



IKV MONTHLY

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION PUBLISHED ITS FIRST REPORT ON VISA LIBERALISATION

The European Commission assesses the situation and the implementation of the relevant legislation, administrative capacities and practices of Turkey in areas within the benchmarks of the roadmap.

The European Commission published the first report on visa liberalisation with Turkey on the 20th October 2014 regarding progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap that started with the signing of the Readmission Agreement between Turkey and the EU on the 16th December 2013.

The report includes 5 chapters (named as "blocks") where Turkey's compliance with the EU norms and practices are assessed by its level of adoption and implementation of national legislation as well as its administrative capacities. The report assesses Turkey's progress in 72 criteria that Turkey needs to fulfil for the visa requirements to Turkish citizens to be lifted. In this report, the European Commission assesses the situation and the implementation of the relevant legislation, administrative capacities and practices of Turkey in areas within the benchmarks of the roadmap. Furthermore, it presents a set of recommendations to Turkish authorities concerning further steps to be taken for the fulfilment of these benchmarks.

Turkey has already achieved comprehensive progress and shows its determination to pursue its efforts to meet these benchmarks. The European Commission acknowledges that significant progress has been made regarding Turkish passports and civil registry system and underpins the importance of the reforms that have recently been adopted in the field of migration and international cooperation. Positive developments have been successfully achieved in areas such as border cooperation with the Member States as well as the EU's external border security agency FRONTEX. There have been encouraging initiatives undertaken also in order to reform the anti-terror legislation of Turkey. The EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström welcomed Turkey's "effective efforts" in meeting the benchmarks set up by the Commission. She further added that reforms are still needed in border management and police and judicial cooperation. **PAGE 7**



**FROM THE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION
-IKV**

We are happy to reach you with this first issue of the IKV Newsletter. IKV Newsletter will be published monthly and include news and comments on major developments in Turkey-EU relations. We aim to provide information and views on the major events, high-level visits, conferences, legal documents and other developments related to Turkey's relations with Europe and especially the EU and its accession process. The news articles will be concise and to the point and summarize the major events of the month for interested readers. Each newsletter will also highlight a major issue as the "In Focus" topic of the month.

What is IKV?

IKV, established in 1965, is a non-governmental research organization specialized on the EU and Turkey-EU relations. It represents the voice of the Turkish business in the EU and aims to explain the EU to Turkish citizens and Turkey to the EU citizens. IKV conducts research and publishes reports, newsletters and a monthly journal on current developments, policies, and institutions of the EU, Turkey-EU relations and EU accession negotiations. It also organizes conferences, seminars, and workshops both in Turkey and EU Member States with the aim of disseminating information and raising awareness on Turkey-EU relations. It is at the same time an advocacy organization and unreservedly supports Turkey's integration to the EU as a full member.



IKV RENEWED ITS WEBSITE

IKV's new website which has been available in Turkish since the 4th August 2014 is now also available in English. In accordance with its objectives, IKV continues to provide updated information regarding the developments in EU and Turkey-EU relations especially within the framework of the Customs Union and the accession process with its new internet portal which can be accessed at www.ikv.org.tr. Furthermore, detailed information on IKV's main objectives, working areas and projects can also be found on the website. IKV also provides access to its publications and brief notes prepared by IKV Researchers covering various topics such as EU policies, EU's enlargement, Turkey's EU accession process, Customs Union, and visa and readmission.

IKV VICE-CHAIRMAN PROF. DR. KABAALIOĞLU GAVE A SPEECH AT THE POLISH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS INSTITUTE

IKV Vice-Chairman and Dean of the Faculty of Law of Yeditepe University Prof. Dr. Halûk Kabaalioğlu evaluated the current status of Turkey-EU relations during a conference entitled the "Prospects of EU Enlargement: Time for Consolidation?" organized on the 17th October 2014 by the Polish International Relations Institute in cooperation with the European Commission Representation in Poland. This conference was organized on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Turkey and of the 10th anniversary of Poland's membership in the Union. The conference gave the opportunity to discuss the current status of all candidate countries in the light of the recent publication of the Progress Reports by the European Commission.

IKV CHAIRMAN MADE A SPEECH AT THE TURKISH-GREEK BUSINESS FORUM IN IZMIR

Turkey-Greece Business Forum was organized by DEIK on the 12th November 2014 in Izmir.

IKV Chairman Ömer Cihad Vardan made a speech at the Turkey-Greece Business Forum organized by DEIK (Foreign Economic Relations Board) on the 12th November 2014 in Izmir. Turkish Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci and Greek Minister of Development and Competitiveness Konstantinos Skrekas delivered the opening speeches in the Forum.

IKV Chairman Vardan focused on common interests and shared future outlook as the basis of friendly relations between the two countries and underlined that recently, Turkey and Greece managed to place bilateral relations on a course of "sustainable stability". Vardan noted that the improvement of political relations was reflected positively on economic relations and contributed to a considerable increase in investments and cooperation among Turkish and Greek firms.

Vardan underlined the positive effects of the visa facilitation measures adopted by Greece on the increase in human mobility between the two countries. He also called for the extensive development of maritime transport facilities between Greece and Turkey in order to further increase trade and economic cooperation.

IKV Chairman told the participants of the Forum that Turkish business is very much interested in investment opportunities in Greece and that the Turkish-Greek Business Council aims to support investment and business cooperation among the parties.

Vardan said: "As the Turkish



business sector, we are closely interested in investment opportunities in Greece. I believe that partnerships between Turkish and Greek firms will elevate our economic relations to the anticipated level. Turkish firms will be motivated to invest more in Greece if bureaucratic procedures regarding investment, business and

residence permits are simplified". Lastly, IKV Chairman also reiterated the importance of Turkey's EU process for the improvement of bilateral relations and emphasised that relations between Greece and Turkey will further deepen and diversify in line with the acceleration of Turkey's accession process to the EU.

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IKV CHAIRMAN VARDAN VISITED LATVIA AND ESTONIA

IKV Chairman Ömer Cihad Vardan visited Latvia and Estonia on the 22-24 October 2014, as a participant in President Erdoğan's entourage. Vardan made a speech in the Turkish-Latvian Business Forum organized by DEIK in Riga.

In his speech, Vardan referred to Latvia as "a far away, yet close country" for Turkey. Vardan noted that bilateral relations that were disrupted after 1940 recommenced following Latvia's independence and improved further with Latvia's NATO and EU membership. According to Vardan, Latvia, despite the fact that it is a relatively new Member State of the EU, fully grasps the importance of the EU project for the Continent's peace and stability, in the light of its historical experiences and geography. He said that Turkey and Latvia have much more in common than what can be expected at first sight, since both have a vested interest in the preservation of peace, cooperation and stability in wider Europe.

IKV Chairman Vardan, noted that Latvia will assume the term presidency of the Council of the EU as of January 2015, and praised the country's support for EU enlargement and Turkey's EU membership perspective.

Vardan said: "Let me express Turkey's expectations from Latvia during its term presidency. Turkey has been undergoing accession negotiations with the EU since 2005. However, the process is stalled due to the Cyprus issue and unilateral blockages on negotiation chapters by some Member States. We hope that progress will be achieved during Latvia's Presidency with the



opening of new chapters such as Chapter 17 or Chapter 19. Several calls not only by us, but also by the European Commission and Member State officials have also been made for the opening of Chapter 23 and Chapter 24 that are currently blocked by the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus. These chapters involve judiciary and fundamental rights (Chapter 23) as well as freedom, security and justice (Chapter 24), issues that are sensitive and critical for Turkey's progress in meeting EU membership criteria. We call on the EU to lift the blockages and open these chapters, considering that it is our mutual desire to trigger further reforms in Turkey".

PRESIDENT OF S&D GROUP IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VISITED IKV

President of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament Gianni Pittella, attended the round table meeting on "Turkey-EU relations and regional development" organized by IKV in cooperation with DEIK on the 30th October 2014.



During his two day visit in Istanbul, President of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament (EP) Gianni Pittella, attended the round table meeting on "Turkey-EU relations and regional development" organized by IKV in cooperation with DEIK on the 30th October 2014.

Italian MEP Pittella underlined Turkey's importance for EU which is looking forward to reinforce this partnership at political, economic and cultural level. He ensured that his party supports Turkey's accession to the EU but he also underlined the fact that Turkey needs to take further steps towards the direction of EU membership.

During the discussion, Turkish representatives stressed the importance of adopting a new approach in Turkey's EU accession process considering that the relation between EU and Turkey has still not led to membership over the last 50 years. Taking into account the changes within the EU institutions and the Turkish government, it has been pointed out that these changes could be interpreted as an opportunity to re-own Turkey's EU project. During the meeting, the problems encountered in the current way of functioning of the Customs Union were also discussed. In this framework, representatives of business interest groups underlined the importance of including Turkey in the ongoing TTIP negotiations between

the EU and the US. Another major concern that was pointed out was the burdensome visa procedures applied towards Turkish businessmen as well as problems related to transport quotas applied by EU member states. Both of these problems constitute barriers to trade and unfair competition for Turkey's firms and business people compared to their European counterparts. During the round table, the situation in Syria and its implications for Turkey and Cyprus issue were also two other main topics discussed by the participants.

At the end of the conference, Italian MEP Pittella stressed the importance of lifting the barriers on visa liberalisation and of including Turkey in TTIP negotiations conducted with the US.

ITALY'S CONSUL GENERAL IN ISTANBUL VISITED IKV

IKV Chairman shared the latest developments on Turkey's EU accession process and underlined the potential benefits of Turkey's membership for the EU during Consul General's visit to IKV.

Italy's newly appointed Consul General in Istanbul, her Excellency Federica Ferrari Bravo visited IKV Chairman Ömer Cihad Vardan and IKV Vice-Chairwoman, President of the Assembly of Istanbul Chamber of Industry and DEIK's Turkish-Italian Business Council President Zeynep Bodur Okyay on the 10th November 2014. Italian Commercial Attaché Maria Trinchieri, Financial Attaché Giorgio Merlonghi and the Italian Trade Agency Director Ferdinando Pastore, DEIK's Turkish-Angolan Business Council Chairman Burak Vardan, IKV Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, IKV Deputy Secretary-General and Research Director Melih Özsöz and DEIK's European Business Council Coordinator Ayşegül Gök Arıcan also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, IKV Chairman Ömer Cihad Vardan gave detailed information about IKV's structure, objectives and activities. IKV Chairman also shared the

latest developments on Turkey's EU accession process and underlined the potential benefits of Turkey's membership for the EU. He also drew attention to the problems related to the Customs Union, the ongoing Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations between the EU and the US and the visa liberalisation dialogue. IKV Chairman Vardan also explained that Turkey's accession to the EU as a country with a Muslim majority who shares common values with the EU will constitute an important message worldwide of peace and stability.

IKV Vice-Chairwoman Zeynep Bodur Okyay gave detailed information on bilateral relations between Turkey and Italy. Both Vardan and Okyay emphasized that Italy has always been one of Turkey's closest partners within the EU and stressed the need to further enhance this partnership through joint projects and investments as well as stronger cooperation vis-à-vis third countries.

IMF SENIOR RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IN TURKEY VISITED IKV

IMF Senior Resident Representative in Turkey Srikant Seshadri visited IKV Chairman Ömer Cihad Vardan on the 28th October 2014. IKV Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and Mustafa Oğuz from DEIK Strategy Department also joined the meeting which gave the opportunity to exchange information on the activities carried out by each institution and to assess the potential future areas of cooperation. Turkey's economic situation, Turkey-EU relations, Turkey's increasing role in the IMF and the latest regional developments were the other main topics discussed during the meeting.



IKV PUBLICATIONS THIS MONTH

Following the publication of the Turkey 2014 Progress Report by the European Commission in October 2014, IKV Deputy Secretary-General and Research Director Melih Özsöz prepared a comprehensive analysis of the main outcomes of the report. By comparing the recent report with the previous progress reports, this study aims to shed light on the particularities of the European Commission's 17th Progress Report for Turkey. IKV Deputy Secretary-General and Research Director Melih Özsöz also prepared a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the main outcomes of the first evaluation report on Turkey regarding the visa liberalisation roadmap by the European Commission.

The study entitled "Mathematics of Progress: A Different Look at the European Commission Turkey Progress Report" was prepared by IKV Deputy Secretary-General and Research Director Melih Özsöz, translated by Dr. Zeynep Özkurt, and edited by IKV Researcher Büşra Çatır. This study aims to look beyond the stereotypical progress reports in Turkey-EU relations and to make tangible and concrete contributions to Turkey's EU membership. To that end, the study makes recommendations on progress reports that the European Commission prepares with great efforts throughout the year.

FIRST MEETING OF REFORM ACTION GROUP



The first meeting of the Reform Action Group (REG) was held in Ankara on the 8th of November 2014 with the participation of Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ, Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, and Minister of Interior Efkan Ala. Co-Chairman of Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee Afif Demirkıran, Chairman of the EU Harmonization Committee of the TGNA Prof. Dr. Mehmet Tekelioğlu, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the TGNA, Ahmet Berat Çonkar and Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry Kemal Madenoğlu also participated in this meeting.

With the new structuring of REG, previously known as Reform Monitoring Group (RIG), a new period has started in the political reforms regarding Turkey's EU accession process. REG aims to play a significant role in the EU accession process by implementing a constructive and active communication strategy, correcting misperceptions on both sides, involving all segments of the society in the accession process, and assisting in the preparation of the political reform proposals as well as in their implementation process. In this regard, REG member Ministers and Undersecretaries plan to increase their activities at the international level to deliver the developments in the reform process to their counterparts in the EU.

During the meeting, important decisions were taken on significant issues with regard to future of EU-Turkey relations. Regarding the visa liberalisation dialogue, it has been decided to monitor the process at ministerial level under the framework of the first report of visa liberalisation dialogue published by European Commission in October 2014. Second decision was to enhance the activities of the REG member Ministries with regard to reforms to fulfil the political criteria and to increase the level of alignment of Chapter 23 and Chapter 24.

In the press release of Minister for EU Affairs on the REG meeting, the initiatives of the new government towards EU membership process and Turkey's determination for having a stance based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights in the realm of political reforms were underlined.



TOBB PRESIDENT M. RIFAT HISARCIKLIOĞLU'S SPEECH AT THE EP

TOBB President: "Turkey's inclusion to TTIP negotiations and opening of the Chapter on Energy to negotiations were still sensitive issues for Turkey."

TOBB President and the Vice-President of the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry (EUROCHAMBRES) M. Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu attended, with a delegation of TOBB Board Members and Chamber Presidents, the third meeting of EP of Enterprise organized by EUROCHAMBRES at the EP General Assembly on the 16th October 2014.

M. Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu gave a speech to more than 800 business enterprises in Europe about Turkey's B20 term presidency work principles and program. In his speech, he also mentioned that Turkey's inclusion to TTIP negotiations and opening of the Chapter on Energy to negotiations were still sensitive issues for Turkey. In the Conference entitled "How Can the Business World Contribute to the EU Enlargement Process?" and organized by EUROCHAMBRES and TOBB, M. Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu expressed that the future of the EU could be ensured by the enlargement process. In the EUROCHAMBRES General Assembly, his main focus points were the youth unemployment problem and Turkey's economic benefits to the EU.

TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu also visited IKV's Brussels Office on the 15th October 2014. During this meeting, the main topics discussed were the ongoing TTIP negotiations and Turkish business views on EU membership process. On the same day, TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu also attended the EUROCHAMBRES European Enlargement and Neighbourhood Committee meeting where participants exchanged their views on Turkey 2014 Progress Report, and Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement.



IKV LAUNCHED THE MICRO WEBSITE "MISPERCEPTIONS ON TURKEY-EU RELATIONS"

IKV's new micro website entitled "Misperceptions on Turkey-EU relations" (in Turkish) was launched recently with the financial support of the EU Delegation to Turkey, within the framework of Turkey's EU Information Centers Network Strengthening Project.

The content of the website which is prepared by IKV's experts aims not only to provide solid and reliable information on EU policies and Turkey-EU relations but also to correct the common misperceptions and misunderstandings. On this current website, IKV experts aim to shed light on and rectify more than 30 of these common misperceptions regarding the EU and Turkey-EU relations. This interactive website (<http://dby.ikv.org.tr/>) also enables Turkish citizens to direct their questions and additional comments which are followed up by our experts.

TURKEY-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE'S 75TH MEETING TOOK PLACE

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn made his first speech about Turkey since he took office on the 1st November 2014 during Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee Meeting.

TURKEY'S NEW EU COMMUNICATION STRATEGY WAS ANNOUNCED

Turkey's New EU Strategy presented on the 18th September 2014 within the 62nd Government Programme is built upon three main pillars: Political Reform Process, Socio-Economic Transformation in the Accession Process and the EU Communication Strategy. This program includes significant elements with regard to Turkey's objective of EU membership which shows the government's strong determination to pursue its objective of EU membership and to accelerate the pace of the reform process.

The third part of this new strategy, namely the EU Communication Strategy was announced by the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır in Brussels in October 2014. This strategy which was first implemented in 2010 was strengthened with the introduction of new approaches and new methods with the aim of raising public awareness of Turkey's socio-economic transformation both in Turkey and EU Member States.

As the influences of the rapidly changing international conjuncture on our region highlights the strategic importance of Turkey, it is crucial to readdress the communication aspect of Turkey-EU relations and to emphasize more the importance of the European Project specifically in this time period. Therefore, the implementation of a more effective communication strategy through proper methods is foreseen with the aim of increasing the credibility of Turkey's efforts for membership and the reform process.

The Ministry for EU Affairs is setting forth Turkey's economic and political contributions to the EU by emphasizing that the "Strong Turkey, Strong EU" perspective will be effective in overcoming obstacles to Turkey's EU membership with this new EU Communication Strategy. The objective of the EU Communication Strategy is to inform the public about the benefits obtained as a result of the EU accession process and to ensure an increased presence of Turkey's membership on the EU agenda. This strategy is expected to strengthen the relationship between the target audiences and to create better synergy.

This new EU Communication Strategy is presented as a sustainable, measurable and result-oriented, committed, sincere and self-confident strategy. The Ministry for EU Affairs is reporting that it is based on social advocacy and it aims to bring about a change in mindset of the two parties in this process



Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee's (JPC) 75th Meeting was held in Brussels on the 11th November 2014 under the joint chairmanship of Afif Demirkiran and Manolis Kefalogiannis. Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn and Deputy Director for European Integration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Alberto Cuttillo on behalf of the Italian Presidency also attended the meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, JPC Chairman Afif Demirkiran reminded that this Committee was established with the aim of contributing to the reinforcement of Turkey-EU relations and creating a platform where both sides could discuss about potential solutions to overcome current problems. He also stressed the importance of opening chapters related to Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (Chapter 23) and Justice, Freedom and Security (Chapter 24). As for the representative of the Italian Presidency Alberto Cuttillo, he underlined the fact that there is a specific need to strengthen political will in order to see credible progress in Turkey's path towards the EU. He urged Turkey to fully implement the Ankara Protocol and normalise diplomatic relations with the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC).

At the occasion of this meeting, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn made his first speech about Turkey since he took office on the 1st November 2014. In his speech, he ensured that there was no doubt about Turkey's EU perspective and despite the long road ahead, the objective remains unchanged. Following his evaluation

FIRST PHASE OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR EU ACCESSION WAS ANNOUNCED

Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır announced the "First Phase of the National Action Plan for the EU Accession" under the framework of Turkey's new EU Strategy on the 30th October 2014. First phase of the Plan includes priorities with regard to harmonisation of the national legislation with the EU acquis and institutional and administrative capacity building in the period covering November 2014 and June 2015.

Chief Negotiator Bozkır highlighted that the first phase of the plan clearly

includes primary and secondary legislation to be regulated under specific negotiation chapters. The first phase of the Plan involves the adoption or harmonisation of 36 primary legislation, 142 secondary legislation, and 39 plans for institutional and administrative capacity building. Turkish authorities aim to adopt and harmonise national legislation that are of greater importance for the Chapter 23 and Chapter 24. The second phase of the Plan that covers the period between 2015 and 2019 will be announced in November 2014.

of the recent Progress Report published by the European Commission, he stressed on the importance of establishing an effective dialogue between both parties in order to better monitor the developments in regards to the reforms under taken in the areas of fundamental freedoms and rule of law and of ensuring their alignment with the EU standards. The European Commission continues to renew its call to the Council to open Chapters 23 and Chapter 24 for negotiations. It is argued that the opening of these chapters will constitute an important stimulus for Turkey to make further reforms in the areas of fundamental freedoms and rule of law.

Furthermore, considering that Turkey plays an important regional role, the European Commission is calling upon Turkey to strengthen and deepen its dialogue in the area of foreign policy and security. The need to reinforce cooperation regarding the refugees from Syria

and Iraq has been also highlighted during the meeting. Referring to the Cyprus issue, Commissioner Hahn underlined the necessity for Turkey to respect the GCASC's sovereignty over its Exclusive Economic Zone and to avoid any further escalation of tensions. In this regard, he welcomed the latest efforts made by the UN Special Representative for Cyprus, Espen Barth Eide. During the meeting, members of the JPC praised Turkey's dynamic economy and its contribution to the prosperity of the European continent as a whole and underlined the need to strengthen further economic dialogue and cooperation in areas such as energy security and transport. Lastly, the publication by the Ministry of EU Affairs of Turkey, of the two Action Plans which present the foreseen measures in detail for the period 2015-2019 was considered as an important step and a proof of Turkey's determination towards its perspective of EU membership.

TURKEY RELEASED A NEW PLAN FOR STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE ECONOMY

The package was presented by the Prime Minister as “the most significant structural transformation initiative in the history of the Turkish Republic”.

Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu announced on the 6th November 2014 the Structural Transformation Package which constitutes a medium term roadmap for Turkey. The government’s goal with this package is to increase Turkey’s GDP to \$1.3 trillion dollars, to reduce the current account deficit from 7.9 percent to 5.2 percent and to decrease the unemployment rate to 7 percent through sectoral transformation programmes by the end of the year 2018.

The package presented by the Prime Minister as “the most significant structural transformation initiative in the history of the Turkish Republic”, is based on five main principles which are political stability, qualified human resources, reforms focusing on the change in production technologies and R&D, mutual support between the financial sector and real sector, and the integration with the global economy. The package prepared in coordination with the Ministry of Development foresees 1350 action plans in 25 different areas.

The 9 programmes of which the details were presented in early November cover 417 action plans regarding the real sector of the economy. The 8 programmes to be announced in the next period include the macroeconomic steps and the last 8 programmes cover action plans aiming to foster human resources.

Prime Minister Davutoğlu presented the priorities of the 9 programmes that include 417



action plans as follows:

- Reducing the dependency on imports;
- Commercialisation of prioritized technological areas;
- Technology development and domestic production through public procurement;
- Development of domestic energy production;
- Improving energy efficiency;
- Increasing efficiency of water use in agriculture;
- Structural transformation in healthcare industries;
- Improving health tourism;
- Transition of transportation to logistics.

PRIME MINISTER DAVUTOĞLU ANNOUNCED THE NEW WORKPLACE SAFETY REGULATION PACKAGE

mindset of the people about the safety of the workplace.

In the course of 2014, around 1,400 fatal accidents have occurred in workplaces. In May 2014, Turkey witnessed the worst industrial accident in its history in Soma mines where 301 workers died. Very recently, another workplace disaster occurred in a mine at Karaman’s Ermenek district. In the light of these tragic events, this new package places a particular importance on improving the working conditions in mines. Following the entry into force of these regulations, mining operations will be recorded at every stage and will be observed and monitored by independent parties.

As Prime Minister Davutoğlu emphasized, the reforms will be based on a reward and punishment system. The businesses without occupational accident records would be rewarded and the businesses where accidents have occurred would face heavy fines and criminal charges. According to Prime Minister Davutoğlu, one of the most important regulations expected to come into effect as part of the safety package is that; “If an employer is found culpable in fatal occupational accidents, in line with the Turkish Penal Code, he/she will be banned from public tenders for 2 years in addition to an ordered punishment”. The package also foresees a series of educational measures to improve the awareness among workers about the safety of workplaces.

Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu announced the new workplace safety regulation package on the 12th November 2014 during a press conference to which Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan, Labor and Social Security Minister Faruk Çelik, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yıldız and Minister of Development Cevdet Yılmaz also attended. This new regulation package aims to ensure that occupational health, safety and working conditions are in line with the universal standards. Prime Minister Davutoğlu added that it is important to raise awareness among workers and change the

IKV IN THE NEWS: INTERVIEW WITH EUROPOLITICS



“TURKEY NEEDS MOTIVATION”

Interview with Cigdem Nas and Melih Özsoz, General Secretary and Research Director of Turkish pro-EU think tank IKV

The European Commission’s progress reports on Turkey have lost their value, the Istanbul-based think tank Economic Development Foundation (IKV), founded in 1965, stated in its evaluation of this year’s document. Against the backdrop of Ankara’s fading EU membership prospects, these progress reports do not elicit reforms in Turkey any longer, IKV claims. The researchers call for the opening of Chapter 23 on judiciary and fundamental rights, stressing the new positive tone introduced by the country’s new European Affairs Minister, Volkan Bozkir.

Do you really think that Turkey’s leaders are inclined to heed the European Commission’s advice and criticism?

Nas: In the past, the EU had a stronger leverage over Turkey on the reform process because there was a clear perspective of opening the accession process. However, soon after the negotiations started, the European Council, in relation to the

Cyprus issue, decided in 2006 to not open eight chapters. Then came the bilateral vetos from the Greek Cypriots and from France, the EU’s financial crisis that was widely reported in Turkey. People started to ask themselves: “Why should we become a member of the EU? We do economically better in Turkey than some EU member states”. A recent poll has shown more support for the EU among Turkish citizens due to the insecure situation at the country’s Middle Eastern borders. The EU perspective has regained relevance for Turkey.

Is this a temporary phenomenon?

Nas: It depends on how the EU will react. If the EU insists on some “privileged partnership” with Turkey instead of full membership, this will, of course, have a negative impact on public opinion as well as on the government. On the contrary, opening of a chapter during the Italian Presidency, above all Chapter 23 on judiciary and fundamental rights, would be a very encouraging signal.

Why would you need the opening of a chapter to undertake reforms in the judiciary, or to undo new laws on internet censorship, or on the High Council of the Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) that the Commission deems problematic? The benchmarks are known.

Nas: We have to do it ourselves, of course, but it would create a more disciplined reform process. There would be peer reviews, financial and technical support, experts coming in from the EU. It would be a dynamic, interactive process. And since the opening of a chapter increases the prospects for membership, it also increases the willingness of the government to engage in reforms.

Özsöz: The European Commission has by now published 17 progress reports on Turkey. Some 1,700 pages have been written – that’s 6.5 times the Lisbon Treaty. So, the question arises: how many more reports does Turkey need to get into the European Union? The progress reports are not enough to push Turkey towards further reforms. The Turkish government always took these reports as criticism.

Would you like to see “nice reports” each year?

Özsöz: No, we’d like to see a report that encourages Turkey to take further steps towards alignment with the EU acquis. If the reports give road maps and short or medium-term objectives, it would be for the benefit of Turkey and the EU alike. Then Turkey would stop qualifying these reports as good or bad.

Isn’t this more of a psychological issue?

Nas: Turkey needs motivation, indeed.

Özsöz: This year, Volkan Bozkir, our new minister for the European Union, stated that the report was “balanced” and “something we can live with”. That was a new tone, very different from his past statements.

What is this supposed to mean? The minister accepts the report’s critical remarks? In the end, this was not about some minor technical problems in Turkey, but about core issues: freedom of expression and of assembly, independence of the judiciary, separation of powers.

Özsöz: In my view, the government takes this report seriously. They will say there is some criticism that we do not agree with, but we will respond to the Commission. This is definitely a new tone compared to that three or four years ago. But you also have to see that over the years the balance of the reports has shifted towards the political criteria to an extent that the other two parts - the economic area and alignment with the EU acquis - are hardly paid any attention to by the public.

After nine years of membership negotiations, you certainly would not like to read in a progress report that the separation of powers is at stake in a candidate country...

Nas: I totally agree. That’s why we need the EU. The Turkish people want democratisation, they count on the EU. Due to its neighbourhood, the Middle East, Turkey is also prone to destabilising influences. If we can hold on to the EU, it will also prevent the government from becoming authoritarian.

PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN'S VISITS TO BALTICS AND FRANCE



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Latvia, Estonia and France in October 2014.

Latvia

President Erdoğan met Latvian President Andris Bērziņš during his visit to Latvia on the 22nd October 2014. This visit was of great significance for Turkey-EU relations since Latvia is preparing to take over the Presidency of the Council of the EU as of the 1st January 2015. While Latvian President Andris Bērziņš declared its country's support to Turkey's EU membership, President Erdoğan stressed that Turkey wished to open to negotiations Chapter 15 on Energy, Chapter 23 on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, and Chapter 24 on Justice, Freedom and Security during Latvia's Presidency.

During this visit, a business agreement was also signed between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey and the Ministry of Agriculture of Latvia.

Estonia

President Erdoğan made a one-day visit to Estonia on the 23rd October 2014. Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and President Erdoğan discussed latest developments in regional issues, as two NATO members during their meeting. When speaking about Ukraine, President Erdoğan stated that Turkey had deep ties with the ethnic Tatars who are subject to serious political pressure. In this respect, Erdoğan told that Turkey welcomed the Estonian support to Tatars in the region.

France

President Erdoğan visited French President François Hollande on the 31st October 2014. During the meeting, President Erdoğan pointed out that bilateral relations in the fields of economy, commerce and culture have been enhanced following Hollande's positive approach towards Turkey's EU accession process. President Erdoğan also mentioned that Turkish citizens living in France played a significant role in strengthening the relations. He also ensured that Turkey had fulfilled the requirements in blocked Chapter 23 and Chapter 24. President Hollande focused mainly on the multi-dimensional aspects of the relations between the two countries and on Turkey's position in regional issues. In this respect, Turkey's support in the Syrian crisis was welcomed by France. With regard to Turkey's EU accession process, President Hollande also underlined the importance of opening of the "Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments" chapter last November.

MINISTER FOR EU AFFAIRS AND CHIEF NEGOTIATOR BOZKIR'S VISITS

Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır visited Norway and Belgium.

Norway

Minister Bozkır visited Oslo on the 4th-6th November. Minister Bozkır met with Norwegian Minister for EEA and EU Affairs Vidar Helgesen. Explaining that although Norway was not a member state, Norway was considerably integrated into the EU structures, Minister Bozkır stressed the importance of Norway's support to Turkey's EU accession process.

Minister Bozkır also met with Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende, Norwegian Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Lars Jacob Hiim, the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence Anniken Huitfeldt, as well as the Committee members and the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and with the Chair of the EFTA and EEA Parliamentary Committee and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Svein Roald Hansen, along with the Committee members. During his visit, Minister Bozkır exchanged views with his Norwegian counterparts on bilateral relations, Turkey-EU relations as well as on TTIP.

Belgium

Minister Bozkır visited Brussels on the 11th -12th November. Minister Bozkır delivered an opening speech at the 75th Meeting of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee where he emphasized that EU accession was a strategic goal for Turkey and ensured that the reforms for Turkey's EU accession process would continue.

Minister Bozkır also met with the newly appointed High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini, Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip and Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis and with President of the S&D Group in the EP Gianni Pittella. Turkey-EU relations and Turkey's EU accession process constituted the main topics discussed during these meetings.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION PUBLISHED ITS FIRST REPORT ON VISA LIBERALISATION

FROM THE FIRST PAGE

Nevertheless, the report also presents the areas where Turkey still does not comply with the relevant criteria and where further reforms are still needed.

Specifically, as for document security, the European Commission calls upon Turkey to launch new passports that will include biometric data which are in line with the EU acquis and to further enhance cooperation with the Member States in order to detect forged or fraudulent travel documents.

In the area of migration management, Turkey still needs to fully implement the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection. Furthermore, the General Directorate for Migration Management will have to be set up completely. Specific measures also need to be taken to set up a modern, effective and integrated border management system, as well to further strengthen the visa system and to increase border cooperation with Member States. The European Commission also stresses the necessity for the full and effective implementation of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement by all Member States, which entered into force on the 1st October 2014.

As for the public order and security, the European Commission calls upon Turkish authorities to sign, ratify and swiftly start implementing the relevant international conventions, and thus adopt national legislation in line with the European and international standards. The Commission underlines the importance of pursuing the reform in Turkey's judicial system in accordance with the principle of independence and efficiency. Thanks to those new measures, Turkey's law enforcement agencies will have new tools to fight against organised crime and moreover, to strengthen police and judicial cooperation with its counterparts in Member States as well as all relevant EU agencies.

As for the fundamental rights, the European Commission underscores the necessity for Turkey to pursue the full revision of its anti-terrorism legislation and to ensure that the relevant legislation is implemented fully in line with ECHR provisions.

In other areas, Turkey will also have to adopt and implement a comprehensive strategy and action plan to improve the situation of Roma people living within its boundaries. Within this framework, it is essential that Turkey adopts a legislation that will strengthen the prevention of social discrimination and further facilitate their social inclusion in Turkish society.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE CYPRUS ISSUE AND THE HYDROCARBON RESOURCES IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN



The "Annan Plan" proposing a comprehensive resolution of the Cyprus question by unifying the Turkish and Greek Cypriot administrations, was rejected in a referendum in the South of the island with 76 percent votes against reunification. The same plan was approved by a majority of Turkish Cypriots with 65 percent in favour of a settlement.

On the 21st October 2014, the National Council of the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) announced a package of 8 measures after Turkey sent the seismic survey vessel "Barbaros" and issued a maritime order (NAVTEX) reserving areas in the area unilaterally declared by GCASC as its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Turkey's move follows the unilateral actions of GCASC regarding the hydrocarbon resources around the island. The SAIPEM 10000 drilling and exploration vessel belonging to the ENI-Kogas consortium licensed by GCASC entered the so-called EEZ and started exploration activities in September. In response to the GCASC's activities, Turkey in cooperation with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) announced its intention to conduct seismic survey activities in the regions licensed by the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO).

The package targeting Turkey contains measures such as making use of the EU membership of GCASC in the international fora to induce a reprisal on Turkey's allegedly "illegal" actions. GCASC's spokesman Nicos Christodoulides stated that in the light of the measures adopted, GCASC will not consent to the opening of any new negotiating chapters in Turkey's EU accession talks. Furthermore, he announced that GCASC leader Nicos Anastasiades would submit a formal complaint against Turkey during the European Council meeting on the 23rd-24th October. The opening of 6 chapters remains blocked due to GCASC's unilateral veto and the opening of 8 chapters as well as the provisional closing of all chapters were blocked by the European Council in December 2005, over Turkey's failure to open its ports to Greek Cypriot goods.

GCASC raised the issue in the European Council meeting convening on 23rd and 24th October 2014. The European Council in its conclusions urged Turkey to show restraint and to respect the sovereign rights of the "Republic of Cyprus" over its territorial waters and EEZ. In its conclusions, the Council also highlighted

its declaration of 21st September 2005 which emphasized that the recognition of all member states is a necessary component of the accession process. The EU heads of state and government indicated that they considered ensuring a positive climate for the resumption of the negotiations for a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus issue to be more important than ever.

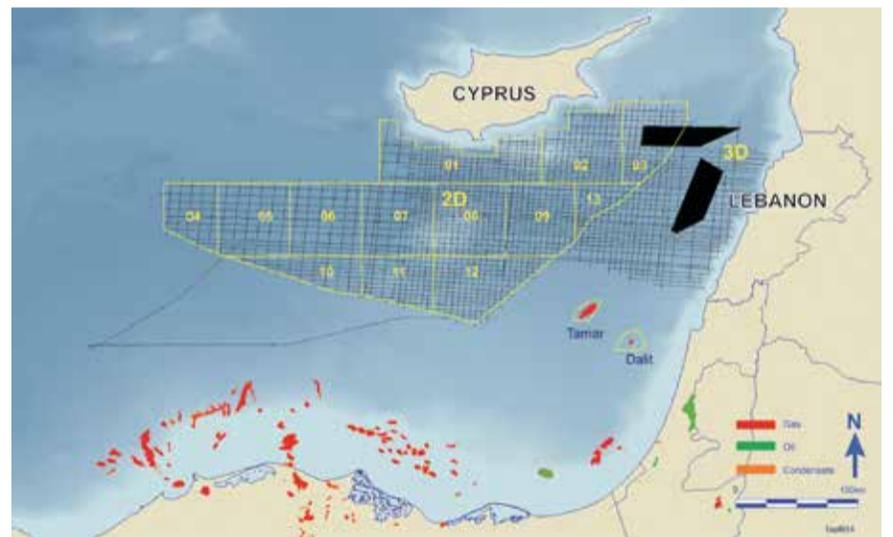
The issue was also brought up by GCASC in the trilateral summit between the leaders of GCASC, Greece and Egypt convening in Cairo on the 8th November. The declaration adopted by the three leaders confirmed that GCASC, Greece and Egypt will increase their cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean and called for the termination of Turkey's seismic research activities.

The EP, in a resolution adopted on the 13th November, called on Turkey to stop its allegedly "illegal" and "provocative" actions in GCASC's so-called EEZ. The EP resolution, which states that Turkey's maritime surveys should be regarded "illegal and provocative", calls for the immediate withdrawal of Turkey's maritime vessels operating in and around GCASC's so-called EEZ. MEPs warned against the possibility that the continuation of such actions by Turkey could have a negative impact on Turkey-EU relations.

Prior to the adoption of the draft resolution Turkey's Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır, indicated that the EP resolution had no validity for Turkey. Stating that Turkey respects the EP and its decisions, he argued that this resolution was likely to end up like many other resolutions.

Following GCASC's unilateral decision to suspend indefinitely the UN-sponsored comprehensive settlement talks that were scheduled for the 9th October, UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Cyprus Espen Barth Eide visited Ankara and was received by Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu and by Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu on the 28th October.

During his meeting with Foreign Minister



Çavuşoğlu, Eide indicated that he is still optimistic for finding a solution to the Cyprus problem and stressed that a solution will not be reached unless the issues were discussed around the negotiating table. Furthermore, he stated that the issue has become more complicated due to the inclusion of the hydrocarbon aspect. Minister for Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu confirmed that Turkey still maintains a strong resolve vis-à-vis the resolution of the Cyprus issue and will sustain its constructive approach. Emphasizing that GCASC's drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean contradict with the spirit of negotiations, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu underscored that Turkish Cypriots have equal rights on the natural resources in the Mediterranean and Turkey rejects the unilateral steps taken by the GCASC. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu reiterated that Turkey will continue to support the UN's contribution to the process and that both GCASC and Greece should demonstrate the same political will.

Following his visit to Ankara, Eide visited Athens on the 5th November, where he

was received by the Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Evangelos Venizelos. Visiting the island on the 6th and 7th November, Eide held separate meetings with President of TRNC, Dr. Derviş Eroğlu and the leader of GCASC, Nicos Anastasiades. A resolution of the Cyprus issue remains a top priority in terms of Turkey's foreign policy goals and a critical condition in Turkey's EU accession talks. If the Cyprus conflict could be resolved, this would make it possible for Turkey to accelerate its negotiations for EU entry, with the opening of 8 Chapters blocked by the 2006 decision of the Council as well as further 6 chapters unilaterally blocked by the Greek Cypriots. The "Annan Plan" proposing a comprehensive resolution of the Cyprus question by unifying the Turkish and Greek Cypriot administrations, was rejected in a referendum in the South of the island with 76 percent votes against reunification. The same plan was approved by a majority of Turkish Cypriots with 65 percent in favour of a settlement.