

EU and Turkey

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TURKEY’S WAY TO EUROPE

Introduction

The enlargement of the European Union on 1 May 2004 has brought a historical shift for the Union in political, geographic and economic terms, further reinforcing the political and economic interdependence between the EU and Turkey. It offers the opportunity for the EU and Turkey to develop an increasingly close relationship, going beyond co-operation, to involve a significant measure of economic integration and a deepening of political co-operation. The European Union and Turkey are determined to make use of this occasion to enhance their relations and to promote stability, security and welfare. The approach is founded on partnership, joint ownership and differentiation. The European Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union sets ambitious objectives based on commitments to shared values and effective implementation of political, economic and institutional reforms. Turkey is invited to enter into intensified political, security, economic and cultural relations with the EU, enhanced regional and cross border co-operation and shared responsibility in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The European Union takes note of Turkey’s expressed European aspirations. The EU welcomes Turkey’s readiness to enhance cooperation in all domains. The level of ambition of the relationship will depend on the degree of Turkey’s commitment to common values as well as its capacity to implement jointly agreed priorities, in compliance with international and European norms and principles. The pace of progress of the relationship will acknowledge fully Turkey’s efforts and concrete achievements in meeting those commitments.

In the first part of this speech; I will present an overall information about the expectations of the EU as regards Turkey’s EU membership, in the second part; I will present the reforms realised by Turkish government since Ankara Agreement in 1963, and in the last part; I will mention probable advantages that Turkey might present to the neighbouring states, particularly Georgia, following her full membership.

1. Expectations of the EU from Turkey in the Process of the EU Membership

1.1. Democracy and the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms: Strengthening the stability and effectiveness of institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law

Reform of the judicial system

Further improvement of the system of plea bargaining;

Development of effective statistics in the criminal justice sector.

To enhance further development of forensic field.

Civil service reform

Continue to develop and implement reform of public administration with a view to its modernisation, accountability and transparency; strengthening of the already functioning training centres;

Fight against corruption

Continue to develop and implement specific anti-corruption measures within the law enforcement agencies (police, State border service and judiciary), including the development

of Code of Ethics for prosecutors and judges and implementation of the European Code of Police Ethics, as adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 19 September 2001;

Ensure progress in implementing the recommendations of the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

Strengthening democratic institutions

Raise the level of legal expertise and law-screening in the processes of harmonization of Turkish legislation with the European standards.

Encourage greater political pluralism: strengthen the role and functioning of political parties in Turkey;

Ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms

Ensure freedom of the media. Encourage proper implementation of the Law of Turkey on Broadcasting and the Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression;

Further improvement of the legal basis and practice in the sphere of detention, in particular pre-trial detention, to prevent torture and ill-treatment of detainees: implement the National Action Plan against Torture;

Ensure respect for rights of persons belonging to national minorities; sign and ratify European Charter for regional or Minority Languages;

Develop and implement a civic integration strategy and ensure its implementation, including creation of appropriate monitoring instruments;

Enhance the role and independence of the Public Defender/Ombudsman institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.

Continue efforts to create conditions of safety and security for the civilian population, including respect for property rights, focusing on those areas which are mostly populated by Turkish citizens of various ethnic origins.

Continue efforts to ensure implementation of the standards set in the European Social Charter and ensure trade union rights and core labour standards in accordance with relevant ILO conventions as ratified by Turkey;

Continue efforts to ensure the equality of men and women in society and economic life.

Ensure the protection of the rights of conscripts, including by facilitating the introduction of civil supervision and monitoring of the armed forces;

1. 2. Cooperation on foreign and security policy, conflict prevention and crisis management :

Strengthen political dialogue and cooperation on foreign and security matters

Continue and develop EU-Turkey political dialogue on regional and international issues, including in the framework of the Council of Europe, OSCE and the UN, and on the implementation of the European Security Strategy;

Develop cooperation on sanctions issued by the EU, including arms embargoes;

Develop an enhanced political dialogue and regular exchange of information on Common Foreign and Security Policy including European Security and Defence Policy;

Fight against international crime in accordance with international law, giving due regard to preserving the integrity of the Rome Statute.

Further develop co-operation in addressing common security threats, including non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and illegal arms exports

Cooperate on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and ballistic missiles, including through implementing UNSC resolution 1540/04, ensuring full compliance with and national implementation of existing international obligations and promoting the accession to and implementation of other relevant international instruments and export control regimes;

In this context, continue the existing dialogue on our joint policy of non proliferation through

enhancing the present cooperation between researchers being involved in activities aimed at helping the former weapon of mass destruction scientists and engineers to redirect their talents to civilian and sustainable activities in the context of the ISTC/STCU.

Further develop co-operation in the prevention of and fight against the illicit trafficking of materials that are used in the manufacture of WMD;

Cooperate on developing effective systems of national export control, controlling export and transit of WMD related goods, including WMD end-use control on dual use of goods and technologies, and effective sanctions for breaches of export controls;

Improve overall co-ordination in the non-proliferation area and examine specific threats related to WMD which undermine regional security and the scope of co-operation in addressing them

Strengthen efforts and cooperation in the fight against terrorism

Strengthen EU-Turkey co-operation in the fight against and prevention of terrorism;

Work towards the establishment of an information exchange system between relevant judicial bodies and law enforcement agencies of the EU Member States and Turkey;

Ensure respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism.

1.3. Fight against organised crime, trafficking in human beings, drugs and money-laundering:

Strengthen efforts and co-operation in the fight against organised crime

Continue implementing the National Action Plan for Combating the Trafficking of Persons.

Cooperate with EU law enforcement agencies and international organizations in new crime areas, e.g. Information and Communication Technology related crime, in particular child pornography.

Reinforce the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially in women and children, (as well as activities to integrate victims of such trafficking) and smuggling of illegal migrants

Implement actions recommended by OSCE action plan to combat trafficking in Human Beings (approved in Maastricht December 2003, Chapters III, IV and V) and enhance co-operation in the framework of relevant international organisations (OSCE, UN);

Promote regional co-operation between relevant law enforcement bodies (police, border guards, customs and judiciary);

Develop mechanisms of protection, assistance and rehabilitation for victims

Further strengthen the fight against illicit drug trafficking, including precursors diversion, and against drug abuse in particular through prevention and rehabilitation of drugs addicts

Continue implementing the 1988 UN Convention on Illicit Traffic of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances;

Reinforce national legislation and develop a national anti-drug strategy, covering drug supply and demand, including prevention programmes and programmes for treatment of drug addicts;

Develop the capacity of relevant law enforcement authorities;

Enhance strategic and operational cooperation with Black Sea and Caspian Sea littoral neighbouring countries with a view to better intercept narcotics shipments originating from Afghanistan.

Strengthen efforts and co-operation in the fight against money-laundering

Fully implement the anti-money laundering law entered into force in 2004, including the effective functioning of the Financial Monitoring Service (FMS), and of the National Money laundering prosecution Unit; where necessary, amend the legislation to bring it fully in line with European and FATF standards;

Enhancing the inter-institutional data-base on suspicious transactions and set up a proper mechanism to freeze and confiscate the proceeds of crime;

Promote application of effective sanctions against money laundering;

Develop a training programme for the judges, prosecutors, and all other relevant personnel;

1.4. Police and judicial co-operation : Develop international and regional judicial and law enforcement cooperation

Establish a network of contact points with EU Member States judicial and law enforcement authorities with a view to develop cooperation and exchange information;

Exchange information on best practices in judicial co-operation between EU Member States and Turkey;

1.5. Economic and social reform, poverty reduction and sustainable development

Continue to pursue prudent macro-economic policies

Maintain macroeconomic stability by implementing prudent monetary and fiscal policies;

Improve strategic planning of capital expenditures;

Improve tax collection to ensure sustainable revenue basis to finance Government priorities;

Take significant steps to reduce levels of poverty

Introduce effective poverty reduction measures aimed at significant reduction in the number of people with income below the poverty line and improved social cohesion, including sustainable systems for education, health and other social services with access for all;

Continue reform of the social security system notably to improve targeting and effectiveness of social protection measures and social assistance particularly child care;

Continue reforms in the education and health sectors, and ensure transparency and accountability of the reformed (former budgetary) organisations;

Undertake effective monitoring of service delivery;

Enhance agricultural production and rural development

Foster the development, promotion and protection of quality production;

Exchange of experience on best practices and use of international and EU standards;

Identify and develop measures to improve (i) access to credit facilities, as to encourage private investment in the agricultural sector, (ii) access to local and export markets, and (iii) knowledge transfer and extension services;

Improve market economy functioning and strengthen economic growth through structural reforms

Undertake operational improvements in enterprises that will remain under state ownership;

Promotion of sustainable development

Identify steps to establish and implement the national strategy on sustainable development;

Ensure strategic planning of sustainable development and coordination between relevant actors;

Take steps to improve integration of environmental considerations into other policy sectors.

1.6. Trade-related issues, market and regulatory reform

Customs

Reinforce customs controls on imports and exports of pirated or counterfeit goods;

Develop an integrated border management strategy by strengthening co-operation between customs and other agencies working at the border;

Develop EU-Turkey co-operation with regard to risk-based customs control ensuring safety and security of goods imported, exported or in transit and define standards for certification of operators (exporters and transporters) intervening in commercial exchanges.

Standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures (EU harmonised areas)

Move toward EU and international legislative and administrative practices for standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment

Ensure effective cooperation in order to establish and strengthen in Turkey a modern institutional system of technical regulation, standardisation, metrology and accreditation. Integrate the institutions in charge of standardisation, accreditation, conformity assessment, metrology and market surveillance to the extent possible within European and international structures;

Develop market surveillance capacities based on the practice of EU Member States; Optimize procedures of conformity assessment of industrial products, with the aim of avoiding compulsory certification of low risk products and repeat testing and introduction of European Modules of conformity assessment.

Restrictions and streamlined administration (EU non-harmonised areas)

Analyse legislation and administrative procedures with a view to identifying and, if need be, progressively removing discrimination and restrictions against imported products;

Designate a central contact point to facilitate information flows and co-operation with economic operators.

Sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues

Increase food safety for consumers and facilitate trade through reforms and modernisation of the sanitary and phyto-sanitary services.

Continue work towards full implementation of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures and active participation in relevant international bodies Exchange information on and explore possible areas of convergence with EU rules and practices in the field of sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues

Adhere to the International Plant Protection Convention;

Fulfillment of EU requirements on animal health and for the processing of animal products);

Work towards interconnection with the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF).

1.7. Right of establishment, Company Law and Services

Right of establishment and Company Law

Progressively abolish barriers to establishment, including to foreign investment;

Ensure full application of the best endeavor standstill clause so that the conditions for establishment of companies are not more restrictive than when the PCA was concluded;

In line with EU standards, improve the registration process for companies, notably by strengthening administrative structures involved in company registration; facilitating establishment, in particular with regards to access to companies' basic legal and financial information, transparency of legislation, etc. Continue simplification of licensing requirements;

Converge with and ensure effective implementation of key principles on company law, accounting and auditing in relevant international and EU rules and standards;

Improve consistency and predictability in the administrative and judicial authorities responsible for oversight of company law and related investment conditions;

Review Turkish law and practice relating to bankruptcy;

Continue improving corporate governance legislation in line with international standards and ensure its effective implementation.

Services

Complete a review of national legislation by Georgia so as to identify barriers to the provision of services with the aim of abolishing them;

Establish a Business Information one-stop-shop with the aim of facilitating provision of services to the private sector.

Financial services

Continue reform of financial services sector, including development of a securities market

Enhancement of a prudential regulatory framework for financial services and supervision

equivalent to that existing in the EU;

Ensure effective functioning of independent supervisory authorities in accordance with internationally recognised standards.

1.8. Movement of capital and current payments

Ensure full application of PCA commitments under Chapter V (Current Payments and capital)

Ensure the free movement of capital relating to direct investment made in companies and other investments made in accordance with the provisions on Establishment;

Ensure the protection of such foreign investments and the liquidation and repatriation of profits and capital.

Exchange information about the present legal and regulatory regime as concerns capital movement;

Consider progressive facilitation of capital movements other than those relating to direct investments.

1.9. Movement of persons including movement of workers

Ensure full application of the best endeavour clause by abolishing all discriminatory measures based on nationality which affect migrant workers, as regards working conditions, remuneration or dismissal.

1.10. Other key areas

Taxation

Complete the network of bilateral agreements between Turkey and EU Member States on avoidance of double taxation in line with the OECD Model Tax Convention;

Initiate a dialogue on the principles of the EU Code of Conduct for Business Taxation with a view to ensuring fair conditions for Georgia in its future process of integration into the internal market.

Competition policy

Anti-trust and control on state aids policy

Ensure enforcement of the competition law, in particular by: optimization of the administrative capacity enhancing the independence of the Free Trade and Competition Agency.

Examine the possibility of establishing further transparency as regards State aid granted in Turkey, in particular by (i) elaborating general rules of state aid and (ii) drawing up annual reports on the amounts, types and recipients of aid.

Intellectual and industrial property rights

Ensure proper functioning of the judicial system to guarantee access to justice for right-holders and availability and effective implementation of sanctions;

Consolidate the relevant institutional structures, as well as of the offices for industrial rights, copyrights protection and collective societies. Extend cooperation with third country authorities and industry associations;

Establish system of effective protection of geographical indication;

Take measures to increase public awareness in the field of intellectual and industrial property protection. Establish an efficient system of use of patent information for enterprises.

Increase resources dedicated to enforcement, including for the judicial system;

Improve enforcement of the relevant conventions;

Conduct a study on piracy and counterfeiting in Georgia and ensure effective dialogue with rights holders.

Public procurement

Converge with and effectively implement key principles in the EU legislation on public procurement (e.g. transparency, non-discrimination, competition and access to legal recourse);

Develop conditions for open and competitive award of contracts between the parties;

Improve the functioning of the current system through increased transparency, information provision, access to legal recourse, awareness and training among contracting authorities and business community, as well as the limited use of exceptions.

Statistics

Adoption of statistical methods fully compatible with European standards and advance the modernisation of the Department of Statistics of Turkey with the view to strengthen the independence and a sustainable functioning of official statistics.

Elaborate a short and medium term development strategy of official statistics for harmonisation with European standards in the relevant statistical areas (in particular national accounts, business statistics, external trade statistics etc), taking into account the process of gradual harmonization with EU standards.

Take steps to restructure the regional and local offices of the Department of Statistics of Turkey to ensure an optimal balance between available resources and data quality needs;

Improve the quality and coverage of the statistical business register.

Public Internal Financial Control and related issues

Promote the development of appropriate administrative capacity to prevent and fight effectively against fraud and other irregularities affecting national and international funds, including the establishment of well-functioning co-operation structures involving all relevant national entities;

Ensure effective cooperation with the relevant EU Institutions and bodies in the case of on-the-spot checks and inspections related to the management and control of EU funds;

Improve public finance management and transparency, through upgrading of the existing Treasury Accounts Systems, appropriate audit of budget revenue and expenditures. Set up and implement an integrated informational system for public finance management.

Public Internal Financial Control

Develop a strategy paper for the public internal financial control system (managerial accountability and internal audit);

Develop legislative framework for public internal financial control;

Pursue gradual harmonization with the internationally agreed standards and methodologies, as well as with EU best practices for the control and audit of public income, expenditure, assets and liabilities;

External Audit

Continue the reform of the Chamber of Control in line with the internationally accepted and EU best practice external audit standards.

Enterprise policy

Create a favorable environment for the development of SMEs;

Promote the exchange of information and of best practice on enterprise and industrial policy and associate Turkey to EU initiatives to stimulate competitiveness (e.g. exchange of information, participation in networks and studies, training);

Explore the need and possible options for launching a dialogue on enterprise and industrial policy.

1.11. Cooperation in specific sectors: including transport, energy, environment, telecommunications, research and innovation

Transport

Continue implementation and refinement of the national sustainable transport policy for the

development of all modes of transport and related infrastructure as well as where appropriate approximation of legislative and regulatory frameworks with European international standards, in particular for safety and security issues;

Develop an infrastructure strategy (identifying capacity constraints, lack of inter-modal equipment and missing link infrastructure) in order to identify the priority infrastructure projects in various sectors;

Develop co-operation in satellite navigation, (including joint research actions and applications).

Develop and implement an action plan on road safety including the technical control/road worthiness testing of vehicles and implementation of legislation on the transport of dangerous goods as well as improve control on movement of the overloaded vehicles;

Ensure that international transport sector is regulated in terms of access to the profession;

Introduce and ensure strict enforcement of mandatory driving times and rest periods in the international transport sector complying with international standards.

Improve efficiency of freight transport services (including issues of border crossing procedures). Promote multi-modal services, address issues of interoperability.

Complete Restructuring of the railway sector;

Promote regulatory approximation, including on safety and security issues;

Increase administrative and technical capacity to comply with Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) standards and obtain full JAA member status;

Cooperation in the area of air navigation.

Complete restructuring of the port sector;

Implement relevant international IMO (International Maritime Organisation) conventions requirements; pursue effective enforcement in the areas of Port State Control and Flag State implementation as well as resolutions of the Maritime Environment Protection Committee on tanker safety;

Speed up the phasing-out of single-hull oil tankers and introduce the pertinent changes agreed in the IMO Marpol Convention;

Promote regulatory approximation, including on safety and security issues.

Energy

Energy policy convergence towards EU energy policy objectives

Elaborate and implement a coherent long-term energy policy converging gradually with the EU energy policy objectives including security of energy supply;

Explore the medium-term possibility for participation in the Intelligent Energy-Europe programme.

Gradual convergence towards the principles of the EU internal electricity and gas markets

Establish a list of measures for gradual legal and regulatory convergence towards the principles of the EU internal electricity and gas markets, accompanied by time schedules and a financing plan;

Work towards the progressive elimination of energy price distortions; and improve bill collection rates;

Complete restructuring the electricity (including hydropower), gas and heat sectors, ensure their financial viability.

Progress regarding energy networks

Take steps to reduce energy network losses;

Improve the safety and security of energy infrastructure.

Progress on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources

Take steps to develop an action plan including a financial plan for improving energy efficiency and enhancing the use of renewable energy;

Adopt legislation addressing energy efficiency and renewable energy;

Reinforce the institutions dealing with energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
Implement a set of measures in this area.

Environment

Take steps to ensure that conditions for good environmental governance are set and start implementing them

Strengthen administrative structures and procedures to ensure strategic planning of environment issues and co-ordination between relevant actors;

Adopt legislation and establish procedures regarding access to environmental information and public participation, including implementation of the Aarhus Convention;

Continue preparing regular reports on the state-of-the-environment;

Reinforce structures and procedures to carry out environmental impact assessments;

Establish communication strategies on the benefits of environmental policy; support civil society actors and local authorities.

Take action for prevention of deterioration of the environment, protection of human health and achievement of rational use of natural resources in line with the commitments of Johannesburg Summit

Develop framework legislation and basic procedures and ensure planning for key environmental sectors, air quality, water quality, waste management, nature protection;

Enhance administrative capacities, including for the issuing of permits as well as for enforcement and inspection;

Implement existing national plans and programmes (e.g. on integrated coastal zone management, forest management, and water management);

Take measures to strengthen control of all types of radioactive sources.

Enhance co-operation on environmental issues

Implement provisions under the Kyoto Protocol and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change including through the active cooperation under the Clean Development Mechanism;

Identify possibilities with neighbouring countries for enhanced regional co-operation, in particular with regard to water issues;

Possible participation in selected European Environment Agency activities.

Information Society and media

Further progress in electronic communications policy and regulations. Development and use of Information Society applications

Adopt a national policy on the development of the telecommunications and IT sectors and further develop comprehensive regulatory framework including numbering, users rights, privacy protection and data security;

Promote the use and exchange of views on new technologies and electronic means of communications by businesses, government and citizens in areas such as e-Business (including standards for e-signatures), e-Government, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Culture;

Work towards adopting audiovisual legislation in full compliance with European standards with a view to future participation in international instruments of the Council of Europe in the field of media. Promote an exchange of views on audiovisual policy, including co-operation in the fight against racism and xenophobia;

Regional cooperation

Facilitate the interconnection of the Caucasian Research and Education Networks with their European counterparts in order to support scientific collaboration.

Develop distance education programmes in Southern Caucasus and Black Sea Countries.

Science and technology, research and development

Reinforce human, material and institutional resources in order to improve the capacities in technological R&I.

Restructure science management system through introduction of peer review-based competitive environment for the selection of grant applications, institutional integration of scientific institutions with higher education institutions (HEIs) and reinforcing outcome-oriented R&D projects.

Prepare Turkey's integration into the European Research Area and into the Community R&I Framework Programmes on the basis of scientific excellence

Implement appropriate information strategy to facilitate adequate participation of Turkish scientists in the Community R&I Framework Programmes.

Education, training and youth

Reform and modernise the education and training systems within the framework of Turkish plans towards convergence with EU standards and practice.

Ensure access for all to high quality education by providing sufficient funding, setting up quality assurance services, reforming education and training systems, including vocational education and training and fostering lifelong learning, in particular through implementation of a national education reform strategy;

Reform the higher education sector in line with the principles of the 'Bologna process'.

Strengthen local capacities for policy development and implementation, address accreditation and licensing procedures;

Stimulate universities to establish teaching activities in European Integration studies and encourage universities to apply for Jean Monnet Modules and Chairs;

Strengthen the adaptation of higher and vocational education to the future demands of the labour market by increasing the involvement of social partners and stakeholders from civil society;

Encourage participation in the Erasmus Mundus and TEMPUS programmes and in the new scholarship scheme.

Enhance co-operation in the field of education, training and youth

Continue and enhance a policy dialogue between EU and Turkish authorities in the field of education and training;

Enhance youth exchanges and cooperation, in particular among the Black Sea countries in partnership with their counterparts from the European Union in the field of non-formal education for young people and promotion of intercultural dialogue through the YOUTH programme.

Public health

Health sector reform

Continue health sector reform inter alia through enhancing the policy and regulatory framework with a view to notably: improve access and affordability for whole population.

Culture

Enhance cultural co-operation

Investigate the possibilities for co-operation in the framework of EU programmes in the field of culture;

Exchange views on the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.

2. Reforms Realised by Turkish Governments to Cover the Expectations of the EU since Ankara Agreement

Turkey's EU membership process sets out a set of priorities in areas within and beyond the scope of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Among these priorities, all of which are important, particular attention has been given to the following areas and specific actions.

Priority area 1 : Judicial System

- improved the training of judges, prosecutors, and officials in judiciary, Ministry of Justice

administration, police and prisons, in particular with regard to the human rights issues and judicial internal cooperation;

- improved access to justice notably through the establishment of an effective legal aid system;
- improved penitentiary and probation service;
- improved the system of execution of Court decisions;
- improved the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, notably to improve detention conditions.
- adopted a public service reform strategy and legislation for the civil service in order to improve good governance and transparency.

Priority area 2 : Business

- Developed and implemented a comprehensive programme to improve the business climate, in particular to improve the conditions to starting a business;
- Adopted and implemented a new Customs Code in line with EU and international standards;
- simplified and streamline customs procedures and to address the issue of customs ethics in line with EU and international standards;
- Strengthened the overall administrative capacity of the customs administration;
- Continued the modernisation, simplification and computerisation of the tax administration;
- pursued transparent privatisation process both as regards divestiture and use of privatisation proceeds;
- developed the necessary administrative capacities to ensure an effective and transparent licences system.

Priority area 3 : Economic Development

- Maintained macroeconomic stability by implementing prudent monetary and fiscal policies
- Conducted a systematic review and revision of the government's reform strategy document, with particular emphasis on poverty reduction;
- Continue reforms in public finance management;
- Develop a Research and Innovation policy directly relevant to the sustainable and equitable economic development policy objectives of Turkey;
- Undertake reform of the social assistance and health care sectors;
- Enhanced reform efforts in the field of education to promote human resources development;
- Fostered co-operation with the aim of reforming higher education sector;
- Reinforced participation of Turkish scientists/students/academics in international and exchange programmes;
- Encouraged life-long and life-wide learning opportunities;
- Developed special programmes of education for public servants;
- Reformed science management system through appropriate regulatory framework, financing model and governance;
- Fostered the development of education, information and communication programmes and technologies;
- Strengthened administrative structures and procedures to ensure strategic planning of environment issues and coordination between relevant actors.
- Co-operated in the area of food safety;
- Ensured effective cooperation in order to establish and strengthened standardization.

Priority area 4 : Security

- Ratified and implemented the UN Convention against trans-national organised crime on smuggling of migrants and trafficking of persons; and on illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms;
- Developed a dialogue on fight against terrorism and organized crime, trafficking, illegal

arms trading.

Priority area 5 : Regional Co-operation

- Enhanced participation in regional cooperation initiatives in the Black Sea region;
- Continued cooperation in the Energy, Transport and Science and Technological development fields in the context of the EU/Black Sea and neighboring countries initiative;
- Strengthened Turkey participation in regional law enforcement cooperation initiatives in the Black Sea region, including the Southern Caucasus;
- Promoted co-operation between Governmental and non-Governmental actors in the region;
- Enhanced bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region;
- Enhanced youth exchanges and cooperation among the Black Sea States, including the S. Caucasus countries.

Priority area 6 : Resolution of Internal Conflicts

- Contributed to the conflicts settlement in Kurdish issue based on respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Turkey within its internationally recognised borders;
- Enhanced efforts at confidence building;
- considered further economic assistance in light of the progress in the conflict settlement process;
- contributed actively, and in any relevant forum, to accelerating the process of demilitarisation and of conflict resolution;
- Increased the effectiveness of the negotiating mechanisms.

Priority area 7 : Transport and Energy

- Concentrated on the issues of transport security and safety;
- Continued cooperation on Caspian and Black Sea regional energy issues such as oil, gas, electricity
- As energy transit country, encourage the development of diversified infrastructure connected to development of Caspian energy resources and facilitate transit.

3. Probable Advantages Turkey Might Present for The Neighbouring States Following Her Full Membership

- First of all, Turkey might be a model for the neighbouring states in the process of EU membership;
- Upon the economic advantages that EU full membership would bring, Turkey would certainly provide more economic support for the neighbouring states,
- Turkey's success in this tiring EU membership process would also be an admiring example and hope for the states in Caucasus and Central Asia,
- Turkey's practice/ experience had by Turkish decision-makers in EU process in many fields would also be a sample case for the states willing for EU membership,
- As a transit country, Turkey would be able to transport Caucasy and Central Asian oil and gas to European markets via more secure line, so having that advantage Turkey would also be for the benefit of neighbouring states,
- Following Turkey's EU membership, states and peoples in Caucasus will have a border with the EU.

Conclusion

Despite the efforts made by Turkish side there is still ongoing critics as regards Turkey's EU membership process. Kurdish issue takes the first in scale. EU members demand Turkish side to give more freedom to the cultural, linguistic, ethnical rights of the Kurds; to increase the number of Kurdish courses in Turkey; to integrate not assimilate the Kurds into overall Turkish society; and to abolish discrimination on Kurds. As for the Cyprus issue, EU members demand Turkish side to open harbours to Greek Cypriots and recognize Greek Cypriots as the official representative of Cyprus Island. EU members also criticise minority

rights in Turkey and demand Turkish side to give more freedom to the minorities in Turkey, to abolish restrictions on minority foundations in Turkey, to allocate more money from budget to minority schools, to recognise Fenariot Greek Patriarch as ecumenic, and to open Heybeliada Religious School. Furthermore, the EU member states demand Turkey to diminish the role of military in politics, rehabilitate the conditions of prisons and prisoners in Turkey, ensure and develop freedom of thought and speech, ensure fair judgement process, develop human rights, recognise Kurds, Assyrians and Alevi as minority. I believe that despite all those fragile issues Turkey would continue its way and realise all the reforms and become a full member of the EU. This EU membership is not a sole membership but for Turkey it is a “modernization project”.

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