expecting that UNCAC-CoSP will focus on issues relevant to its own agenda.

I kindly invite you, Your Excellency, to convey this letter to H.E. Dr. Harib Al Amimi, President of the Conference of the State Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption. I will also be grateful if you could circulate it to the Permanent Representations of all UNCAC Parties. I am copying it to the incoming Egyptian Presidency, H.E. Ambassador Muhammed Hamdy El Molla and to H.E. Ambassador Stephan Klement, the Head of EU Delegation.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ahmet Muhtar GÜN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Vienna

Cc:

- H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Hamdy El Molla, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the International Organizations in Vienna, Incoming Presidency of the Conference

- H.E. Ambassador Stephan Klement, Head of Delegation of the EU to the International Organizations in Vienna