Turkey: membership application, 12 April 1987

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PURPOSE: Regular report prepared by the European Commission concerning Turkey's progress towards accession. CONTENT: In line with the AGENDA 2000 timetable and the guidelines laid down by the Cardiff European Council, the Commission presents its report on Turkey's progress towards accession. The report: - describes relations between Turkey and the EU, in particular in the framework of the Association Agreement; - analyses the situation and the prospects with regard to the political conditions referred to by the European Council (democracy, rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities); - assesses the situation and the prospects for Turkey with regard to the economic conditions referred to by the European Council (market economy, capacity to cope with competitive pressure within the EU); - examines Turkey's ability to take on the obligation of membership, i.e. the EU acquis as set out in the EU Treaty, secondary law and policies. In the conclusions of its report, the Commission perceives Turkey's results on a political level as chaotic. There have been important shortcomings in the respect of human rights and difficulties in relation to the Cypriot question are aspects that have thwarted progress in relation to Turkey's bid for EU membership. With AGENDA 2000, the Commission proposed strengthening relations between the Union and Turkey by consolidating the customs union set in place in 1995 (see COS /1997/2193). However, Turkey has not wished to deepen its political dialogue with the Community since the Luxembourg European Summit (December 1997) when the Union took the decision to postpone Turkey's candidacy to an unspecified date. With regard to compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria, the situation in Turkey is somewhat behind the other candidate countries in terms of the respect for basic rights (poor treatment of prisoners, incomplete freedom of expression,.) and the rights of minorities (the Kurd problem). The economy has considerable potential for growth and has shown great adaptability, particularly in the context of the customs union, which has contributed significantly to its modernisation. Nevertheless, serious efforts are needed to overcome important disparities in regional development. With respect to the acquis communautaire, Turkey has shown its ability to adopt and implement the bulk of the legislation stipulated in the Customs Union Decision by the deadlines. It must now show a similar determination in particular in the field of internal market (public procurement, agriculture and the environment). Conclusion: even if Turkey's results are good in the economic sphere, the outcome of its membership bid remains inextricably linked to the resolution of various political matters, as well as human rights priorities. During the second half of 1999, the Commission will propose the re-examination of Turkey's situation. In the meantime, it suggests that a strategy for closer relationswith Turkey with the purpose of strengthening the EU-Turkey customs union (see AVC/1995 /0813). This strategy is the subject of two proposals currently under examination (CNS/1998/299 and COD /1998/300).