

To: Ahmet Necdet Sezer, president
Tayyip Erdogan, prime minister

His Excellency,

The images of the harsh police intervention in Istanbul during a demonstration of women demanding their human rights has been a shock and the focus of attention on today's Women's Day celebrations in the Netherlands. The fact that this demonstration was illegal is not an acceptable reason for such police brutality.

Turkey has been on the European agenda since the beginning of its negotiations to become an EU member. The position of women in Turkey was one of the central issues in these discussions.

The Turkish women were very active ambassadors of their country during this process. They have been pointing out the legal arrangements made in favour of women and their strong will to see the implementations of these changes in their daily lives. Belonging to a country which has signed the Cedaw Agreement, proud they were having a Turkish woman presiding the prestigious Cedaw Commission of the United Nations.

Turkey's efforts were almost convincing in dealing with the greatest of all discrimination; the unequal treatment of women. Now on this special day that the women are dealing with the results of their ten long struggle years after the declaration of Beijing in 1995, the media images have once more puzzled the defenders of Turkey's EU membership. We hope that this incident would be the last one shadowing Turkey's efforts.