

# Erdogan is 'welcomed' with protests at Berlin

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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived Berlin Tegel airport for his state visit to the German capital to restore Turkey's credibility with foreign investors and weakened diplomatic relations with European countries.

However, Erdogan's visit has sharply divided Germany; many politicians decided to boycott the state banquet for Erdogan, as well as, two huge protests will take place in Berlin and Cologne. He met with a protest as soon as he entered German soil in Tegel on Thursday noon. His opponents have registered numerous rallies and demonstrations; the first one took place directly at the airport. Reporters Without Borders organisation protested when Erdogan landed Berlin Tegel airport against the imprisonment of journalists in Turkey. Amnesty International demanded to increase the pressure for the release of detainees. If the Turkish government wants a fresh start in international relations, it must first fulfil international obligations, Markus Beeko, Secretary General of Amnesty International in Germany, said to Germany

daily Zeit Online. "The instrumentalisation of law must be ended, arbitrary detainees must, and the European Convention on Human Rights be respected."

According to Beeko, more than 150 journalists are currently in Turkey's prisons, more than in any other country in the world. Hundreds of non-governmental organisations and media houses have been closed in the last two years. Peaceful protests have been suppressed.

Erdogan's expecting talk of leaving the "past period completely behind" -regarding the meltdown of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Germany- in comments to reporters en route to New York is unanticipated. In the German Parliament, there were strong criticisms across parliamentary groups. The Green politician Cem Ozdemir said, "There comes a ruler of a country, in which there is practically no freedom of the press, in which people have never been more afraid to express their opinion." Die Linke politician Sevim Dagdelen demanded that no concessions to be made with Turkey as long as the EU candidate does not take the path of democracy and the rule of law and tens of thousands of political prisoners, including Germans, continue to be imprisoned in the country. "I warn against further stabilising the regime of Erdogan," she said in the German ZDF magazine.