



**Republic of Turkey
MINISTRY FOR EU AFFAIRS**

**MINISTER FOR EU AFFAIRS AND CHIEF NEGOTIATOR
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TALKING POINTS FOR PRESS CONFERENCE**

**PHASE II OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR EU ACCESSION
(June 2015-June 2019)**

1 December 2014, Ankara

Distinguished Members of the Press,

- I am pleased to share with you today the “Second Phase of the National Action Plan for the EU Accession”, prepared in the framework of Turkey’s New European Union Strategy.
- On 30 October, I announced the Phase I of the Action Plan (November 2014 and June 2015) and provided information on our activities in the forthcoming period.
- We have made significant progress within a short period and have carried out intensive work. We have taken concrete steps to swiftly implement the “New European Union Strategy” since its announcement on 18 September.
- We started to implement the EU Communication Strategy within one month that I had announced on 16 October in Brussels. We have prepared the Phase I of the Action Plan (November 2014 and June 2015) and I shared it with the public on 30 October. Today, we will share the Phase II of the Action Plan (June 2015-June 2019) with the public.
- The first meeting of the Reform Action Group (RAG), which will take an active role in the preparation and implementation of political reforms, the main pillar of the European Union Strategy, was held in Ankara on 8 November 2014,

with the participation of the Minister of Justice, Minister of Interior, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and myself. The second meeting of RAG will be hosted by our Ministry in Istanbul in January 2015; and our Prime Minister will also participate in this meeting.

- In the RAG meeting, two areas have been determined for work in the forthcoming period. In addition to comprehensive work to eliminate the effects of 12 September period, work will also be carried out to prepare a separate package on the freedom of expression. This package is envisaged to be announced by the Prime Minister at the second meeting of RAG in January.
- The implementation of Phase I of the National Action Plan has clearly been started without delay. The Law on the Regulation of Electronic Commerce, on the agenda of the TGNA during the preparations for the Phase I of the National Action Plan, was published in the Official Gazette on 5 November. Furthermore, four communiqués were also published in the Official Gazette. These communiqués are important for updating accounting and auditing standards in accordance with EU legislation. Updating these standards is one of the closing benchmarks of Chapter 6 on Company Law.
- The Civil Society Dialogue Meeting was held on 26 November in Istanbul with the broad participation of civil society organizations. This meeting was held so as to benefit from the knowledge and experience of civil society organizations and seek solutions to current problems.
- This meeting was an environment of discussion and consultation eliciting contributions and recommendations from civil society organizations on the new EU Communication Strategy. A wide range of more than 400 civil society organizations, from universities, different faith groups, youth and women's organizations and disabled people's associations, participated in the meeting with approximately 2200 representatives. We will hold similar consultation meetings in other provinces as well.
- In addition, we have made efforts to develop constructive means of communication with the new high-level EU officials appointed following the European Parliament elections held in May. For this purpose, I have

intensified my visits abroad so as to set out Turkey's justified expectations and views regarding EU membership various platforms in a number of countries.

- I have visited Brussels four times since my appointment. I have met with twelve Commissioners from the new Commission until now, which took office on 1 November 2014. I met with the President of the European Parliament and the chairmen of the Parliamentary Groups in Strasbourg and Brussels. I also met with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the President of the Venice Commission.
- Furthermore, I have carried out official visits to Germany, France, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal and Sweden and I accompanied President Erdoğan during his visit to Estonia and Latvia. Thus, I met with the officials of countries that participate in the Troika, as well as Latvia and Luxembourg which will be participants as of 1 January.
- This work is a clear indication that Turkey's EU Strategy is swiftly being implemented through concrete steps.
- Today we will share Phase II of the National Action Plan, which sets out priorities for the alignment of primary and secondary legislation, as well as institutional capacity building and other relevant work, in the June 2015-June 2019 period.
- Following its approval by the Council of Ministers, Phase II of the National Action Plan that I will announce today has been conveyed to the European Commission. Commission has conveyed its views on the Action Plan to Turkey and confirmed that the Action Plan includes important arrangements for alignment with the EU acquis in many areas

Distinguished Members of the Press,

- Phase II of the National Action Plan is a roadmap that sets forth our priorities on the political reforms, as well as for sustaining the current socio- economic transformation, in the June 2015 - June 2019 period.

- I would like to particularly emphasize that the most important matter in Turkey's EU accession process is swiftly attaining EU standards. The National Action Plans are effective means to overcome delays in the negotiation process, by reaching in advance the level of preparedness to open and close the negotiation chapters as soon as the political obstacles are lifted.
- As in Phase I, Phase II of the National Action Plan clearly outlines the primary and secondary legislation that will be enacted for each negotiation chapter. Furthermore, the National Action Plan sets out in detail the corresponding legislative arrangement with reference to the EU acquis, the purpose, the stage of the preparations, the institution responsible for the legislative arrangement, as well a timetable for its publication.
- I would like to emphasize once again that, with the National Action Plan we will continue our disciplined approach to the enactment of legislation in the process of alignment with EU legislation.
- Furthermore, as stated by our Prime Minister, EU standards will be taken into account when carrying out reforms for protecting the rights and interests of our citizens in all other areas which have not been referred to in this Action Plan.
- The TGNA will naturally decide on the schedule for the enactment of the arrangements referred to in the Action Plan. We are fully confident that the TGNA will do the utmost for a timely enactment of these legislative arrangements despite its busy agenda.

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- The support of our citizens and the commitment of the TGNA are the driving forces for the implementation of the reforms. Within this framework, 277 laws and 1964 pieces of secondary legislation have been adopted in the past thirteen years; 15 laws and 142 pieces of secondary legislation were adopted in the previous year.
- Thus, we have taken many critical steps which have direct impact on our daily lives and Turkey has moved closer to the achievement of EU standards.

- The Phase II of the National Action Plan for the EU Accession, which we have shared with you today, is an indicator of Turkey's commitment to continue with the reforms introduced so far which have increased the welfare and living standards of our citizens.
- The enactment of 53 laws and 246 pieces of secondary legislation, as well as 136 institutional capacity-building initiatives, have been envisaged for the Phase II of the National Action Plan (June 2015-June 2019).
- I would like to give a few examples of these arrangements.
- I would like to emphasize that, as a part of the political reform process which is the first pillar of our EU Strategy, we will take important steps in the process of alignment with the EU acquis by enacting important laws and revising some of the laws which are already in force.
- For instance, with the "Law on Legal Aid to the Victims of Crime", the material injuries of the victims of crimes of violence will be compensated, psycho-social support will be provided to other victims of crime or advisory services will be made available within the framework of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- To give another example, "Law on the Establishment of a Border Security Organisation" will be published. The law aims to establish a professional border security organization which will operate at all border gates and along green and blue borders of Turkey. The enactment of this law will fulfil one of Turkey's obligations set forth in the Roadmap towards a Visa-Free Regime between Turkey and the EU.
- A number of arrangements to further serve our citizens in their daily lives will be introduced not only in the political area, but in nearly all areas of social life.
- A number of important arrangements are envisaged to be introduced regarding a wide range of product groups, such as weighing instruments, medical products, motor vehicles, cosmetics, medical devices and elevators.

- Within this scope, health and safety of the consumers will be more effectively protected. With the "Law on Product Safety and Technical Regulations", functioning of the product safety and the market surveillance systems in Turkey will be strengthened and improved.
- In addition, national measures to improve air quality through future arrangements in the air quality sector will be identified and our citizens will be provided with cleaner air through the application of more stringent air quality standards.
- The "Environmental Liability Law" will be published. Within the scope of preventing and recovery of environmental damage, this law provides that businesses responsible for environmental damage are financially responsible for the recovery of the damage and must pay the cost of the environmental damage that it has caused.
- In the areas of airline and railway transport, measures will be taken to provide for the rights of the disabled or the persons with decreased mobility, as well as to ensure these persons more comfortable travel.
- I would like to emphasize that the National Action Plan includes arrangements significant not only for the reform process but also the accession negotiations.
- For instance, the "Strategy for Freedom to Provide Services and Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications" will be prepared under Chapter 3 on Right of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services, and thus, one technical opening benchmark of the chapter will be met.
- With the enactment of the "Fisheries Law", an important step will be taken for alignment with EU Common Fisheries Policy and for ensuring sustainability in the sector.

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- As you see, the Phase II of the National Action Plan sets out important arrangements.

- I already stated this when announcing Phase I. I would like to emphasize this once again. Whereas Turkey needs to adopt new legislation to achieve EU standards, enacting new legislation is not sufficient. What is equally or even more important than enacting a law is its implementation. Laws, by-laws, and communiqués are meaningful only when they are effectively implemented.
- Public institutions assume great responsibility for the implementation of the legislation. However, this is indeed a social responsibility, a culture, and a life style. Thus, various segments of society and individuals in Turkey all have significant roles to play. The EU accession process can only be finalised with the participation and contributions of our people.

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- I would like to particularly underline that Turkey's perspective of full membership to the European Union is not a matter of circumstance, but is the objective of a lasting and strategic approach.
- The Turkish Government conveys a strong, sincere and resolute message to the European Union, even during a period of instability in our region that is a source of concern for the rest of the world. Turkey confidently progresses in the EU accession process while providing for higher standards for its citizens in all areas.
- We will continue to take appropriate and decisive steps to ensure stable economic growth, competitiveness in the global economy and the fair distribution of income, the creation of a knowledge society and the achievement of EU standards in all areas in a stronger Turkey.
- We will make all efforts for the full and timely implementation of the arrangements referred to in the National Action Plan and will closely monitor the necessary work.
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank all public institutions which contributed to the National Action Plan and all of my colleagues for their work.
- Thank you for your participation.