



**COUNCIL OF
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EU-TURKEY ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

The EU-Turkey Association Council held its 52nd meeting on Monday, 23 June 2014, in Luxembourg.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for EU Affairs of Turkey. Mr. Evangelos Venizelos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, led the EU delegation (on behalf of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton). Mr Štefan Füle, Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, represented the European Commission.

The meeting provided a good opportunity to review and exchange views on a whole range of issues. It reaffirmed the significance the EU attaches to its relations with Turkey, as a country negotiating accession to the EU and a key foreign policy and trade partner.

The EU underlined the importance of continuing the EU-Turkey foreign policy dialogue, since cooperation on this topic can be mutually beneficial. Several issues of common interest were discussed: Syria, Iraq, the ongoing negotiations on Iran, the developments in the Southern Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans and the situation in Ukraine.

With regard to the EU's relations with Turkey, the EU underlined that credible accession negotiations which respect the EU's commitments and conditions, such as the Copenhagen political criteria and the alignment with the *acquis*, would lead to achieve more concrete results. Both sides welcomed the opening, last November, of Chapter 22 on regional policy and coordination of structural instruments.

P R E S S

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The EU noted with satisfaction the clear statement that Turkey made of its commitment to the accession process. In this respect, the EU expressed its clear position as regards the Additional Protocol of the Association Agreement. Full non-discriminatory implementation towards all EU Member States is an obligation and as such must be honoured. In this respect, the EU reiterated its call for progress and underlined that such implementation could provide a significant boost to the negotiation process.

Furthermore, the EU underlined the importance of progress in the normalisation of relations between Turkey and all Member States.

The EU welcomed the resumption of the full-fledged settlement talks in Cyprus between the leaders of both communities under the auspices of the UN. Turkey's commitment and contribution in concrete terms to such a comprehensive settlement remains crucial.

The EU also reiterated its position on good neighbourly relations and stressed again that maintaining good neighbourly relations is an essential part of the accession process.

The EU stressed that it is important to sustain the momentum in the accession negotiations in the interest of both parties and in order to achieve real and tangible results. The EU should remain the anchor for reforms in Turkey, especially in the areas of the rule of law, judiciary, and fundamental rights and freedoms.

The EU welcomed some progress on reforms that has been made in Turkey, including the implementation of the 3rd judicial reform package which resulted in increased use of judicial control. The 4th judicial reform package continued this positive trend. The three objectives that were identified in the recent meeting of the working group on chapter 23 were recalled: prior consultation with the Commission before the adoption of important legislation; work on the basis of the three peer assessment review recommendations; discussion with civil society about on-going work.

The EU's concerns were focused on the independence of the judiciary, the separation of powers, and on the freedom of expression and press, including the Internet. The massive reassignments and dismissals in the police, the judiciary and the civil service over the last months were also a matter of serious concern. During the meeting, illegal migration, which remains a crucial issue for the EU as well as a priority for the Hellenic Presidency, was also discussed.

The EU welcomed the signature of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement last December and the launch of the visa liberalization dialogue which represent landmark developments. The EU is looking forward to the swift ratification of the Agreement by Turkey and its entry into force without delay.

The EU also underlined that full and effective implementation by Turkey of the readmission agreement vis-à-vis all Member States is expected, and reiterated the crucial importance of the adequate implementation of existing bilateral readmission agreements.

Fifteen years after the Helsinki European Council, which opened the European path for Turkey, the EU and the Hellenic Presidency hold high expectations that Turkey, after the upcoming Presidential elections, would return to the reform process with a new, decisive dynamic which would enable the accession negotiations regain momentum and pave the way for Turkey's European future.

The EU is convinced of the benefits that this process will bring to the people of Turkey, to EU-Turkey relations, and to the stability of the entire region.
