

## Articles

**Europe, stand up for Erdogan  
Coups have no place in a region  
built on democratic values.**

**Carl Bildt /August 2016**

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Is Brussels asleep, or just ignorant? That's the question being asked after European leaders responded tepidly to the attempted military coup in Turkey on July 15.

Imagine the rebellious military units had succeeded, and some sort of military-political junta had captured the instruments of state power in Turkey.

I doubt it would have been as easy as when the colonels and their tanks took power in Athens in April 1967, arresting many thousands and starting a nightmare for Greece and Europe that lasted for nearly a decade.

We would have seen major bloodshed on the streets of Ankara and Istanbul as coup forces tried to suppress opposition demonstrations. Think back to the deadly violence that erupted in Cairo in the immediate aftermath of the July 2013 coup.

A successful coup in Turkey would in all probability have engulfed the country in civil war. And the consequences would have been immense.

Millions of Turkish citizens fleeing violence, chaos and death would have joined the more than 2 million Syrian refugees hosted in Turkey in setting sail for Europe. The EU would now be facing a refugee disaster of even larger magnitude than in 2015.

The EU has never witnessed a serious military coup attempt in any of its member or accession countries. In Hungary and elsewhere, challenges to our concept of the rule of law fade in comparison to a fully-fledged attempted coup that occupied TV stations, bombed the parliament and tried to capture the elected President of the country.

The threat was averted, but at the cost of at least 265 lives and 1,100 wounded. Turkey's political parties were quick to come together to condemn the coup. We can hope that this unique show of solidarity will put democracy in Turkey on more secure footing.

But on the night of the coup, it took some time for the EU to condemn the events. And there was no sign of senior EU representatives afterward flying Turkey in support of an accession country facing the gravest threat to its constitutional order yet.

Instead, Europe's leaders immediately began to question measures taken by the Turkish authorities to cleanse from power any elements thought to be associated with the Gülen movement.

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This article expresses the opinion of the writer and not necessarily, the opinion of the site.

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