



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**47th meeting of the EC-Turkey Association Council
Tuesday, 19 May 2009
Press release**

The EC-Turkey Association Council held its 47th meeting on Tuesday, 19 May 2009. The meeting was chaired by Mr Ahmet DAVUTOGLU, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Head of the Turkish delegation. Mr Jan KOHOUT, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, led the European Union delegation (Troika format). Mr Olli REHN, Commissioner responsible for Enlargement, represented the European Commission.

The Association Council meeting provided a timely opportunity to review EU-Turkey relations. In line with the EU Council conclusions of 8 December 2008, EU noted progress made by Turkey in its preparations for accession. Overall, at this stage, out of 35 chapters, ten have been opened and one provisionally closed. In addition, discussions on screening reports and EU Common Positions in a number of other chapters are ongoing. As concerns chapters for which opening benchmarks have been set, the EU invited Turkey to address them accordingly, and welcomed that Turkey has started preparations in this regard.

The EU reaffirmed that the pace of negotiations depends notably on Turkey's progress in addressing opening and closing benchmarks as well as the requirements of the Negotiating Framework. In this respect, the EU welcomed Turkey's adoption of the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) on 31 December 2008, and would continue to monitor closely its implementation and the reform process in Turkey.

P R E S S

Progress made by Turkey in meeting the Copenhagen political and economic criteria, as well as Turkey's progress towards alignment with the *acquis communautaire*, was also reviewed. In this context, the EU underlined that reforms and substantial efforts are still needed in various areas, such as continued judicial reform, anti-corruption strategy, effective protection of citizens' rights, full implementation of the policy of zero tolerance of torture and ill-treatment, ensuring freedom of expression and of religion in law and in practice for all religious communities, respect for property rights, respect for and protection of minorities and strengthening of cultural rights, women's rights, children's rights and trade union rights, and the civilian authorities' control of the military. The EU welcomed the Turkish Government's reaffirmed commitment to work for the reforms, and expressed hope that Turkey will now redouble its efforts to implement the measures so long awaited.

Finally, the Association Council reviewed the state of bilateral relations and considered priorities for further work within the framework of the Association Agreement and the Customs Union.
