



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Brussels, 21 January 2014
EUCO 16/14

PRESSE 20
PR PCE 11

**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
after his meeting with Prime Minister of Turkey
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**

I am pleased to welcome Prime Minister Erdoğan to Brussels today and thereby return the hospitality he offered me during a productive visit to Ankara last May. In my bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan we discussed the political and economic situation in the European Union and in Turkey, the accession process, the Cyprus issue and our cooperation in international affairs and in the common neighbourhood.

Turkey and the European Union have common interests, large economic cooperation and profound relations between our people. That is why I find it important that Turkey and the European Union conduct regular talks on the highest political level.

At the end of last year we made progress. We opened the first chapter in over three years and we signed the readmission agreement. This demonstrates our will on moving forward. Now we must uphold the momentum and work towards further progress. I hope that we will see a speedy ratification of the readmission agreement and that we can go forward on the visa liberalisation roadmap.

Progress on reforms have taken place in Turkey during 2013. I encouraged Turkey to consolidate and implement reforms as well as finalise the democratisation package announced in September. Progress in accession negotiations and progress in political reforms in Turkey are two sides of the same coin. The European Union should remain the anchor for reforms in Turkey.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president>

EUCO 16/14

1
EN

In our talks we addressed the current developments in Turkey since 17 December. I stressed that Turkey as a candidate country is committed to respect the political criteria of accession, including the application of the rule of law and separation of powers. It is important not to backtrack on achievements and to assure that the judiciary is able to function without discrimination or preference, in a transparent and impartial manner and I welcome the further dialogue on this between Turkey and the European Union.

We discussed the Kurdish peace process and I encouraged the Prime Minister to pursue the efforts to end violence in the South East and bring peace to Turkey. This is the best chance in a generation to resolve a conflict that has claimed far too many lives. The European Union fully supports these efforts and we are ready to help in any way we can.

The Prime Minister and I also agreed on the urgent need to find a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus issue. It is in all our interests, and we encourage the parties to resume settlement talks as soon as possible.

For Europe, Turkey is a key foreign policy and security ally. Today we discussed together our growing foreign policy cooperation in our shared neighbourhood and in particular the crisis in Syria and the urgent need for a political solution. We shared concerns over the acute humanitarian situation in the country and the surrounding areas. The European Union remains the largest humanitarian donor to the Syrian crisis and I commended also Turkey's important humanitarian support to those fleeing violence across the border. We are both hoping that the meeting in Montreux tomorrow will result in the launching of a political process that will progress towards a peaceful settlement.

Let me once again thank Prime Minister Erdoğan for his visit. I look forward to continuing a fruitful cooperation with the aim to strengthen the relations between the European Union and Turkey on the basis of common values.
