

Brussels, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005

## Commission presents a rigorous draft framework for accession negotiations with Turkey

***Following the request of the European Council, the Commission today proposed to the EU Member States a rigorous negotiating framework for accession negotiations with Turkey. This document lays down the guiding principles and the procedures for the accession negotiations, in line with the conclusions of the European Council of December 2004 confirmed by the European Council on 17 June 2005. The negotiating framework shall be adopted by the Member States before the start of the negotiations. Taking into account the concerns of the citizens, the Commission today also proposed to launch a civil society dialogue between the EU Member States and the candidate countries<sup>1</sup>.***

The European Council decided that talks can start with Turkey on 3 October 2005 provided it brings into force six outstanding pieces of legislation. Turkey fulfilled this condition on 1 June 2005. Following its own commitment, Turkey is also expected, prior to the start of negotiations, to sign the protocol extending the Ankara Agreement to the ten new Member States.

Presenting the negotiating framework Commissioner Rehn said: *“It is in Europe’s interest to have a stable, democratic, prosperous Turkey that adopts and implements all EU values, policies and standards. The opening of the accession negotiations is a recognition of the reforms already achieved in Turkey. It gives this country a chance to demonstrate, through a fair and rigorous negotiation process, whether it is able to meet fully all the criteria required to join the EU. But we all know that it will be a long and difficult journey and we have to take into account the concerns of citizens.”*

### **What are the principles and the procedures of the negotiations?**

The shared objective of the negotiations is accession. These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand. While taking account of all Copenhagen criteria, if Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond.

The Commission calls on the Council to foster a debate and consensus among Europeans on the relationship between the EU and Turkey.

The fulfilment of the political criteria<sup>2</sup> is a precondition for the start of the negotiations. The Union expects Turkey to continue to fulfil these criteria and to improve its record throughout the negotiations. In case of a serious and persistent breach by Turkey of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on which the Union is founded, accession negotiations may be suspended.

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<sup>1</sup> [IP/05/805](#)

<sup>2</sup> Political criteria set by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, later enshrined in Article 6(1) of the Treaty on European Union and proclaimed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The negotiations will be based on Turkey's own merits and their pace will depend on Turkey's progress in meeting the 'Copenhagen criteria'.<sup>3</sup> In addition, commitment to good neighbourly relations, support for efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework, fulfilment of the obligations under the customs union will be required.

Turkey will have to adopt the rights and obligations of the European Union, and apply them by the time of accession, unless transitional arrangements are agreed. Long transitional measures, derogations, specific arrangements and permanently available safeguard clauses may also be considered.

### **How are accession negotiations conducted?**

EU legislation and standards are broken down into 35 chapters, and negotiations will be conducted chapter by chapter. The Union will also specify benchmarks for the provisional closure and, where appropriate, also for the opening of individual chapters.

The Commission will closely monitor the fulfilment of the commitments made by Turkey during the accession negotiations.

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<sup>3</sup> \*the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

\*the existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;

\*the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union and the administrative capacity to effectively apply and implement the *acquis communautaire*.

\*The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries.