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The escalation of anti-government protests and police crackdown in Turkey has highlighted the risks of majority governments becoming excessively authoritarian and ignoring the concerns and views of the rest of the population.

Guy Verhofstadt, ALDE group leader said: "The Turkish model has been held up many times over the past decade as a model for moderate Islamic democracy yet a number of recent laws and acts have been perceived as anti-secular and undermined the reputation of the governing AKP party, both at home and in the EU - with whom it is pursuing accession talks."

"President Gul is right to call for calm and cool heads. The reactionary response of security forces recalled images of a more dictatorial past when faced with pro-democracy demonstrators. But people have a right to demonstrate their discontent with government policy. The Government should regain its composure, listen to legitimate concerns and not pour more fuel on the fire."

Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (FDP, Germany), ALDE spokesperson on Turkey stresses:

"No-one questions the majority that AKP and its leader Erdogan achieved in the elections, but people on Taksim square demonstrate against 'a dictatorship of the majority'. They do not accept that this majority is used to push an agenda against freedom of expression and freedom of the media, against women's rights and a secular lifestyle, against any law curtailing individual rights. It is the duty of a democratically elected Prime Minister to safeguard the rights of minorities in his country, to take their demands seriously and react differently to democratic mass protests"