

## **Response of the Federal Council (16.02.2011)**

The interest shown by Armenia and Turkey to normalize their relations paved the way for the signing of the Zurich Protocols. Despite all the difficulties, the Federal Council is confident that dialogue and cooperation between the parties will contribute to a mutual rapprochement of the two countries, from which both can profit. In any case, no means should be left unused on this issue and the Federal Council is determined to continue its engagement for peace, stability and development in the region.

The official response of the Federal Council to the 3 Questions of the interpellant:

1. Several times the Federal Council had the opportunity to extend its regrets and its conviction regarding the tragic mass deportations and massacre, which took place towards the end of the Ottoman Empire. The Federal Council stands by its opinion that it is the task of historians to work out the tragic events of 1915 and to clarify them as comprehensively as possible. Switzerland wants to encourage both Armenia and Turkey to handle historical questions on a constructive basis within the framework of the rapprochement between the two countries. The invitation of historians to deal with the tragic events of 1915 aims to encourage an open and responsible debate, which would lead to a better understanding, knowledge and greater acceptance of the tragedy of 1915.

The reference regarding the crimes against Armenians in a message dated 15 November 2000 about the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (00.900), was related to a report of the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, dated 2 August 1985. With this reference and another to a resolution of the European Parliament, dated 18 June 1987, it was aimed to show which events in certain bodies were qualified as genocide. But this does not necessarily mean that the Federal Council agrees with these assessments.

2. The Federal Council knows how delicate the debate about the historical issues are for Turks and Armenians and as it was mentioned before, wants to encourage both States to tackle these issues constructively and within the perspective of a mutual rapprochement.

3. The answer of 13 December 2010 reflected the level of information of the Federal Council at the time of its dealing with the question (10.5590) titled "Process Against Doğan Akhanlı in Turkey. A Nonsensical Issue" The first hearing took place on 8 December 2010, after which Doğan Akhanlı was released. Another hearing was decided to be held on 9 March 2011.