



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**46th meeting of the EC-Turkey Association Council
Tuesday, 27 May 2008**

Press release

The EC-Turkey Association Council held its 46th meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, 27 May 2008. The meeting was chaired by Mr Ali BABACAN, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Chief Negotiator and Head of the Turkish delegation. Dr Dimitrij RUPEL, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, 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, after almost two years since the last Association Council took place. In line with the EU Council conclusions of 10 December 2007, the European Union noted progress in Turkey's preparations for accession by opening six chapters and provisionally closing one chapter. It also 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.

P R E S S

The European Union noted the Turkish government's renewed commitment to continue the reform process and address the existing shortcomings and looked forward to seeing these commitments soon translated into real and tangible actions whilst welcoming the steps already taken. It underlined the importance for Turkey not to distract attention from the necessary reforms and from their implementation, in view of ensuring respect of the Copenhagen political criteria and the fulfilment of the priorities set out in the Accession Partnership. A new National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis should be adopted to reflect the priorities formulated in the Accession Partnership and serve as a planning tool for further reforms.

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 significant efforts are still needed in various areas.

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.

