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Eighth meeting of the Accession Conference at Ministerial level with Turkey
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The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference with Turkey at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels, following the start of the negotiations on 3 October 2005. The European Union delegation was headed by Carl Bildt, Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Turkish delegation was led by Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Egemen Bağış, Minister of State for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator and Veysel Eroğlu, Minister for Environment and Forestry.

The aim of the Conference was to open negotiations on Chapter 27 - Environment, thus advancing further the negotiating process. This chapter covers areas that are of crucial importance for Turkey's preparations in implementing European policies.

P R E S S

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For this chapter, and on the basis of the negotiating positions, the Union has closely examined Turkey's general state of preparedness. Taking into account Turkey's present state of preparations, and in line with the Council conclusions on 11 December 2006 - as well as on the understanding that Turkey will continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* - the EU underlined main issues regarding the closing benchmarks to be met by Turkey, namely that:

– Turkey has to fulfil its obligation of the full non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement;

– Turkey adopts legislation aimed at transposing the EU's horizontal and framework environmental legislation, including its transboundary aspects;

– Turkey adopts legislation aimed at transposing the acquis in the field of water quality, notably its Framework Water Protection Law; establishes River Basin Protection Action Plans; and makes further significant progress in legislative alignment in this sector by adopting implementing legislation;

– Turkey adopts legislation aimed at transposing the acquis in the field of industrial pollution control and risk management;

– Turkey continues its alignment with the acquis in the remaining sectors of this chapter, including nature protection and waste management, in line with the Plan for Setting up Necessary Administrative Capacities at National, Regional and Local Level and Required Financial Resources for Implementing the Environmental Acquis and demonstrates that it will be fully prepared to ensure the implementation and enforcement of the EU requirements at the date of accession;

– Turkey continues capacity building of the administrative bodies at all levels, including inspection services, in line with the Plan for Setting up Necessary Administrative Capacities at National, Regional and Local Level and Required Financial Resources for Implementing the Environmental Acquis, further improves coordination of work and demonstrates that all appropriate administrative structures will be in place in good time before accession to enable implementation and enforcement of the acquis in all sectors of this chapter.

In more general terms, the EU also underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common position with a view to ensuring Turkey's administrative capacity at al levels, including at the regional and local level, its capacity to complete legal alignment in all sectors under this chapter, as well as further progress in implementation.

In addition to all the information the EU may require for the negotiations in this chapter and which is to be provided to the Conference, the EU invited Turkey to provide regularly detailed written information to the Association Council on progress in the implementation of the *acquis*. Moreover, Turkey indicated that since the accession date cannot be foreseen at this stage, transitional period requests would be determined within the framework of the accession date set and progress achieved in the context of the overall negotiations. Turkey will therefore need to submit an updated Negotiating Position at a later stage. The EU will revisit its Common Position to incorporate new elements stemming from the updated Turkish Negotiating Position and to take into account developments in the *acquis*, including on tackling climate change.

Since the start of the negotiations, twelve chapters have been opened, of which one has been provisionally closed.