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GERMANY'S POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS REGARDING THE EVENTS OF 1915

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On 25 February 2016, the German Federal Assembly (*Bundestag*) held a debate on the draft resolution submitted by the Alliance '90/The Greens Party that characterizes the events of 1915 as genocide. However, the ruling Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria faction and the Social Democratic Party of Germany opposed the draft resolution on the grounds that this would jeopardize Germanys joints efforts with Turkey on the Syrian refugee crisis. As such, the Alliance '90/The Greens Party chose to withdraw the draft resolution.

The attempt to push this draft resolution through the Federal Assembly was spearheaded by Alliance '90/The Greens co-chair Cem Özdemir, who acts more like a propagandist than a politician in issues related to Turkey. The fact that, on the same day as the debate of the draft resolution, Özdemir met with the Deputy Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly Eduard Sharmazanov,[1] who spewed utter nonsense about Turkey during his speech in Berlin that day,[2] speaks volumes of the mindset Özdemir and where he gets his guidance from.

The Alliance '90/The Greens Party framed their draft resolution with the worn-out clichés of the narrative that portrays the 1915 events as genocide. During the debate, Özdemir stated; Turkey is distorting its own history, while our goal is to establish the truth. A clear message on the part of Germany could change a lot and that Germany needed to pass such a resolution to clear its conscience.[3] The rest of the German Federal Assembly seemed to agree with Alliance '90/The Greens Partys approach to this issue, however, they still opposed the draft resolution on the grounds that now was not the time to handle this issue. It was indicated that such move ahead of the EU-Turkey refugee summit[4] would create problems in forging cooperation with Turkey. Based on the debate in the Federal Assembly, it is apparent that Alliance '90/The Greens Party will try to bring back this draft resolution by April of this year.

There are a couple of points regarding the debate that took place in the German Federal Assembly:

1) The fact that the Alliance '90/The Greens Party brought the draft resolution to the Federal Assembly, only to withdraw it when it did not receive the support they desired reveals Alliance '90/The Greens Partys lack of political foresight. Before even bringing this

draft resolution to the attention of the Federal Assembly, Alliance '90/The Greens Party should have taken a look at Germanys political agenda and the overall political mood in the country.

2) The Alliance '90/The Greens Party move, taken with lack of foresight, has tarnished the German Federal Assemblys image of having a principled approach to politics. If recognizing the 1915 events as genocide was such a moral obligation, then the German Federal Assembly should have gone ahead with the draft resolution no matter the consequences. The fact the draft resolution was pushed aside for the sake Germanys practical considerations reveals that, for Germany, the narrative that portrays the 1915 events as genocide is an issue that has more to do with politics than with morality. This simply reinforces the observation that, for countries that have adopted or are considering to adopt resolution on the 1915 events, the dispute over the characterization of 1915 events is a political tool to verbally harass Turkey and to satiate the incessant demands of Turcophobic Armenian lobby groups.

3) The debate on this draft resolution and the draft resolutions subsequent withdrawal reveals that German politicians are trying to play Turkey for a fool. It is clear that they are withholding the adoption of this resolution until the time when the EU and Turkey agree on a concrete plan on how to handle the refugee crisis. Once such a plan is secured, German politicians will simply bring back this draft resolution and again cause a diplomatic row between Germany and Turkey. Turkey should seriously take German politicians mindset on this issue into consideration before making any commitments on future plans of cooperation.

**Photo: Armradio.am*

[1] Sharmazanov Hails Cem Ozdemirs Stance on Armenian Genocide Condemnation, *Armenpress*, 26.02.2016, http://armenpress.am/eng/news/837433/sharmazanov-hails-cem-ozdemir%E2%80%99s-stance-on-armenian-genocide-condemnation.html

[2] Sharmazanov: Talaat and Kemal followers are committing another genocide in Middle East, *News.am*, 25.02.2016, http://news.am/eng/news/313735.html

[3] Siranush Ghazanchyan, Bundestag to vote on new Armenian Genocide bill before April 24, *Public Radio of Armenia*, 25.02.2016, http://www.armradio.am/en/2016/02/25/bundestag-to-vote-on-new-armenian-genocide-bill-before-april-24/

[4] Georgi Gotev, EU and Turkey to hold refugee summit in March, *Euractive.com*,

19.02.2016, http://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/eu-and-turkey-to-hold-special-refugee-summit-in-march/

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