

EPP Summit, 16 December 2004 (final)**Starting Accession Negotiations with Turkey**

In December 2002 the Copenhagen European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay on the basis of a report and recommendations by the European Commission, provided that Turkey fulfilled the political criteria as laid down by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993.

On 6 October 2004 the European Commission presented its latest progress report and stated that Turkey – upon the entry into force of six remaining pieces of legislation – fulfils the political criteria sufficiently to justify the opening of accession negotiations. The European Commission also completed a study on the impact of an accession of Turkey on the European Union, which was published but qualified by the Commission itself as not sufficiently thorough. In this study the Commission, inter alia, estimates the financial cost of an accession of Turkey to be between 16 and 28 billion € per year.

The EPP attaches the highest importance to fulfilment of the so called fourth Copenhagen criterion, according to which particular attention has to be paid to the Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration.

Based on the findings of the European Commission, the EPP specifically takes the following positions on the question of negotiations with Turkey:

1. The European Union and the EPP have a fundamental interest in continuing and deepening the decades old cooperation and partnership with Turkey. The enormous progress in the reform process and the changes in its society started or already achieved in Turkey during the last years represent an important and indispensable contribution to a further rapprochement and must be continued with intensity.
2. The EPP takes it as a matter of course that a candidate country maintains a standard of relations with all Member States which do not harm this process. It is therefore expected that Turkey will sign the protocol regarding the adaptation of the Ankara agreement, taking account of the accession of the ten Member States that joined the Union on 1 May 2004. Furthermore it is presumed that Turkey will normalize its relations with Cyprus. Other open questions and conflicts in Turkey's neighbourhood relations, particularly if they could have negative repercussions on negotiations, should be resolved as quickly as possible in the spirit of good neighbourliness and in accordance with the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

3. An effective instrument has to ensure that negotiations can be put on hold, suspended or broken off if serious problems arise regarding the Union's fundamental values or if important targets along the way are not met.
4. It is essential that Member States remain masters of the whole process.
5. The progress in negotiations should depend on progress in complete fulfilment and implementation of the Copenhagen criteria. In this context, special attention should be paid to the respect of human rights, the guarantee of religious freedom, the rights of women, children, people with disabilities and minorities, the stability of democratic institutions as well as the independence and the effectiveness of the judiciary and the system of legal protection. To this end a correspondingly strong monitoring system should be maintained during the whole process.
6. The financial aspects of accession of a candidate state must be allowed for in the applicable Financial Framework. Hence, accession negotiations yet to be opened with candidates whose accession could have substantial financial consequences requiring financial reform can only be concluded after the establishment of the Financial Framework for the period from 2014. Even beyond that, special regulations would be necessary in certain areas in case of a positive conclusion of negotiations, most notably concerning the freedom of movement of persons (migration, labour market), finances, agriculture or the acquisition of real estate in the form of very long transition periods, permanent safeguard clauses or even derogations.
7. Maintaining the Union's capacity to act as well as acting in accordance with its capacity to absorb new members is as important as the fulfilment of the accession criteria by Turkey. The accession negotiations are an open-ended process; the outcome cannot be guaranteed beforehand. Should it turn out in the course of negotiations that the accession perspective cannot be realized, full use should be made of the provisions of the – by then presumably having entered into force – Constitutional Treaty to ensure that Turkey will be firmly anchored in the European structures.