

Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1997/2193(COS)	Procedure completed
EC/Turkey relations: further development, European strategy		
Subject 6.40.05.08 Relations with Turkey		
Geographical area Turkey		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy		25/09/1997
		PSE SWOBODA Hannes	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	RELA External Economic Relations		27/10/1997
		PPE SCHWAIGER Konrad K.	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	2047	24/11/1997
	General Affairs	2041	10/11/1997

Key events			
15/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0394	Summary
02/10/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/11/1997	Debate in Council	2041	
24/11/1997	Debate in Council	2047	
18/11/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
18/11/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0432/1998	
02/12/1998	Debate in Parliament		
03/12/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0716/1998	Summary
03/12/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
21/12/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2193(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/4/09207

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1997)0394	15/07/1997	EC	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document		COM(1998)0124	04/03/1998	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0432/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0003	18/11/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0716/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0020-0057	03/12/1998	EP	Summary

EC/Turkey relations: further development, European strategy

OBJECTIVE: to outline future relations between the European Union and Turkey beyond the strict framework of customs union. **CONTENT:** in its communication, the Commission does not refer to the accession of Turkey to the European Union; it merely reiterates that it is eligible for accession and notes its priorities with regard to democratization and the re-establishment of relations with Greece. Reference is also made to settlement of the Cyprus question. The communication concentrates mainly on strengthening current relations beyond what is allowed under customs union. The Commission therefore proposes to consolidate customs union and strengthen cooperation in the field of services, telecommunications, agriculture, industry, investment, consumer protection and human rights. Customs union would be consolidated by harmonizing Turkish legislation with the Community acquis in relation to standards, declarations of conformity, quality assurance and competition and by launching negotiations on public procurement, commercial policy and customs. In the services sector, the Commission proposes to start negotiations with a view to deregulating the sector. Provision is also made for cooperation in industry and investment, mainly with a view to assisting the SME sector. In the field of telecommunications, the Commission proposes harmonizing the legislative framework with the Community model and also suggests that Turkey integrate into the information society by joining the trans-European telecommunications networks. Provision has been made to re-open macro-economic dialogue in order to help Turkey implement widespread structural reforms and make its economy more healthy. In the agricultural sector, Turkey still needs to adjust its policy in order to bring it into line with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Commission advocates greater deregulation of farm holdings with financial and technical support from the Union (transposition of acquis in the health and phytosanitary sector, COMs, rural policy). Provision has also been made for initiatives in the field of consumer protection by linking Turkey to the Community System for the Rapid Exchange of Information to allow early warning in the event of a threat to public health. The Commission also proposes to strengthen cooperation in the environmental, research and training sectors by allowing Turkey to participate in various Community programmes and to strengthen regional and cross-border cooperation (especially with the Black Sea countries). With regard to human rights, the Commission proposes two new forms of cooperation: greater cooperation between European and Turkish NGOs in order to improve human rights, freedom of expression and the development of the civil society and direct support for the Turkish government with a view to supporting its efforts to comply with international conventions on human rights and minorities. Finally, on the financial level, the Commission calls for the rapid adoption of the special financial regulation providing ECU 375 million between now and 1999 and the release of MEDA funds for Turkey.?

EC/Turkey relations: further development, European strategy

OBJECTIVE: to make a number of operational proposals to strengthen the Union's relations with Turkey. **SUBSTANCE:** The Luxembourg European Council of December 1997 confirmed that Turkey was eligible for accession to the Community. However, it will not be included in the first round of accessions, as it has not managed to meet all the accession requirements adopted at Copenhagen (see COS0590). Nevertheless, the proposals presented in this communication demonstrate that the Union wishes to implement a new strategy towards Turkey, the clearly declared aim of which is to prepare Turkey for accession. The strategy is based on five main principles: 1) development of the possibilities afforded by the Ankara Agreement (association between the Community and Turkey), 2) intensification of the customs union, 3) implementation of financial cooperation, 4) approximation of laws and adoption of the Union acquis, 5) participation, to be decided case by case, in certain European programmes. In order to implement this strategy, the Commission proposes a programme of work comprising the following elements: -intensification of industrial cooperation and investment promotion (improving access to the internal market, innovation and information technology, assistance for the development of the private sector, greater liberalization of movements of capital), -support for the transposition of the acquis in the field of agriculture, -exploratory discussions with a view to an agreement on services, -intensification of the customs union through technical assistance and administrative cooperation measures, -strengthening of the mechanism for Community-Turkey consultation in fields of direct relevance to the functioning of the customs union, -exploratory talks on opening up public procurement, -institution of a macroeconomic dialogue, particularly concerning greater liberalization of capital movements, -Community

support for Turkey's incorporation of the 'acquis communautaire' in such fields as the environment, telecommunications and consumer protection policy, -the establishment of the necessary arrangements to enable Turkey to participate in certain Community agencies and programmes, -stepping up institutional cooperation and political dialogue. The implementation of most of the proposals in the document depends largely on the adoption of the Financial Regulation granting ECU 375 m to Turkey, which is still blocked in the Council for lack of unanimity.?

EC/Turkey relations: further development, European strategy

The Committee, in adopting the report by Hannes SWOBODA (PES, A) on the Commission communications on the further development of relations with Turkey and the initial operational proposals for a European Strategy for Turkey, has reaffirmed Turkey's eligibility for accession to the EU once it meets the Copenhagen economic and political criteria, which it does not at present. Clearly, most of the problems are political. Mr SWOBODA's report recalls the promises made to Parliament by Ankara when the go-ahead was given for the customs union and notes, like the Commission, that no significant progress has been made in areas as crucial as the democratic deficit and the protection of human rights and the rights of minorities. The report presents a list of current shortcomings in these areas and proposes improvements which the Turkish Government should make: - an end to persecution, imprisonment and torture, to which Kurds in particular are subjected, and the release of Leyla Zana and all political prisoners; -the abrogation of "anti-terror legislation", and in particular Article 8, under which intellectuals, writers and political figures are still held in prison; -a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem which respects Turkey's territorial integrity. This can only be achieved through dialogue with representatives of the Kurds, constitutionally guaranteed cultural rights and fair representation of all interests in the Grand National Assembly (in particular by lowering the 10% threshold for representation); -greater democratic control over the civilian and military administration, including the removal of the military from their current constitutional role in the political system; -the lifting of the State of Emergency in the East and South East provinces and the promotion of social and economic development in those areas. The occupation of northern Cyprus is another important obstacle, as are the attempts to delay Cyprus's accession to the EU. The Turkish Government is therefore urged to contribute to finding a political solution to the Cyprus question on the basis of the acceptance and implementation of UN Security Council resolutions and to restore good neighbourly relations with Greece. Since, according to the report, the situation can be improved by Turkey alone, the Ankara authorities are asked to make specific proposals accompanied by a binding timetable. ?

EC/Turkey relations: further development, European strategy

In adopting the report by Mr Hannes SWOBODA (PSE, A) on relations between the Union and Turkey, the European Parliament first reaffirmed that Turkey was eligible for accession to the European Union. It regretted the fact that Turkey had not so far agreed to participate in the European Conference and rejected any reference to religious beliefs or cultural traditions as a reason for rejecting Turkey's eligibility. It reviewed the obstacles to Turkey's possible accession, and noted that, from the strictly economic point of view, the country displayed a rare dynamism and should be able in the medium term to acquire a viable market economy able to withstand the pressure of competition. Clearly, it is in the political sphere that the most serious problems exist. Parliament recalled the promises made by Ankara to the European Parliament at the time when assent was given to the Customs Union and agreed with the Commission that no substantial progress had been achieved with regard to such crucial fields as the democratic deficit and protection of human and minority rights. It presented a list of shortcomings which currently existed in these fields, and proposed improvements which the Turkish Government should take into account: -an end to persecution, imprisonment and torture, which were particularly inflicted on the Kurdish population; -the release of Leyla Zana and of all political prisoners; -the repeal of 'antiterrorist' legislation and particularly 'Article 8', under which intellectuals, writers and politicians were kept in detention; -reform of the law on political parties and the electoral law; -a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem, respecting the territorial integrity of Turkey. This should be achieved through dialogue, particularly with Kurdish representatives, the introduction of cultural rights guaranteed by the Constitution, the representation of all interests in the Grand National Assembly (particularly by lowering the 10% threshold for political representation); -increased democratic control over the administration and the military, particularly abolition of the latter's existing constitutional role in the political system; -the lifting of the State of Emergency in the East and South East provinces and inauguration of genuine social and economic development in these regions; -an end to Turkish attacks on Kurdish objectives. The occupation of Northern Cyprus was another major obstacle, as were the attempts to delay Cyprus's accession to the European Union. The Turkish Government was accordingly urged to contribute actively to a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem, on the basis of acceptance and application of United Nations resolutions, and to re-establish good-neighbourly relations with Greece. In Parliament's view, Turkey bore sole responsibility for improving the situation: the authorities in Ankara were therefore called upon to make practical proposals, accompanied by a binding timetable, for fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria for accession to the Union (especially the political criteria). Parliament called on the Commission and Council to draw up, with the Turkish authorities, a joint plan with a view to Turkey's accession to the Union. It called for an international conference to be held on the Kurdish problem with the aim of arriving at an acceptable and peaceful solution. It stressed that, where respect for democracy and human rights in Turkey was concerned, it would certainly be a step in the right direction if certain Kurdish organisations were to cease their terrorist activities. Parliament rejected political and economic interference by Turkey in decisions adopted by a Member State, and considered that any measure which the Turkish Government might take to obstruct bilateral trade with a Member State would be regarded as a violation of the association agreement and the Customs Union. Parliament urged Turkey to participate in the European Conference, and suggested the adoption of a pre-accession strategy based on appropriate funding.?