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1. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

1.1 ERGENEKON INVESTIGATION

An investigation, started in 2007 into an allegedly criminal network known as Ergenekon, led to the arrest of a number of people, including retired army generals. The indictment against Ergenekon is based on charges such as forming a terrorist organisation and attempting to overthrow the government and to undermine its operation by use of violent means. During the course of the investigation, there were reports regarding the insufficient safeguarding of the rights of defence and the excessive duration of detention periods without indictment.

The trial, which began in October 2008, presents an opportunity to finally shed light upon the backroom dealers responsible for political murders and decades of terror in the name of the state. About 150 politicians, ex-military officials, journalists and people who held high ranking positions stand accused. However, due to the high number of suspects and the many recriminations, it is very difficult to say what the outcome will be.

Politicians from the Republican People's Party (CHP) see the trial as little more than a broad attack on secularism. They are concerned that the investigation is being used as an excuse to go after not just those involved in the planned putsch but also those critical of the government in general. They see it as just another move in the ongoing power struggle between Turkey's two main political camps: the secular Kemalist-nationalists, strongly represented in the military and the court system, and the followers of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamist party, the AKP.

European Parliament Rapporteur on Turkey Ria Oomen-Ruijten has voiced support for an ongoing investigation into Ergenekon, she said she was satisfied that the process has started and encouraged Turkish authorities to investigate further to see how different parts of this network have influenced the whole state.

On 12 March 2009 the European Parliament approved a resolution on the 2008 Turkey's progress report, in which it supported among other things an investigation into the shadowy Ergenekon organisation and encouraged further scrutiny. But the document also expressed concern over reports of poor treatment of the suspects and urged the court to conduct fair trials.

1.2 LOCAL ELECTIONS

On 29 March 2009 Turkey will hold its 13th local elections since its transition to multi-party rule in 1946. This is meant to elect the leaders of 2,941 municipalities throughout the country, but the campaign is, as usual, being conducted along the lines of a general election.

Many say the results of the coming elections will be a turning point in Turkish politics and that the course of political developments will, to a great extent, be determined by the results. These local elections may be said to be a referendum on what the people expect of the AKP government. The vote will indicate whether the government has a strong mandate from the people:

- to continue or not with reforms toward fulfilling the EU membership criteria, and particularly with the adoption of a new, civilian and democratic constitution to replace the current one drawn up by the military in 1982;
- to lift all restrictions on the expression of Kurdish identity and thus take a big step towards solving the Kurdish problem;

- to take all measures necessary, including amnesty for militants who are not responsible for atrocities, to put an end to Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorism and to consolidate peace and stability in the country; and
- to pursue efforts to eradicate the Ergenekon network;

However, the effects of the world economic crisis are increasingly felt and the unemployment rate in urban centres has reached 13%, leaving nearly 3 million people jobless. This is why the AKP government is trying to counter the negative effects of the crisis by various subsidies and handouts to the poor and to mobilize all advantages of being in power in the election campaign.

A recent poll has shown that the voting behaviour of the voters has not changed much since the general elections of July 2007. Accordingly, the AKP is expected to get 47.5 % of the votes and the CHP 23.1 %, followed by the MHP 12.5 % and DTP 4.9 %. All other parties would remain well below 5%.

1.3 ECONOMIC SITUATION: OUTLOOK FOR 2009-10

Turkey has demonstrated a strong record on economic growth, averaging 6.8 percent between 2002 and 2008. It is highly likely that 2009 will be a difficult year for the Turkish economy and that its economy will shrink. Analysts believe that with the IMF support the government will do enough to avoid a severe economic crisis.

Economist Intelligence Unit¹ (EIU) expects that under a new IMF stand-by agreement, the government will adopt a degree of fiscal discipline, helping to keep the budget deficit at around 3% in 2009-10 and to stabilise the public debt/GDP ratio at about 40%. EIU estimates that there will be a sharp contraction in the GDP growth in these years, but then it should pick up in 2010. However, Turkey has strengthened its economic position on the world stage becoming more and more integrated with the global economy with respect to trade and capital flows. Moreover, Turkey has witnessed three major economic crises since 1994 and, therefore, it is well versed in handling adverse economic conditions. One should not forget that since 2001 the growth rates in Turkey have been the highest in the OECD area and that, along with low debt levels - compared to some other countries -, this makes the country more resilient to economic shocks.

¹ From "Economist Intelligence Unit", February 2009

2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: TURKEY'S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Turkey's interest in the Middle East can be considered not only as a consequence of the difficult process of Turkey's accession to the EU, but also due to regional and geopolitical factors.

Traditionally, Turkey was viewed by its Arab neighbours with suspicion due to its Ottoman legacy. But in recent years this perception has changed and Turkey has obtained important results in the region. Structural barriers that prevented Turkey's involvement in the Middle East have disappeared thanks to the decreasing importance of Arab nationalism and to the rising of a political class influenced by religious ideologies. In this way, the Turkish model, friendly to political Islam, appears more suitable for the region.

The main reasons which have led to the improvement of the Arab attitude towards Turkey are:

- the coming to power of the AKP;
- the strengthening of the reform process in Turkey as a result of its relationship with the EU which presents a stimulus to political reform in the Arab world as well;
- the refusal of the Turkish parliament to allow the U.S. to station its troops on Turkish soil to open a second front against Iraq. It increased its credibility in the Arab world and dissipated the image of Turkey as a "puppet" of the U.S.

As matter of fact, the role played by Turkey in the Middle East represents a great opportunity for EU to increase its presence and to enhance its ambitions in this region.

2.1 TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS AND THE GAZA WAR

In January 2009, during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met Israeli President Shimon Peres.

The meeting between them was tense because Erdoğan, complaining that his comments on the Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip were cut short, stormed out of the debate after an angry exchange with the Israeli President Shimon Peres, who defended Israel's operation in Gaza.

Turkey and Israel have traditionally had good relations, but a crisis broke out when Israel launched a 22-day offensive operation in the Gaza Strip, killing more than 1,300 Palestinians. Erdoğan has severely criticized the operation, saying that Israel should be barred from the United Nations.

The incident disappointed those who were expecting a new era of peace in the Middle East thanks to Turkey's special relationship with Israel.

However, the end of the diplomatic crisis arrived in the first week of March, when Tzipi Livni and Ali Babacan, the Foreign Ministers of Israel and Turkey, met in Brussels on the sidelines of a NATO conference, trying to repair links strained by the war in the Gaza Strip. Relations between the two States are considered to have a strategic importance, especially for the stability of the Middle East.

The two countries claimed to have excellent bilateral relations, driven by increasing trade and made clear that their alliance, while framed in a relationship that can sometimes predict differences of views, remains a priority for both.

They undertook to continue cooperation and political consultations at a high level.

Turkey and Israel have a strong economic and military cooperation that they both wish to maintain.

Livni and Babacan also reportedly discussed "opportunities to advance peace in the region" among other "bilateral and regional issues."² Most at risk seems to be Turkish mediation role between Israel and Syria, but all the same Erdoğan emphasised his intention to resume his diplomatic efforts for peace in the Middle East at the request of the parties.

Concerning the **Gaza war**, Turkey considers Hamas as an important interlocutor to begin the peace process, while Israel wants to destroy Hamas and asks for its international isolation.

Turkey supports the peace plan, the so-called "Abdullah Plan", approved by the Arab League in 2002 and in 2007 which offers to Israel a final peace and full normalization of Arab-Israeli relations asking in return for a full Israeli withdrawal from West Bank, Gaza and Golan, the creation of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and in Gaza and the resolution of Palestinian refugees issue.

The Israelis rejected the plan but they have to take into account the rising role of Turkey in the region and that U.S. wants Turkey to have an even more active role in Middle East politics. Turkey, in fact, was the only actor able to hold direct contacts with Hamas in this process, and as such Turkey has played an active role in the declaration of a ceasefire.

2.2 TURKISH-ARMENIA RELATIONS

In Davos, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan also held talks with Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian on the sidelines of the forum, while Foreign Minister Ali Babacan met his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian and in an interview they repeated that the two countries are very close to a solution in 2009.

These are the first bilateral talks between the two countries, after the historic visit of Turkish President Gül to Armenia in September 2008. It was held on the sidelines of the Turkish-Armenian football match and it was a follow-up to secret negotiations held in third-party countries.

Furthermore, Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan will visit Armenia in April in the framework of a meeting of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) along with other representatives of member countries of the Organization.

Turkey and Armenia have no formal diplomatic relations but officials from the two sides have expressed hopes of restoring full diplomatic relations as a result of recent tentative discussions between the two sides.

Relations between the two countries have been haunted by whether ethnic Armenians killed by Ottoman Turks during World War One were victims of a systematic genocide, as Armenia always considered it. Ankara accepts many Armenians were killed from 1915-1923 but denies they were victims of genocide.

Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 in a show of solidarity with Azerbaijan, a Turkic-speaking ally which was fighting Armenian-backed separatists over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

² From *Reuters*, 5 March 2009.

Following the war of August 2008 between Russia and Georgia, in November 2008 Erdogan launched a new proposal for a Pact for Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus (CSCP), with the objective of the resolution of conflict in the South Caucasus through the development of regional cooperation.

CSCP's goal is to create a new framework for regional security with the participation of three countries of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) plus Turkey and Russia. The ethnic conflict would be so addressed through a regional cooperation.

Armenia has shown a cautious openness to the initiative, however reiterating its belief that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can only be resolved if Azerbaijan recognizes the self-determination right of the Karabakh people and when the latter will have territorial continuity with Armenia.

It is reasonable to think that Turkey will not face undue illusions about the possibility of success of the above mentioned initiative. It is very likely that Ankara rather points towards maintaining the *status quo* and avoiding a worsening of the situation in the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea.

Another issue concerns the Nabucco project. Due to political problems between Armenia and Turkey and Armenia and Azerbaijan the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project bypassed Armenia and passed through Georgia at an extra 20 percent cost. The inclusion of Armenia in the Nabucco project is on the table but it is likely that parties are waiting for the normalization of relations to advance in this regard.

2.3 TURKISH-IRAQI RELATIONS

Turkish policy in Iraq is primarily a result of Turkey's interest to maintain its territorial integrity. The hypothesis of an ethnic subdivision in three parts of Iraq was refused by Turkey to prevent both the formation of a Kurdish state to its southern borders and an increased Iranian influence following the formation of a Shiite state in southern Iraq.

In February 2009, Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan signalled that Turkey, which refused to let US troops deploy on its territory for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, would allow the US military to use its bases and ports to withdraw troops from Iraq after US President Barack Obama pledged a 2010 withdraw.

Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari came to Ankara to hold a series of talks with Turkish officials. Zebari met his Turkish counterpart Ali Babacan and President Abdullah Gül and covered issues such as cooperation and security, as well as a general review of the bilateral relations ahead of the Turkish President's visit to Baghdad, which is expected soon.

In March, Iraq and Turkey concluded an agreement to expand border security cooperation making possible increased exchanges between the two countries. It is a plan to increase border traffic in 2009 and it would also include the opening of two crossings along the Iraqi-Turkish border.³ In 2008, Iraq and Turkey have significantly increased trade in order to improve diplomatic relations and security. Bilateral trade reached nearly \$5 billion last year and is in constant growth; it is estimated to double by 2010.

More generally, relations between the two countries are normalized mainly thanks to the cooperation in the energy sector.

³ From *World Tribune*, 3 March, 2009.

In July 2008, the two countries signed an agreement that provides the possibility for the TPAO, the Turkish oil company, to conduct exploration, drilling and trade in Iraqi territory.

According to the agreement, the Turks will be allowed to gain access to the lucrative oil fields of Iraq and the Iraqis will then have the opportunity to export oil to the world market. It is also stated that the importance of Kerkük-Yumurtalık oil pipeline between Turkey and Iraq will be enhanced and reach the Mediterranean in the Turkish city of Ceyhan. Furthermore, in Anatolia (a geographical region of south-eastern Turkey) a future gas pipeline will be constructed and it would be connected to the Nabucco pipeline.

2.4 TURKISH-IRAN RELATIONS

Relations between Ankara and Tehran are based on three key areas:

- the containment of Kurdish nationalism and the **preventing of the emergence of an independent Kurdish state**. Both Iran and Turkey face problems of security in the Kurdish majority regions. In 2004, in occasion of the visit of Erdogan to Teheran, the improvement of Turkey/Iran relations was formalized by the signing of a cooperation agreement on security, in particular security of borders.
- **economic cooperation**. This sector has experienced a significant increase and it will expand further due to the complementarity of the two economies.
- **energy cooperation**. In 2007, two agreements were signed for the construction of energy pipelines and a power station on the Iran-Turkish border. The strengthening of energy relations with Iran is important for Turkey in order both to reduce dependence on Russian gas imports and consolidate its aspirations to become a central hub in the transit of gas in the Middle East, Caspian and Central Asia towards Europe.

On 8 March 2009, Foreign Minister Ali Babacan met U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and said Turkey would consider serving as mediator between Iran and the United States. Analysts suggest that it is likely that Turkey would weigh any requests by the two sides to serve as a mediator and current efforts to open a dialogue are considered 'an important opportunity'.

In mid-March, Turkish President Abdullah Gül went to Iran to attend the 10th Summit of Heads of State and Government of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member states (an international organization formed by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan).

On this occasion, Gül met Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's spiritual leader, who stressed that US and Israel are against closer links between Iran and Turkey and that the new US administration's political stance is on the same path it was before, thus showing his lack of enthusiasm about opening up contacts with the United States.⁴

As regards the dispute between Iran and the West over a nuclear programme, Gül said Turkey thinks the dispute should be resolved through diplomatic means. Turkey is against proliferation of nuclear weapons but does not welcome sanctions, including military ones, against Iran. The Obama administration has signalled that it will pursue a different course from its predecessor and will try to engage Iran in an effort to ease the tension over the Iranian nuclear programme. Turkish officials view the Obama administration's pro-

⁴ From *PressTv*, 11 March 2009.

dialogue policy as an opportunity that should not be missed and earlier told Tehran that the new US administration should be given the chance to make a difference.

However, Iran's president Ahmadinejad dismissed this idea of Turkish mediation in US-Iran relations arguing that it is not necessary because if all dialogue were carried out based on justice and respect there would not be any differences of opinion remaining in the world; by this he meant that Iran and the U.S. can officially share their views in a diplomatic manner.⁵

Iran's reluctance indicates two things:

- Negotiations between Iran and the United States would be a major policy shift for Iran, requiring political and psychological preparation at all levels. The reticence about the mediation role of Turkey shows hesitancy in the Iranian leadership and indicates that conservative segments of Iranian society and the leadership may be opposing the idea of negotiations with the United States. In fact, Gül's meeting with Ali Khamenei may have been planned for the purpose of convincing the conservative leadership to accept negotiations.
- Requesting Turkish mediation would damage the possibility for Iran of being a regional power. If Turkey succeeds in persuading Iran and the United States to begin negotiations, it appears as the prevailing regional power while Iran seems to be subjected to Turkey. For this reason, Iran would want direct talks with the United States only if it would clearly serve Iran's national interests.

However, despite the rejection, Iran attached importance to the strengthening of ties with Turkey and relations between Turkey and Iran seem to be veering towards a greater collaboration, according to what Khamenei said during the meeting held on 5 March.

Following talks in Iran, President Gül will attend the NATO summit to be held on early April where he could convey the mood in Tehran to the United States and Western allies. Although not a mediator, Turkey is one of the few countries in the institution that also has access to Ahmadinejad and Khamenei.

⁵ From *TodayZaman*, 16 March 2009.

3. ENERGY SECURITY AND SAFETY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

3.1. THE NABUCCO PIPELINE PROJECT

More than 40 percent of natural gas in Europe is imported from Russia, which has prompted the European Union over the past few years to develop a plan to reduce this dependence. The January 2009 gas dispute between Ukraine and Russia increased the EU's interest in diversifying its energy supplies.

The proposed Nabucco pipeline project, aimed at bringing Caspian gas to the West through Turkey, is often described as an alternative plan to diversify energy sources and curtail the Russian monopoly. However, though the Nabucco project has been on the agenda since 2002, it is already fraught with difficulties, from rising estimated construction costs and a dearth of political backing from some EU countries, to no tangible gas commitments from the Caspian side.

The pipeline currently has six shareholders — OMV of Austria, MOL of Hungary, Transgaz of Romania, Bulgargaz of Bulgaria, Botaş of Turkey and RWE of Germany. The consortium recently raised the cost estimate for the project to about 7.9 billion euros from an initial projection of 4.4 billion euros. Nabucco's future will depend heavily on a binding inter-governmental agreement as well as EU incentives to invest more robustly in Caspian gas. The European Commission's financial commitment to Nabucco falls far short of the project's needs⁶, and major EU energy companies (with the notable exception of RWE) have been cautious thus far.

Also the lack of a clear and shared energy policy in the EU is one of the reasons that has not yet led to results, as some member states remain divided over whether this is the best means available to improve European energy security. Furthermore, even if Nabucco realises its full potential, the pipeline would cover less than 10% of the EU's annual gas import requirement.

Another problematic aspect of the Nabucco project is the securing of natural gas. In fact finding suppliers is one of the Nabucco consortium's top priorities. At this juncture, Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz field is the only feasible source of gas. While there are a number of other gas-rich countries around the Caspian, each faces unique political and practical challenges:

Turkmenistan: despite massive gas reserves at the South Yolotan-Osman field, due to a lack of development and transport infrastructure, Turkmenistan will probably not have gas available for Nabucco until at least 2017. All of Turkmenistan's current exports are committed to Russia and Iran.

Kazakhstan: is unlikely to have gas available until the completion of the Kashagan and Karachaganak projects. Scenarios based on existing trends estimate that Kazakhstan's annual gas export potential could be around 18-20 bcm, of which 15 bcm will be sold to Russia in line with previous contracts. China will receive 5 bcm, so that virtually nothing may be left for the EU.

Azerbaijan: Baku has shown increasing interest in the Nabucco project and possesses significant gas reserves. However, the authorities are cautious of making binding commitments to Nabucco, and may be considering different export options.

⁶ Following the Budapest summit (January 2009), the European Commission committed 250 million euros to support the project.

There are also practical limitations on Baku's ability to supply Nabucco: by 2017-18, Azerbaijan's maximum export volume could be as little as 16-17 bcm per year. Turkey or Russia might purchase a significant portion of this gas.

Reinhard Mitschek, international managing director of the Nabucco pipeline project, recently confirmed that "Nabucco will start to transport the first 8 to 10 billion cubic meters per year in 2014. It will be filled step by step, at first most likely with gas from Azerbaijan, in further steps with gas supply from Egypt, Turkmenistan, Iraq and Iran".

The involvement of Iranian and Iraqi natural gas in the project is crucial. **Iran** is second only to Russia in having the largest gas reserves in the world. However, a lot of investments would be necessary in Iran to exploit these resources and the present political situation does not allow these investments to be made. Although, for several reasons in the short term it is difficult to see Iran as a major gas supplier, the Iranian natural gas should be considered an important asset for the development for the Nabucco project. As regards **Iraq**, if stability finally comes to this country, Iraqi natural gas should be fed into the Nabucco pipeline.

3.2 ENERGY SECURITY

In November 2008 the European Commission proposed a wide-ranging energy package which gives a new boost to energy security in Europe, supporting the 20-20-20 climate change proposals. The Commission puts forward a new strategy to build up energy solidarity among Member States and a new policy on energy networks to stimulate investment in more efficient, low-carbon energy networks. The second **EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan** sets out five areas where more action is needed to secure sustainable energy supplies and to reduce the threat of future disruption as well as enhancing the ability of the EU nations to jointly respond in a crisis situation. Future actions will include: more effective support for projects to build the required infrastructure; make better use of EU indigenous energy resources; and give more attention to solidarity, including EU crisis mechanisms, oil stocks and a variety of mechanisms to respond to possible gas disruption

The issue of investment is also central to the package. Europe's networks need billions of euros of investment to replace ageing infrastructure and adapt to low-carbon and renewable energy. A Green Paper on energy networks identifies six strategic initiatives as essential for the EU's energy security: a Baltic Interconnection Plan, a Mediterranean Energy Ring, adequate North-South gas and electricity interconnections with Central and South-East Europe, a North Sea Offshore Grid, a Southern Gas Corridor and effective liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies for Europe

Last February, the Energy Council adopted conclusions on the Commission's communication "Second Strategic Energy Review - an EU energy security and solidarity action plan". It was agreed to consider the EU energy security of utmost importance, and that a guarantee of the independence of the European Union in this key sector would be a connected internal energy market, with stable supplies, diversified sources and more renewable energies.

The rapid development of infrastructure for the EU's energy needs, notably in the gas sector, will be enhanced in order to encourage diversity of energy sources and to ensure energy independence.

In this regard the EU will also promote negotiations with third countries, especially **with gas-producing countries in the Caspian Sea region** and countries to the south of the Mediterranean.

As regards the **European Parliament**, in February 2009 it adopted a report on the 'Second Strategic Energy Review'. The Report set out wide-ranging recommendations for the EU's future energy policy, calling for mandatory emergency action plans in case of gas supply shortages, more grid interconnections among Member States, a specific road -map for investments in nuclear energy, and new climate targets to be achieved by 2050, including cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80%. The European Parliament strongly believes that reducing energy consumption is an absolute priority with a view to achieving sustainable development, innovation, job creation and competitiveness objectives. It calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the 20% energy saving target by 2020 legally binding on Member States and to propose and implement consistent measures to secure its achievement. Moreover, it calls on the EU and the Member States to adopt as objectives a 35% improvement in energy efficiency and a 60% share of renewable energy by 2050. The Commission is also called upon to support all planned investments in new import energy infrastructure and renewable energy technologies.

3.3 RENEWABLE ENERGIES - THE WIND ENERGY POTENTIAL⁷

Currently, Turkey has few indigenous energy resources and has to import around 65% of primary energy to meet its large and still increasing needs.

In May 2005, Turkey adopted a renewable energy law, which allowed the country to begin tapping its huge potential. The text created the framework for the development of renewable energy sources in Turkey, aiming to reduce investment risks, providing for guaranteed access to the grid, establishing a feed-in tariff and introducing the security of 10 year power purchase agreements linked to a fixed price. The law is also intended to help Turkey to meet its increasing electricity consumption (around 8-8.5% per year).

In 2008 - nominated year of energy efficiency - the government drew up an action plan on "energy efficiency movement", even if no national targets have been set for energy efficiency and renewable energy.⁸

Among the available renewable options, Turkey is one of the windiest countries in Europe and it has, therefore, excellent wind energy potential⁹. The OECD estimates that Turkey has a technical potential for 160 TWh of power to come from the wind, much more than the country's total demand.

In November 2008, the Turkish government announced investment plans to promote wind energy and allow the development of up to 20,000 MW of wind by 2020. The system operators, therefore, are working on plans to allow the network to absorb that amount of power into the grid.

3.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

Last February Turkey ratified the Kyoto Protocol, a UN-led pact to combat global warming that will have consequences on many sectors from transportation to agriculture and heating to industry in order to reduce carbon emissions.

⁷ Wind Directions, March 2009

⁸ Turkey 2008 Progress report, European Commission

⁹ The country has excellent wind sites in the west and south, as well as to the east of Ankara.

The government postponed signing it for more than a decade because of concerns about the cost to the economy, but after intense pressure from both the European Union and international environmental organizations, the Parliament finally ratified it.

However, signing the Kyoto Protocol does not put an additional burden on Turkey until 2012 not being included among the 39 countries that are obliged to reduce their greenhouse emissions to 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012.

The ratification gave Turkey the right to get involved in climate change decisions after 2012 becoming now a partner in the "processes of constructing a global climate change regime" - which it had missed in the 1990s.

Turkey is the country that has recorded the fastest increase in greenhouse gases since 1990 and, therefore, it is called to shoulder the responsibility that comes with being the world's 17th biggest economy as well as ranking 23rd among the polluters. However, environment is not yet part of the everyday political language, and even now there are a few deputies who seem concerned about global warming; most politicians remain largely indifferent to the issue. There have been positive legislative changes in recent years, a commitment to use energy more productively and a welcome increase in wind energy, but in sharp contrast with the recent decision to ratify Kyoto, 47 new coal power plants are currently being planned or are under construction. If these plans become a reality, Turkey's total emissions will increase by 50 percent in the coming few years.

According to the OECD's 2008 report¹⁰ "Environmental Performance Review of Turkey", Turkey still needs to deal with many environmental challenges, and pollution from agriculture is still a major problem.

The OECD report similarly encouraged Turkey to intensify its efforts in the management of its air, water and natural assets and the development of environmental infrastructure. Despite work that has been done, Turkey's rich biodiversity is under threat.

The report said Turkey was experiencing increasing environmental pressure from the energy, industry, agriculture, transport and tourism industries, resulting in environmental challenges concerning air quality, water services and resources, waste management, soil erosion, nature protection and marine issues.

Pollution needed to be reduced, the transportation system should be shifted from land to other modes of transport, including railways, pollution from agriculture should be reduced, forestation efforts should continue and the inventory of endangered species should be completed, the report said.

A 2008 international assessment of countries' performance in fighting climate change has placed Turkey 36th on a list of 57 countries, OECD experts also said that developing renewable energy sources, Turkey would send a clear message on its efforts about tackling global warming.

¹⁰ OECD Environmental Performance Reviews Programme, Turkey, 2008

4. EU-TURKISH RELATIONS: MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 ERDOGAN'S VISIT TO THE EU

Beginning of this year, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (RTE) made his first visit to Brussels for four years. At a briefing organized by the European Policy Centre (EPC) on 19 January, the Premier gave a speech covering a wide range of issues, focusing in particular on Gaza, energy and Turkey's relationship with the EU.

RTE was very critical of Israel, considering it to be in breach of international law, having ignored about a hundred UNSC resolutions, as well as the Geneva Convention. He expressed sadness and disappointment at the conflict in Gaza and called Israeli actions "unacceptable". However, he maintained that hatred or revenge between states is not possible and that Turkey would have continued to negotiate with all the involved parties.

On his party's achievements (*The Justice and Development Party*, AKP, in power since 2002), he defended its record, citing economic statistics and overall stability. Turkey's GDP has risen considerably, while inflation and interest rates have been lowered to a manageable level. According to RTE, Turkey will be "little affected" by the financial crisis.

On Turkey's EU accession process, RTE spoke of two important elections in 2007, referring to the presidential and parliamentary elections, both of which the AKP won. He said that they had resulted in a "more powerful and healthy democracy". He also expressed scepticism at the claims that the reform process had slowed down. Erdoğan mentioned the *2008 National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis*, which was adopted by Turkey at the end of December 2008. He further considered Turkey's decision to change the head negotiator for EU-accession as representing a relaunch of the negotiations.¹¹ Full EU - membership remains Turkey's only option. "There are no alternatives." He cited over 30 new laws which have recently been adopted, including a reworking of Article 301 along European lines, as well as a reform of the Law on Foundations.¹²

The year 2009, according to Erdoğan, will constitute a "leap forward" in Turkey-EU relations. There are currently trade union laws being addressed in Parliament, as well as the Action plan for SE-Anatolia (irrigation and agriculture projects, as well as projects aiming to raise health and education standards).¹³ Also, a national Kurdish language channel has been opened (TRT-6). The Prime Minister emphasized this point, adding that Farsi and Arabic language channels were soon to be opened, as well.

RTE took up the energy issue in what can be described as a threatening manner, pointing out that if the chapter on energy cooperation were to be blocked by Cyprus or another MS, then Turkey's part in the Nabucco -project¹⁴ would have to be "reconsidered".

¹¹ On 7 January Foreign Minister Ali Babacan handed over his post as chief EU negotiator to Egemen Bağış, deputy chairman of the AKP.

¹² Article 301 of the Turkish penal code has been used to prosecute people for expressing opinions which may be constituted as "insulting Turkishness".

¹³ Over 30 reform-related laws are currently pending.

¹⁴ The Nabucco pipeline is a planned natural gas pipeline that will transport Caspian natural gas from Turkey to Austria via Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. It will run from Erzurum in Turkey to Baumgarten an der March, a major natural gas hub in Austria. This pipeline is a diversion from the current methods of importing natural gas solely from Russia.

Nonetheless, following his meeting with Commission President Barroso, Erdogan ruled out a threat, saying that Turkey would not “use energy as a weapon”.

President Barroso emphasized areas of mutual cooperation and highlighted Turkey’s strategic position in particular. He pointed to the need for a good partnership in energy security between Turkey and the EU and praised Turkey’s constructive role in Middle Eastern diplomacy¹⁵.

In a recent conference¹⁶ the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, said that the EU can assist in turning Turkey into an energy crossroads but it would also be necessary to introduce a number of changes into its energy policy. Such changes are for instance the introduction of clear and enforceable rules on gas transmission, the liberalisation of Turkey's domestic market at least for gas and the increase of investment on infrastructure, most importantly in gas storage. He also renewed once more the European Union’s standing invitation to Turkey to join the European Energy Community. The Energy Community Treaty provides for an ideal framework for deepening regional energy co-operation.

As regards Turkey's EU accession process, and in particular the Energy Chapter, he said that even if it has not been possible to establish a consensus among all EU Member States for its opening, this should not prevent the further development of energy relations with the EU. On the contrary, deepened energy cooperation could contribute to the establishment of an environment conducive to opening negotiations on the Energy Chapter.

4.2 EP RESOLUTION ON TURKEY PROGRESS REPORT 2008

On 12 March 2009 members adopted the draft for Parliament's annual resolution on Turkey's progress towards accession. Members noted with concern the "continuous slowdown of the reform process" in Turkey, for the third consecutive year, and called on the Turkish government "to prove its political will to continue the reform process" to which it committed itself in 2005.

Turkey has so far opened negotiations on only 10 of the 35 negotiating chapters with the EU. In 2008 only four new chapters were opened, of which two were under the French presidency (free movement of capital and information society and media). Only one chapter (science and research) has been provisionally closed since talks began in October 2005.

Regarding **human rights issues**, the resolution highlights that **democratic reforms** did not go far enough. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are still not fully protected in Turkey, and the amendment to Article 301 of the Penal Code, adopted in April 2008, does not go far enough as people continue to be prosecuted for expressing non-violent opinions.

¹⁵ European officials constantly remind Turkey that its strategic position alone will not suffice to bring it full membership. Nonetheless, at a time when the EU is pressed hard in energy security, Turkey’s geography apparently does pay some dividends. Responding to Erdogan’s call for help against the EU members blocking negotiations, Barroso promised his full support to start talks on the frozen chapters moving again.

¹⁶ "Turkey as an energy hub for Europe: prospects and challenges", European Policy Centre, Brussels, 4 March 2009.

More in general, Members have called on the Turkish government to resume work on a new civilian constitution.

With reference to neighbour relations, the European Parliament urged Turkey to withdraw military forces from **Cyprus** in order to facilitate the negotiating between the leaders of the two communities in the island. The text stressed the need to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question based on UN Security Council resolutions and the principles on which the EU is founded. The MEPs deplored the fact that the EC-Turkey customs union and its additional protocol have not yet been implemented fully by the Turkish government. They also pointed out that the non-fulfilment of Turkey's commitments by December 2009 "may further seriously affect the process of negotiations"¹⁷.

MEPs also asked for a lasting settlement of the **Kurdish issue**. This will require better economic and social integration of citizens of Kurdish origin, including offering them real opportunities to learn Kurdish in the public and private schooling system and to use it in broadcasting, in daily life and in access to public services. MEPs welcome the launch of a Kurdish language television channel on 1 January 2009

The text of resolution also called on Turkey to fully support the **Nabucco pipeline project**, which is a European priority project, encouraging Turkey to join the European Energy Community as a full member, so as to strengthen energy cooperation between the EU and Turkey.

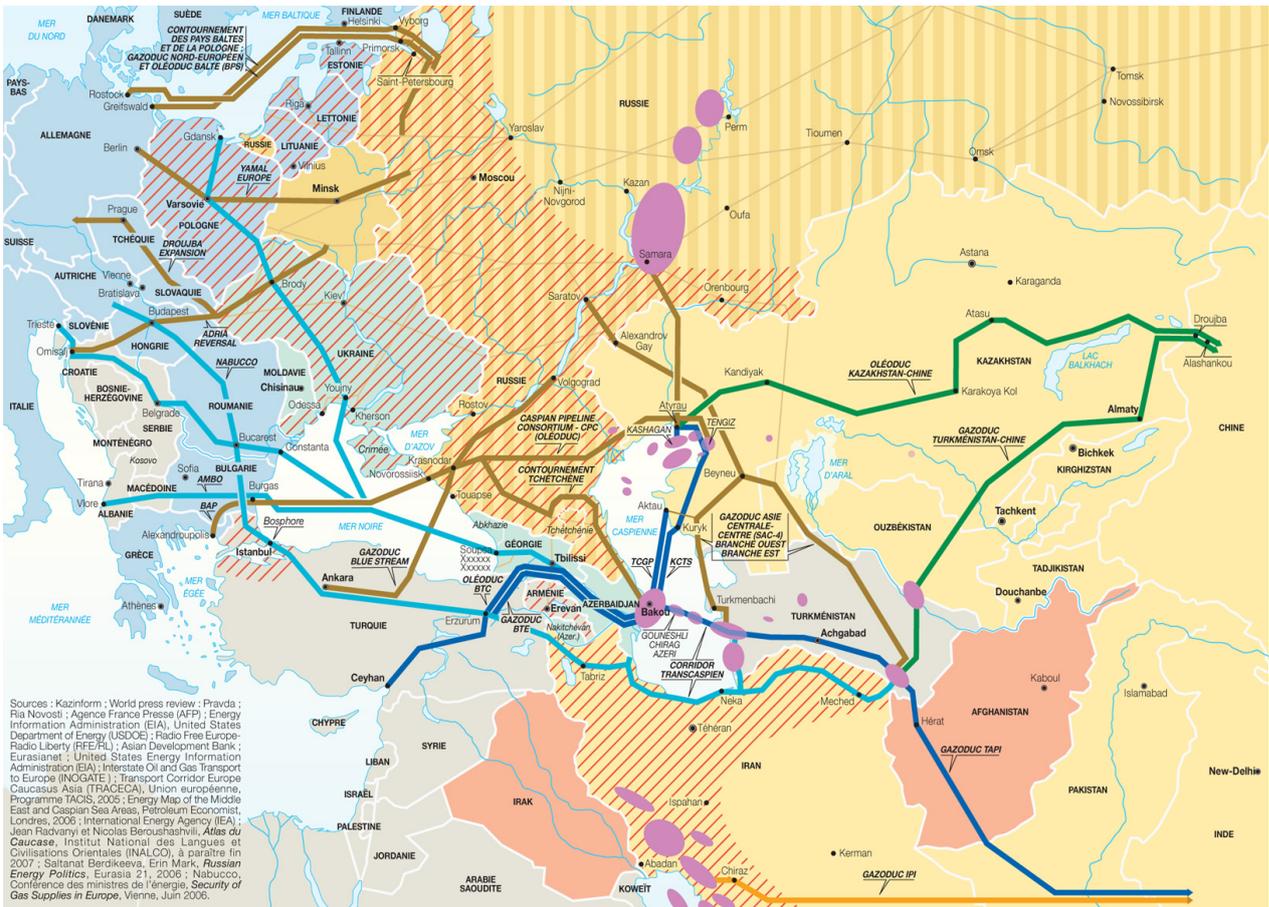
The resolution expresses support to Turkey's efforts to contribute to a solution for many of the world's crisis regions, in particular in the Middle East and the South Caucasus, notably following the conflict between Russia and Georgia. It called for closer consultations with Turkey in the formulation of European defence policies and a reference to Ankara's efforts to create a regional mechanism for consultation in the south Caucasus towards the resolution of main conflicts (Ankara proposed the establishment of a stability platform for the Caucasus after a brief Russian-Georgian war in August over a dispute in the breakaway region of South Ossetia).

¹⁷ Paragraphe 32 of the Resolution - see Annex II

ANNEX 1 (Maps)



Turkey and surroundings, EIU 2007



Alliances économiques

Pays membres

- du GUAM : Géorgie, Ukraine, Azerbaïdjan, Moldavie (pro-occidental)
- de l'Union européenne
- de l'OCS (Organisation de coopération de Shanghai)
- de l'Union Russie-Biélorussie
- à la fois de l'OCS et de l'Union Russie-Biélorussie

« Guerre des tubes »

- Principaux gisements de pétrole et de gaz

Construction ou de rénovation de gazoducs et d'oléoducs : grands projets soutenus par

- la Chine
- la Russie
- les Etats-Unis
- l'Europe
- l'Iran
- Principaux réseaux de pipelines des pays de l'ex-Union soviétique

Par où passer ? : géopolitique des « contournements »

- Pays dans lesquels la majeure partie du territoire échappe au contrôle de l'Etat et où la sécurité des tubes ne peut être assurée

Territoires à éviter - selon les différents acteurs du « grand jeu » pour l'évacuation du gaz et des hydrocarbures des zones d'extractors vers les marchés (Etats-Unis, Europe, Chine et Japon) :

Les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne cherchent à tout prix des voies d'approvisionnement à travers le Caucase sud, la mer Noire, la Turquie pour éviter les territoires russe et iranien (Inéanmoins, les européens soutiennent toujours un projet de gazoduc - route sud - traversant le nord de l'Iran).

La Russie cherche à s'appropriier - jusqu'ici sans succès - les réseaux de gazoducs et oléoducs des pays de transit (Géorgie, Ukraine, Biélorussie, Hongrie et Pologne). Elle a signé, le 12 mai 2007, un accord avec le Turkménistan, le Kazakhstan et l'Ouzbékistan pour la rénovation du gazoduc SAC-4, ce qui met à mal les projets concurrents des occidentaux. Par ailleurs, elle a mis en service un oléoduc de contournement pour éviter le territoire tchétchène. Enfin, en soutenant d'une part le projet de gazoduc et d'oléoduc à travers la mer Baltique (accès direct au marché allemand), et d'autre part l'oléoduc Burgas-Alexandroupolis pour éviter d'utiliser le détroit du Bosphore, la Russie poursuit à court terme disqualifier l'Ukraine comme pays de transit, ainsi que la Pologne et les Pays baltes qui ont d'ailleurs décrit les projets russes en mer baltique comme la *version énergétique du pacte germano-soviétique de 1939*.

L'Azerbaïdjan impose le contournement de l'Arménie voisine avec laquelle il est toujours en conflit.

Sources : Kazinform ; World press review ; Pravda ; Ria Novosti ; Agence France Presse (AFP) ; Energy Information Administration (EIA), United States Department of Energy (USDOE) ; Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) ; Asian Development Bank ; Eurasianet ; United States Energy Information Administration (EIA) ; Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE) ; Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) ; Union européenne, Programme TACIS, 2005 ; Energy Map of the Middle East and Caspian Sea Areas, Petroleum Economist, Londres, 2006 ; International Energy Agency (IEA) ; Jean Padoyari et Nicolas Beroussashvili, *Atlas du Caucase*, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), à paraître fin 2007 ; Saitanik Berdieeva, Erin Mark, *Russian Energy Politics*, Eurasia 21, 2006 ; Nabucco, Conférence des ministres de l'énergie, Security of Gas Supplies in Europe, Vienne, Juin 2006.

<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cartes/IMG/jpg/artoff14891.jpg>

ANNEX 2 (EP resolution on Turkey progress report)

P6_TA-PROV(2009)0134

Turkey: progress report 2008

European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2009 on Turkey's progress report 2008

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Turkey 2008 Progress Report published by the Commission on 5 November 2008 (SEC(2008)2699),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions of 27 September 2006 on Turkey's progress towards accession¹⁸, of 24 October 2007 on EU-Turkey relations¹⁹ and of 21 May 2008 on Turkey's 2007 progress report²⁰,
 - having regard to the Negotiating Framework for Turkey, approved on 3 October 2005,
 - having regard to Council Decision 2008/157/EC of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey²¹ ('the Accession Partnership'), as well as to the previous Council decisions on the Accession Partnership of 2001, 2003 and 2006,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas accession negotiations with Turkey were opened on 3 October 2005 after approval by the Council of the Negotiating Framework, and whereas the opening of those negotiations was the starting-point for a long-lasting and open-ended process,
- B. whereas Turkey has committed itself to reforms, good neighbourly relations and progressive alignment with the EU, and whereas these efforts should be viewed as an opportunity for Turkey itself to further modernise,
- C. whereas full compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria and EU integration capacity, in accordance with the conclusions of the December 2006 European Council meeting, remain the basis for accession to the EU, which is a community based on shared values,
- D. whereas the Commission concluded that 2008 had been marked by strong political tensions, and that the Turkish government had not, despite its strong mandate, put forward a consistent and comprehensive programme of political reforms,

¹⁸ OJ C 306 E, 15.12.2006, p. 284.

¹⁹ OJ C 263 E, 16.10.2008, p. 452.

²⁰ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2008)0224.

²¹ OJ L 51, 26.02.2008, p. 4.

- E. whereas Turkey has still not implemented the provisions stemming from the EC-Turkey Association Agreement and the Additional Protocol thereto,
- F. whereas four negotiating chapters were opened in 2008,
1. Is concerned to see in Turkey, for the third consecutive year, a continuous slowdown of the reform process, and calls on the Turkish government to prove its political will to continue the reform process to which it committed itself in 2005; stresses that such modernisation is first and foremost in Turkey's own interest and for the benefit of Turkish society as a whole;
 2. Is concerned by the ongoing polarisation within Turkish society and between the main political parties, which has deepened in the course of 2008 and has negatively affected the functioning of the political institutions and the process of reforms;
 3. Stresses that political reforms are at the heart of the reform process, and welcomes the fact that the Turkish government prepared and approved the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis;
 4. Urges the leaders of the political parties to seriously seek dialogue and to agree, in a spirit of compromise, on a reform agenda for the modernisation of Turkey towards a stable, democratic, pluralist, secular and prosperous society, guided by respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and based on the rule of law;

I. Fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria

Democracy and the rule of law

5. Regrets that the initial effort to reform comprehensively the constitution resulted in dispute over the headscarf issue and generated further polarisation of society; calls on the Turkish government to resume its work on a new, civilian constitution which would place the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at its core, and urges the government to ensure that political parties and civil society, as well as ethnic and religious minorities, are closely involved in this constitutive process;
6. Is concerned by the closure cases opened in 2008 against two parliamentary parties, especially the case still pending against the Democratic Society Party (DTP); emphasises the need to amend, as a matter of priority, the legislation on political parties so as to bring it fully into line with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the recommendations of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission;
7. Calls on the Turkish authorities to take all necessary steps to allow all parties taking part in elections to be represented within the electoral commission;
8. Regrets that no progress has been made on establishing full systematic civilian supervisory functions over the military and on strengthening the parliamentary oversight of military and defence policy;
9. Notes the progress made with regard to the development of a judicial reform strategy; points out, however, the urgent need for further systematic efforts to

enhance the impartiality and professionalism of the judiciary, and to ensure that members of the judiciary refrain from interfering in political debate and that they respect the standards of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR);

10. Regrets that no progress has been made on establishing the Ombudsman's office; takes note of the negative decision of the Constitutional Court on the Ombudsman Law, and urges the Turkish government to reintroduce as soon as possible the necessary legislation to establish this office, as supported by both the government and the parliament in the past;
11. Regrets that the Turkish government has not presented any comprehensive anti-corruption strategy; underlines the need to strengthen parliamentary oversight over public expenditure and the need for new legislation in respect of the Court of Auditors;
12. Welcomes the beginning of the trial against those accused of being members of the Ergenekon criminal organisation; encourages the authorities to continue investigations and to fully uncover the organisation's networks which reach into the state structures; is concerned about reports regarding the treatment of defendants in this case; urges the Turkish authorities to provide them with a fair trial and to adhere strictly to the principles of the rule of law;

Human rights and respect for, and protection of, minorities

13. Regrets that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are still not fully protected in Turkey; is of the view that freedom of the press in a democratic, pluralistic society is served neither by frequent website bans nor by pressures on and lawsuits against critical press; is also of the opinion that the amendment to Article 301 of the Penal Code, adopted in April 2008, was not sufficient, as people continue to be prosecuted for expressing non-violent opinions on the basis of this as well as of other articles of the Penal Code, the Anti-Terror Law or the Press Law, such as the 1995 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought laureate Leyla Zana; reiterates that the repeal of Article 301 as well as a fundamental reform of the Penal Code and of other laws used to arbitrarily restrict non-violent opinions is needed, so as to ensure that freedom of expression is fully respected in line with ECHR standards;
14. Welcomes the apologies offered by the Minister of Justice, Mehmet Ali Sahin, on behalf of the government to the family of Engin Ceber, who died in prison as a consequence of abuse; joins the Human Rights Committee of the Turkish Parliament in its concern over the failure of the judiciary to prosecute cases of torture and ill-treatment, the number of which is growing; calls on the Turkish government to undertake further systematic efforts to eliminate torture and ill-treatment, inside and outside official places of detention, and to end the culture of impunity; stresses in this regard that ratification and implementation of the Optional Protocol of the UN Convention against Torture would increase considerably the credibility of these efforts; is also concerned about excessive use of police force in dealing with public demonstrations;
15. Welcomes the work done by the Human Rights Investigation Committee of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in its investigation of torture and ill-treatment in

prisons and of the murder of journalist Hrant Dink; urges the Turkish authorities to follow up fully the findings of the Committee's reports, as well as the findings of the report of the Prime Ministerial Inspection Board; also takes the view that the hypothesis of Ergenekon's involvement should be taken more seriously when considering other unsolved cases, such as the murder of Hrant Dink;

16. Welcomes the adoption in February 2008 of the Law on Foundations and appreciates the Commission's assessment that the Law on Foundations addresses a number of outstanding property-related issues concerning non-Muslim communities; urges the Turkish government to ensure that the law is implemented in line with ECtHR case-law, and to tackle the so far unresolved issue of properties seized and sold to third parties as well as that of properties of foundations fused before the adoption of the new legislation;
17. Reiterates that a legal framework developed in line with ECtHR case-law is still needed so as to enable all religious communities to function without undue constraints, in particular as regards their legal status, training of clergy, election of their hierarchy, religious education and the construction of places of worship; encourages Turkish authorities, all political parties, civil society and the communities concerned to engage in creating an environment conducive to full respect for freedom of religion in practice; reiterates its call for the immediate re-opening of the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary and the public use of the ecclesiastical title of the Ecumenical Patriarch; welcomes the recent initiatives by the government and its ongoing talks between the government and Alevi leaders on long-standing issues, such as Alevi places of worship and the setting-up of a memorial commemorating the Sivas massacre, and calls on the Turkish government to address their concerns without delay and to make state-run courses on religion non-compulsory; regrets the planned expropriation of the Syriac Orthodox Monastery of St Gabriel in Tur Abdin and the court procedures against representatives of the monastery;
18. Calls on the Turkish government to launch as a matter of priority a political initiative favouring a lasting settlement of the Kurdish issue, which initiative needs to address the economic and social opportunities of citizens of Kurdish origin, and to tangibly improve their cultural rights, including real possibilities to learn Kurdish within the public and private schooling system and to use it in broadcasting and in access to public services, and to allow elected officials to use a second language apart from Turkish in communicating with their constituents; welcomes the start of a 24-hour public television channel in the Kurdish language from 1 January 2009;
19. Condemns the violence perpetrated by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and other terrorist groups on Turkish soil; reiterates its solidarity with Turkey in the fight against terrorism and once again calls on the PKK to declare and respect an immediate and unconditional ceasefire;
20. Urges the DTP and all its elected members to distance themselves clearly from the terrorist PKK and from its use of violence, and appeals to all parties to contribute to a solution that enhances the stability, prosperity and integrity of the Turkish state;

21. Notes that the Turkish government has decided to complete the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) for the development of the south-east of Turkey; points, however, to its social, ecological, cultural and geopolitical consequences, including those on the water supplies of the neighbouring countries, Iraq and Syria, and calls on the government to take these issues fully into consideration, to protect the rights of the population affected and to ensure close cooperation with local and regional authorities as it continues its work on the plan; calls on the Commission to present a study on the GAP and its consequences;
22. Reiterates that European values of pluralism and diversity incorporate respect for a far wider definition of minorities, on the basis of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), than that adopted by Turkey; is concerned about continuing hostility and violence against minorities; is concerned that Turkey has made no progress on ensuring cultural diversity and promoting respect for, and protection of, minorities in accordance with ECHR standards; urges the Turkish government to start the overdue dialogue with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on issues such as the participation of minorities in public life and broadcasting in minority languages;
23. Calls on the Turkish government to take action against organisations and groups which stir up hostility against minorities and to protect all those who are threatened and fear for their lives, while making sustained efforts to create an environment conducive to full respect of fundamental human rights and freedoms;
24. Calls on the Turkish government to seek solutions to preserve the bicultural character of the Turkish islands Gökçeada (Imvros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos), and to address the problems encountered by members of the Greek minority with regard to their education and property rights;
25. Welcomes the establishment of the ‘Women-Men Equal Opportunities Commission’ in the Turkish Parliament; welcomes the Commission’s assessment that the legal framework guaranteeing women’s rights and gender equality is broadly in place; urges, however, the Turkish government to ensure that it is implemented so as to have a positive effect on the situation of women in Turkey; points to upcoming local elections as an opportunity to remedy the low representation of women in politics;
26. Is concerned that the number of reported so-called ‘honour killings’ is increasing in Turkey, and calls on the Turkish authorities and civil society to intensify their efforts to prevent these killings, domestic violence and forced marriages; welcomes the increase in the number of shelters, but calls urgently for effective and sustainable policies on budgetary and staffing matters, and for support for women and their children after they leave the shelters; asks the Turkish government to combat the trafficking of women in close cooperation with the Member States;
27. Welcomes the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeals not to uphold the decision banning the interest group Lambda Istanbul; urges the government to ensure that equality regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation is guaranteed;

Existence of a functioning market economy

28. Welcomes the Commission's assessment classifying Turkey as a functioning market economy;
29. Notes that although economic growth in Turkey slowed in 2008, its overall economic performance demonstrated that the foundations and resilience of the Turkish economy are substantially stronger than some years ago; notes that the impact of the global financial crisis on the Turkish banking system has remained limited so far, but is concerned about the effect of the crisis on economic growth; asks the Commission to report specifically on the consequences of the crisis for the Turkish economy; encourages the Turkish government to continue its close cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and other international and European financial institutions;

Ability to take on the obligations of membership

30. Regrets that a number of commitments made by Turkey within the EC-Turkey customs union remain unfulfilled, distorting bilateral trade relations;
31. Notes that the customs union obliges Turkey to negotiate and conclude free trade agreements (FTAs) with third countries with which the EU has concluded FTAs; calls on the Council and the Commission to include Turkey in the impact assessment studies of prospective FTAs between the EU and third countries and to further strengthen the transmission of information on the EU's position and the state of play of the FTA negotiations;
32. Regrets that the EC-Turkey Association Agreement and the Additional Protocol thereto have not yet been implemented fully by the Turkish government; recalls that the non-fulfilment of Turkey's commitments by December 2009 may further seriously affect the process of negotiations; invites the Council to continue to follow up and review progress made on the issues covered by the declaration of the Community and its Member States of 21 September 2005 in accordance with its conclusions of 11 December 2006;
33. Commends Turkey on its progress in the field of education and culture; reiterates that providing access to education for all is not just a good strategy for the inclusion of minorities but also the basis for a prosperous and modern society; views the plan to open departments for Armenian and Kurdish studies at Turkish universities as a sign of goodwill that needs to be followed up by concrete action;

II. Enhancing prosperity

Enhancing social cohesion and prosperity

34. Points out that a socially oriented market economy is the basis for a socially coherent society and one of the keys to stability and prosperity; welcomes in this regard the adoption of the Social Insurance and General Health Insurance Law as a contribution to strengthening the social cohesion of Turkish society;
35. Also welcomes the adoption of the employment package in May 2008 by the Turkish Parliament, aimed at promoting job opportunities for women, young people and people with disabilities; is concerned, however, about the ongoing weakness of the employment market, which engages only 43% of the working-age population, and is particularly worried about the decreasing overall rate of

employment of women; encourages the Turkish government to take further action to tackle the problem of the informal economy;

36. Reiterates its calls for the Turkish government to take further tangible steps to empower women in the political, economic and social sector, through, for instance, temporary measures to increase their active involvement in politics; points out the need to take effective measures to increase women's access to education, which regrettably still remains the lowest among OECD countries;
37. Takes note of the progress made in the area of health protection; is concerned, however, that no progress can be reported on mental health; urges the Turkish authorities to make more resources available for mental health care, and to find a solution to the problem of inadequate general medical care and treatment of people with mental disabilities in mental health hospitals and rehabilitation centres; calls for the treatment of children and adults with disabilities in institutions to fully respect their rights;
38. Regrets that no progress has been made on amending the legislation on trade union rights, and calls on the Turkish Parliament to adopt a new law on trade unions that is in line with the International Labour Organization conventions; regrets that, despite the fact that regulations on union formation and membership were eased in 2004, trade union activities remain subject to constraints; calls on the Turkish authorities to find a solution, together with the trade unions, that enables peaceful demonstrations to take place on 1 May on Taksim Square in Istanbul, respecting the freedom of association;
39. Points, once again, to the need to address the problem of development disparities among Turkish regions and between rural and urban areas, which is a major obstacle to the prosperity of Turkish society; regrets, therefore, that no comprehensive strategy has so far been presented by the Turkish government to tackle this problem, and is disappointed that the Commission has not presented any information about the EU's contribution under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance to this strategic planning, as requested by Parliament in its above-mentioned resolution of 21 May 2008;

III. Building good neighbourly relations

40. Stresses the need for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question based on UN Security Council resolutions and on the principles on which the European Union is founded; welcomes the renewed commitment of both political leaders on both sides to a negotiated solution and supports the ongoing direct negotiations by the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus and will accept any agreement reached by them provided that it is in conformity with the principles on which the EU is founded, including the four fundamental freedoms, except for temporary transitional derogations, and that it is accepted after a referendum; calls on Turkey to facilitate a suitable climate for negotiations by withdrawing Turkish forces and allowing the two leaders to negotiate freely their country's future;
41. Calls on Turkey to comply with its obligations under international law, the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights on the Fourth Interstate Application by Cyprus against Turkey regarding investigations into the fate of missing persons; urges all the EU Member States to

call on Turkey to take appropriate action on what is mainly a humanitarian issue;

42. Encourages greater trans-border cooperation between local authorities, business people and other local partners with the neighbouring EU members Greece and Bulgaria;
43. Welcomes the communication and cooperation developed over the last year between Turkish and Iraqi authorities, including the contacts between Turkey and the Kurdish regional government in Northern Iraq; encourages those authorities to further intensify their cooperation, so as to ensure that terrorist attacks from Iraqi territory are prevented under Iraqi responsibility, to guarantee stability and to contribute to the economic development of the whole Turkish-Iraqi neighbourhood area; recalls its earlier appeals to the Turkish government to respect, when conducting anti-terrorist operations, Iraq's territorial integrity, human rights and the rule of law, and to make sure that civilian casualties are avoided;
44. Welcomes the visit of President Gül to Armenia in September 2008 following an invitation from President Sarkisian, and hopes that it will indeed foster a climate favourable to the normalisation of relations between their countries; calls on the Turkish government to re-open its border with Armenia and to restore full economic and political relations with Armenia; once again calls on the Turkish and Armenian governments to start a process of reconciliation, in respect of the present and the past, allowing for a frank and open discussion of past events; calls on the Commission to facilitate this reconciliation process;
45. Appreciates the continued efforts of the Turkish and Greek governments to improve bilateral relations; reiterates that the repeal of the *casus belli* declared by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1995 would provide important impetus for further improvement of those relations; recalls that Turkey has committed itself to good neighbourly relations and calls on the Turkish government to make serious and intensive efforts to resolve any outstanding dispute peacefully and in accordance with the UN Charter, other relevant international conventions and bilateral agreements and obligations;

IV. Strengthening EU-Turkey bilateral cooperation

46. Calls upon the Council to consider making progress on opening of negotiations on chapters in which Turkey, according to the Commission's assessment, has fulfilled the conditions for opening;
47. Recognises Turkey's ambition of becoming a Eurasian energy hub and the role it can play in contributing to Europe's energy security; commends the progress achieved by Turkey in the field of energy; recalls its above-mentioned resolution of 24 October 2007 supporting the opening of negotiations on this chapter and regrets that no agreement has been reached on this in the Council; encourages Turkey to join the European Energy Community as a full member, so as to strengthen energy cooperation between the EU and Turkey, which can benefit all parties involved; calls on Turkey to fully support the Nabucco pipeline project, which is a European priority project, and expects that an inter-governmental agreement aimed at bringing the pipeline into operation will be concluded soon;
48. Takes note of the progress made in the area of migration and asylum; regrets,

however, that Turkey has not, since December 2006, resumed the negotiations on a readmission agreement with the EC, the signing of which is a condition for a visa facilitation agreement; and calls on the Turkish government to intensify its cooperation with the EU on migration management, including through proper implementation of the existing bilateral readmission agreements and protocols with Member States; notes that no development can be reported on alignment with EU visa lists; calls on the Commission and the Turkish government to start negotiations on a visa facilitation agreement; urges the Member States to ease visa restrictions for bona fide travellers such as students, academics or businesspeople; calls for full respect of the human rights of asylum-seekers and refugees, including open and unrestricted access to all detention centres by the UN High Commission for Refugees;

49. Welcomes the launch in September 2008 of a new generation of projects aimed at enhancing the dialogue between civil society in Turkey and in the EU; asks the Commission to report on activities carried out within the framework of the EU-Turkey Civil Society Dialogue; reiterates its call on the Turkish government to involve civil society more closely in the reform process;
50. Notes that the Commission intends to provide impact assessments on only certain policy areas²²; urges the Commission to issue a more comprehensive impact study as a follow-up to the one presented in 2004, and to present it to Parliament without delay;
51. Asks the Turkish government and judicial authorities to cooperate better with EU Member States and authorities in criminal cases in which EU citizens and residents have been the victims of fraud, as in the case of the so-called "Green Funds" (Islamic investment funds based in Turkey) and in the case of "Deniz Feneri", a charity based in Germany;

Cooperation on international and global issues

52. Appreciates Turkey's efforts to contribute to a solution for many of the world's crisis regions, in particular in the Middle East and the South Caucasus, and also with regard to relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan; in particular, welcomes Turkey's active and constructive involvement, following the conflict between Russia and Georgia, aimed at promoting peace and stability in the South Caucasus, notably through its proposal for a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform; calls on the Council and the Commission to intensify cooperation with Turkey and to look for synergies in the EU's and Turkey's approach to these regions;
53. Congratulates Turkey on its election to the UN Security Council, and encourages the Turkish government to adopt an approach within the UN that is closely coordinated with the EU's position;
54. Welcomes the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by the Turkish parliament;
55. Welcomes Turkey's continuous contribution to European Security and Defence Policy and NATO operations; regrets, however, that the NATO-EU strategic cooperation extending beyond the "Berlin Plus" arrangements continues to be blocked by Turkey's objections, which has negative consequences for the

²² European Commission: Action taken on Parliament's non-legislative resolutions – May II 2008.

protection of the EU personnel deployed, and urges Turkey to set aside these objections as soon as possible; calls on the Council to consult Turkey, as one of the biggest suppliers of troops, in the planning and decision-making stages of the European Security and Defence Policy;

56. Calls on the Turkish government to sign and submit for ratification the Statute of the International Criminal Court, thus further increasing Turkey's contribution to, and engagement in, the global multilateral system;

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57. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the President of the European Court of Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Turkey.