



JOINT STATEMENTS

Joint Statement following the High Level Political Dialogue between the EU and Turkey

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High Representative for Foreign Affairs/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu issued this statement following the European Union - Turkey- High Level Political Dialogue meeting held in Ankara on 22 November 2018.

In today's High Level Political Dialogue, we underlined the strategic importance of EU-Turkey relations. We remain committed to maintaining an open and frank dialogue, to discussing issues high on both of our agendas in a comprehensive manner in view of addressing common challenges and to cooperating in essential areas of joint interest.

Turkey's accession process can provide an important framework for fully realising the potential of the EU-Turkey relationship as well as for the economic, social and political reforms in Turkey. In this framework, we discussed recent developments, including political criteria and the Negotiation Framework, cooperation on key thematic issues: economy, trade and the customs union, security, financial cooperation (IPA), energy, migration, visa liberalisation and fight against terrorism.

The resumption of the Reform Action Group (RAG) meetings was welcomed.

The Turkish side reiterated its commitment to accession to the EU and its determination to rapidly undertake reforms in the area of the rule of law and fundamental rights as detailed in the press statement following the RAG meeting of 29 August 2018. The standards of the Council of Europe and EU norms will act as an

anchor for these reforms. Ongoing updates to the Judicial Reform Strategy and the possible contribution of the EU were discussed.

Both sides agreed on the importance of the ongoing dialogue and cooperation with the Council of Europe of which Turkey is a founding member. They noted with satisfaction the continuation of the informal working group between the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Justice.

Cooperation with the Council of Europe and all its bodies remains essential. The EU side referred to the conclusions of the General Affairs Council and in particular the need for Turkey to take decisive action to reverse the current trend in the rule of law and fundamental rights mainly resulting from the 15 July 2016 attempted coup that had been condemned by the EU. We will cooperate on protecting and broadening the space for an open and inclusive civil society as an important element of a functioning democracy.

We reiterated our strong will to enhance cooperation to combat terrorism. Turkey and the EU are pursuing concrete actions to increase cooperation to counter the threat of terrorism in an effective manner. These actions include, inter alia, exchange of good practices; countering financing of terrorism; initiatives to address radicalisation and to prevent and act against returning foreign terrorist fighters as well as those joining Da'esh; aviation security and closer cooperation between relevant Turkish authorities and the EU Agencies. Against the background of recurrent terrorist acts, PKK and the DHKP-C remain on the EU list of persons, groups and entities involved in acts of terrorism. The Turkish side also underlined that the perpetrators of the 15 July coup attempt are designated by Turkish authorities as terrorists.

The two sides reconfirmed their intention to continuing the visa liberalisation dialogue to implement all pending benchmarks. In the framework of the Visa Liberalisation Roadmap benchmarks, Turkey has started to issue second-generation passports as of 2nd April and the negotiations for an operational cooperation agreement between the European Union and Turkey on exchange of personal data between Europol and the Turkish authorities competent for fighting serious crime and terrorism will start on 30 November.

Turkey has become a home for the largest refugee population in the world and exerts outstanding efforts to provide access to services such as education and health.

The 18 March 2016 Statement has allowed for a unique model of cooperation between Turkey and the EU by making an important contribution to managing irregular migration. The two sides agreed to continue cooperation in this framework.

Both sides underlined the importance of financial cooperation including within the framework of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) in support of Turkey's compliance with the EU membership norms and standards in various areas. Turkey as a candidate underlined the positive perception of the EU among the

public and civil society linked to EU financial cooperation and committed to enhancing implementation of existing programmes under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

We agreed to intensify our cooperation through a series of high level dialogues on economy, energy, transport. We agreed to work on improving the functioning of the customs union and on its modernisation as soon as circumstances allow. We will continue preparations for new sessions of the Association Council, counter-terrorism dialogue, CSDP consultations as well as thematic foreign policy dialogues.

We will continue to give full and resolute support to the efforts of the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and the UN Secretary General towards achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue.

We exchanged views on the situation in the region with particular focus on the Balkans, Syria, Iraq and Libya.

The EU and Turkey have shared interest in the stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans and support progress on their European path.

Turkey has demonstrated unparalleled generosity in hosting and supporting Syrians who have fled civil war in Syria. The EU and Turkey are close partners on migration management and humanitarian assistance and enjoy good cooperation in these areas. The EU's Facility for Refugees in Turkey provides a joint coordination mechanism designed to ensure that the needs of Syrians in Turkey and their host communities are addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

Regarding an inclusive, credible and sustainable solution to the Syrian conflict, we stressed the need for a negotiated political transition in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2254. We underlined the importance of a lasting ceasefire through the full implementation of the Memorandum on Stabilisation of the Situation in the Idlib De-escalation Area and of the compliance of all relevant parties with its provisions.

We agreed on the importance of maintaining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and preserving the economic benefits for Iran arising from sanctions-lifting under the Agreement.

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