



26th meeting of the EU-Turkey  
Joint Consultative Committee

Istanbul, 28 April 2009

**JOINT DECLARATION**

by

**Mr Sandy Boyle (co-chair) and Mr Tuğrul Kudatgobilik (co-chair),**

**at the 26th meeting of the**

**EU-TURKEY JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**held in Istanbul on 27 and 28 April 2009**

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1. The EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) is a body that brings together representatives of organised civil society from the EU and Turkey. It complements the bodies within the framework of the Association Agreement between the EU and Turkey and allows civil society organisations from both sides to monitor the accession negotiations and initiate debates on issues of common interest. Its members come from various economic and social interest groups.
2. The 26th meeting of the JCC was honoured by the presence of H.E. Egemen Bağış, Turkish Minister for EU Affairs and Turkey's Chief Negotiator, Mr Ahmet Erdem, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Mr Afif Demirkıran, MP and Member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly's EU Harmonisation Committee, Mr Jean-Christophe Filori, Head of the Turkey Unit of DG Enlargement at the European Commission and Mr František Štěpánek, Consul General of the Czech Republic in Istanbul on behalf of the Czech Presidency of the EU.

### **EU-Turkey relations and the role of organised civil society**

3. Against the background of the global crisis, the JCC stresses the importance of international cooperation and concerted action in order to find solutions to the current difficulties in terms of both trade and investment. Cooperation between the EU and Turkey in this context could play a positive role, as the EU is Turkey's most important trade partner and Turkey is the EU's 7th biggest trade partner.
4. The JCC regrets the slow pace of Turkey's accession negotiations and that new chapters have not yet been opened during the Czech Presidency. It calls upon the Turkish government to proceed quickly with the necessary reforms, and upon the Czech and upcoming Swedish Presidency to open negotiations on chapters where Turkey, according to the European Commission's assessment, fulfils the conditions.
5. The JCC urges the European Commission and the Turkish government to consult and regularly inform the JCC and Turkish civil society organisations on the negotiations.
6. The JCC underlines the importance of an open debate on Turkey in the EU and of removing prejudices with regard to the consequences of its accession. The JCC underlines its commitment to playing an active role in disseminating information and leading debates on the accession process among civil society organisations in the EU and in Turkey. In this context, the JCC has taken the initiative to organise, in the framework of its meeting in Istanbul, a seminar with Turkish civil society organisations and media on "Communicating Turkey". This seminar will be followed up at the next meeting of the JCC in Stockholm (autumn 2009), together with Swedish civil society organisations and media.
7. The JCC calls on the Turkish government to proceed with the revision of its Constitution and to increase consultation of Turkish civil society organisations on reforms as well as during the policy-making process in general. It reiterates its previous calls for rapid reform of the

Economic and Social Council of Turkey in order to make this institution more representative and a fully fledged consultative body.

8. The JCC takes note of the Judgment of the European Court of Justice of 19 February 2009 on "EEC-Turkey Association Agreement – Freedom to provide services – Visa requirement for admission to the territory of a Member State". It calls on the European Commission and the Member States covered by the ruling to implement it without delay.
9. The JCC notes with great satisfaction that Turkey's Tripartite Advisory Board, consisting of workers, employers and the government, unanimously took the initiative to advise the government to proceed with the relevant legislative amendment and welcomes the adoption of 1 May, "Labour and Solidarity Day", by the Turkish Grand National Assembly as a national holiday in Turkey.
10. The JCC welcomes the commitments made by H.E. Faruk Çelik, Turkish Minister of Labour and Social Security, on the occasion of the meeting held with the co-chairs of the JCC on 18 February 2009, but notes that the legislation on trade union rights has not yet been amended. It reiterates the importance of making the necessary reforms to the legislation on trade union rights in Turkey and of giving full trade union rights also to civil servants. The JCC recalls the joint declaration of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting and insists that the decision of the conciliation board should be considered as an "agreed text" by both parties. It underlines that the changes to be made should not be gradual and superficial, but fully in line with ILO conventions. Progress at this time with regard to trade union rights is of utmost importance as it is one of the key benchmarks for the opening of the Social Chapter. The JCC will continue to follow this issue closely. The JCC calls on the Turkish government to involve the Turkish social partners in the negotiations on the Social Chapter.
11. The JCC welcomes the recent approval by the Turkish National Assembly of the establishment of a "Women and Men Equal Opportunities Commission". It urges the Parliament to make this Commission operational without delay so that it can play an essential role in mainstreaming women's issues in all policy areas. The JCC underlines the importance of continuing the discussion on women's rights and role in Turkey and intends to include it as a standing item on the agenda of its meetings.
12. The JCC welcomes the positive developments in cooperation with the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee and underlines its commitment to continue this fruitful work with the Co-Presidents after the European elections on 7 June 2009. It reaffirms its pledge to work actively as a major institution of the Turkey-EU Association framework in close cooperation with the Association Council and Joint Parliamentary Committee.

#### **Cooperation between the EU and Turkey on research and development**

13. The JCC stresses that, in the context of the global crisis, it is important to invest in research and innovation in order to anticipate economic recovery and strengthen economic prosperity

in the long term. The JCC notes that investment and R&D in green technologies are of primary importance. The upgrading of manpower skills is also critically important.

14. The JCC underlines the importance of increasing the financial capacities of SMEs in Turkey and in the EU through the development of instruments facilitating access to financing for SMEs in order to foster their investments in R&D. It recommends the establishment of public-private partnerships and increased international cooperation.
15. The JCC points out that if the EU wants to be a serious global competitor, it must develop an internal market for R&D. In this context, the EU must also build lasting relationships with partners like Turkey.
16. The JCC urges the EU to work towards integrating the Turkish Research Area into the EU's strategic goals for R&D. It underlines that unhindered mobility within the European Research Area among organisations and the private and public sectors in the Member States and the candidate countries would foster career development, the pooling of knowledge and technical experience.
17. The JCC welcomes the cooperation between the EU and Turkey in the framework of the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development as it supports both EU and Turkish objectives with regard to creativity, innovation and competitiveness in the knowledge economy of the future. It recommends that the EU and Turkey globally increase their investment in R&D.
18. The JCC welcomes the Turkish government's Ninth Development Plan, which aims to encourage R&D spending, improve the infrastructure for research and foster industry-science relations. It notes with satisfaction that Turkey has been fostering a science and higher-education culture that has been supported by the doubling of its research spending from 2002 to 2007. It notes that most of the R&D spending comes from public sources. It recommends that Turkey increase its share of private investment in R&D.

#### **Energy supply policies in the context of EU-Turkey relations**

19. The JCC is of the opinion that every effort should be made to manage energy consumption more efficiently and to promote renewable energies.
20. The JCC notes that reliable and affordable energy supplies are a sine qua non for economic growth and development. In addition, given growing energy consumption, the diversification of energy sources is fundamental.
21. The JCC underlines that the EU's and Turkey's energy policies have to be seen in the context of today's challenges: climate change, security of supply, housing and transport. The EU and Turkey need to define clear and comprehensive external energy strategies. It recommends that

the social partners, environmental organisations and other civil society organisations should be actively involved in defining the external energy strategies of the EU and Turkey.

22. The JCC welcomes Turkey's recent ratification of the Kyoto protocol, which demonstrates Turkey's determination to fight climate change.
23. The JCC points out that Turkey could play a strategic role in meeting its own and the EU's growing energy needs by becoming a crucial energy hub for supplies from producer regions. The realisation of the Nabucco pipeline will foster foreign direct investment in Turkey, as it is linked to the accomplishment of European energy networks, and will also boost cooperation between the EU and the source and transit countries, contributing to an effective energy partnership. In this context the JCC stresses the need to implement the Energy Charter Treaty in order to strengthen the rule of law on energy issues by creating common rules to facilitate energy investment and trade, taking the public interest into consideration.
24. The JCC welcomes the ongoing discussions between the European Commission and the Turkish authorities with a view to making Nabucco operational in 2013.
25. Turkey has already taken important steps to align its energy market with the EU internal market rules. The JCC therefore reiterates its support for the opening of the chapter on energy and calls on the Council to reach rapid agreement on the issue.

#### **The impact of EU Free Trade Agreements with third countries on Turkey-EU economic relations**

26. The JCC considers that in the context of the present economic and financial crisis and contraction of world trade, it is important to resist protectionist pressures and avoid policies that restrict trade.
27. The JCC takes note of the current Free Trade Negotiations conducted by the European Commission and calls for full cooperation with Turkey on the basis of the provisions contained in the Customs Union. It notes that the Customs Union obliges Turkey to conclude free trade agreements (FTAs) with third countries with which the EU has concluded FTAs. It calls on the European Commission to facilitate Turkey's conclusion of FTAs with these third countries. Furthermore, it calls on the European Commission and on Turkey to keep each other regularly and fully informed on the development of FTA negotiations.
28. At civil society level, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is involved in the monitoring of trade negotiations conducted by the European Commission on the basis of various mechanisms, mostly the EESC permanent Study Group on the WTO and International Trade. The EESC invites the Turkish delegation of the JCC to nominate from within its number a small representation to participate in this study group as observers when matters of common interest are dealt with.

### **Next JCC meeting**

29. The 27th meeting of the JCC will take place in Stockholm in autumn 2009. The JCC will continue its discussion on Turkey's accession negotiations and the involvement of organised civil society in the process. The meeting agenda will include a report on the Informal Economy in Turkey. A debate will also be held on the consequences of the economic crisis for the EU and Turkey.

*This declaration has been sent to the Turkish authorities, the EU institutions, the representatives of Turkish and EU civil society organisations and the media. The EU-Turkey JCC working documents and any further information can be obtained by contacting the secretariats: **Mr Mustafa Bayburtlu**, Director, Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB). (Tel: 00.90.312.413 82 30; email: [abm@tobb.org.tr](mailto:abm@tobb.org.tr)) and **Ms Laila Wold**, Administrator, Section for External Relations, European Economic and Social Committee (Tel: 00.32.2-546.91.58; email: [laila.wold@eesc.europa.eu](mailto:laila.wold@eesc.europa.eu)).*

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