

Resolution on Turkey's 2010 progress report

2010/2996(RSP) - 14/12/2010

The Council adopted a series of conclusions on the **enlargement strategy**. These may be summarised as follows:

Welcoming the communication from the Commission of 9 November 2010 on the [Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011](#), as well as the Opinions on Montenegro and Albania, and the progress reports on **Turkey**, Croatia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The Council states that it broadly shares the Commission's assessments.

The Council reaffirms the strong support of the EU for taking the enlargement process forward but states that **key challenges remain to be negotiated in most enlargement countries**. Sound macro-economic and fiscal policies and EU-related reforms can help to overcome the economic crisis and to achieve sustainable growth. Strengthening the rule of law, including through judiciary reform and stepping up the fight against corruption and organised crime, remains crucial and requires sustained efforts. Public administration reform is also important for EU policies to function properly. Social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups, including the Roma, should be improved. Problems affecting freedom of expression and the media remain a particular concern. Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are essential parts of the enlargement process. They contribute to reconciliation and a climate conducive to addressing open bilateral issues. The Council encourages all parties concerned to address bilateral issues, falling outside areas of EU competence and/or contractual obligations towards the EU, in a constructive spirit and taking into account overall EU interests.

As the countries concerned meet the standards which have been set, including notably those linked to democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms, the EU is committed to working with them to advance to the next steps in the process. The Council welcomes the strengthened link between priorities identified for the (potential) candidate countries and the programming of financial assistance, in particular through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

As regards Turkey: the Council expresses the following:

(1) Political criteria: the Council welcomes Turkey's continued commitment to the negotiation process and the political reform agenda. The constitutional reform package is an important step in the right direction as it addresses a number of priorities of the Accession Partnership in the area of judiciary, fundamental rights and public administration. Implementation in line with European standards will be key. The Council emphasises that any future constitutional changes should be prepared through the broadest possible consultation, involving all political parties and civil society.

Building on progress made, the **Council encourages Turkey to further improve the observance of fundamental rights and freedoms in law and in practice**, in particular in the areas of freedom of expression and freedom of religion. A number of positive steps have been registered on civilian oversight of the security forces and implementation of the judicial reform strategy, but further progress is needed. Further efforts towards fully meeting the Copenhagen criteria are also required, inter alia, as regards property rights, trade union rights, rights of persons belonging to minorities, women's and children's rights, anti-discrimination and gender equality, and the fight against torture and ill-treatment.

The Council strongly condemns all acts of terrorism perpetrated on Turkish territory. It recalls that PKK is on the EU list of terrorist organisations. The Council hopes that implementation and follow-up of the democratic opening, notably to address the Kurdish issue, will start producing the expected results.

- **On an external level:** Turkey has become more active in its wider neighbourhood and is an important regional player, inter alia for security in the Middle East, Western Balkans, Afghanistan/Pakistan, and the Southern Caucasus. In line with the principles set out in the Negotiating Framework, **the Council encourages Turkey to develop its foreign policy as a complement to and in coordination with the EU.** By thus acting together, the EU and Turkey can strengthen energy security, address regional conflicts and prevent divisions developing along ethnic or religious lines. In this regard, the Council stands ready to intensify its existing dialogue with Turkey on foreign policy issues of mutual interest.
- **On immigration:** Turkey is one of the key countries of origin and transit for illegal immigration to the EU. In this context, the Council welcomes that substantial progress has been made in the negotiations on an EU-Turkey readmission agreement. The Council looks forward to its conclusion, in view of its effective implementation. Pending this, adequate implementation of existing bilateral readmission agreements and readmission provisions contained in similar agreements remains a priority.
- **Good neighbourly relations:** the Council underlines that Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice. In this context, the Union urges the avoidance of any kind of threat, source of friction or actions which could damage good neighbourly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Furthermore, the EU stresses again all the sovereign rights of EU Member States which include, inter alia, entering into bilateral agreements, in accordance with the EU acquis and international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- **Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement:** the Council notes with deep regret that Turkey, despite repeated calls, continues refusing to fulfil its obligation of full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement. **In the absence of progress on this issue, the Council will maintain its measures from 2006, which will have a continuous effect on the overall progress of the negotiations.** Furthermore, Turkey has still not made progress towards the necessary normalisation of its relations with the Republic of Cyprus. The Council invites the Commission to monitor closely and specifically report on all issues covered by the declaration of the European Community and its Member States of 21 September 2005 in its forthcoming annual report. On this basis, the Council will continue to closely follow and review progress made, in accordance with its conclusions of 11 December 2006 and 8 December 2009. Progress is now expected **without further delay.** As emphasised by the Negotiating Framework, the Council also expects Turkey to actively support the ongoing negotiations aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the **Cyprus problem** within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded. Turkey's commitment and contribution in concrete terms to such a comprehensive settlement is crucial.

(2) Other criteria: recalling that negotiations have reached a more demanding stage, the Council notes that Turkey will be able to accelerate the pace of negotiations by advancing in the fulfilment of benchmarks, meeting the requirements of the Negotiating Framework and by respecting its contractual obligations towards the EU. In this context, the Council notes the good progress made by Turkey toward the fulfilment of the opening benchmarks in the field of **Competition Policy.** As soon as all the benchmarks are met, the Council will revert to this chapter, in accordance with established procedures, with a view to its opening.