



FMA Bulletin

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FMA Annual Events

Malta Colloquy

Guest Writer: Egemen Bağış

EP to Campus 2012

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Cover. Martin Schulz, EP President, and Karin Junker, FMA Vice-President, during our annual Dinner on 5 December 2012. Picture © EP.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editorial Board would like to thank all those members who took the time to contribute to this issue of the FMA Bulletin. The next issue will be published in June 2013. Contributions are most welcome. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision to include an article lies with the FMA Editorial Board and, in principle, contributions from members, who are not up to date with the payment of the membership fee, are not retained.

The FMA Bulletin is produced for the members so please have your say. We need your suggestions and opinions. Please consider an article, book review, letter to the editor or simply write to tell us what you are doing now. Ideally, contributions should be sent by e-mail. For further details concerning the length of articles and deadlines, please contact the FMA Secretariat. If you send us an article, please provide your current email address. This gives readers, who would like to find out more, the possibility to contact you directly.

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TURKEY AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION IN THE ARAB SPRING

We are witnessing a period of rapid transition giving birth to panoply of potential outcomes in our Southern neighborhood. This historical turning point referred to as the “Arab Spring” has triggered massive social and political transformations across countries in the Middle East and North Africa. People express the need for democratization and economic reforms. All global actors that are aware of the central-importance of supporting people’s demand for reform are feeling a high sense of responsibility to provide assistance.

Without any doubt, the European Union (EU) is one of the prominent global actors that have already established economic ties with the region. Additionally, the EU and the member states underline in their discourses a strong political will to assist these countries’ reform processes. Nevertheless, it is far from realistic to claim that EU’s policy towards North Africa yields the expected efficient and fruitful outcomes. In particular, in the wake of the Arab Spring, the EU faced the challenge to adopt a coherent policy. EU’s policy towards the region would remain incredible and ineffective as long as stronger mechanisms for political dialogue with regional actors will not be established. The EU needs to cooperate with influential regional partners to contribute reconstruct the future of the region. In this context, the Union cannot underestimate the strategic value of this historical opportunity to cooperate with Turkey that would serve the EU to enhance cooperation with neighbor countries in North Africa and to continue being a “lighthouse” in the region. Helping reconstruct a politically stable region can be translated into higher benefits from economic

The EU needs to cooperate with influential regional partners to contribute reconstruct the future of the region. In this context, the Union cannot underestimate the strategic value of this historical opportunity to cooperate with Turkey that would serve the EU to enhance cooperation with neighbor countries in North Africa and to continue being a “lighthouse” in the region.



Informal Meeting of Ministers and State Secretaries for European Affairs, Ireland, 21.01.2013. Family Photo

integration, higher regional security, higher rates of economic growth and employment, and lower rates of illegal immigration, political corruption and poverty.

Turkey is a center of gravity in the region. Turkey’s multi-dimensional foreign policy strategy and the country’s increasing role in these regions means that a stronger Turkey-EU cooperation would stimulate better relations between Europe and North Africa. Turkey supports reforms that would lead to democratization, economic recovery and better living conditions and standards for the people in the region. Now Turkey has become a potential and inspiring actor of democratization and modernization reforms in North Africa. Diversification of projects with the initiative of public-private sectors or non- governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote economic growth, social rights and employment, gender equality, human rights, fight against corruption, cross-border cooperation can be undertaken collaboratively. Turkey is ready to act as a “soft power” along with its European counterparts to help the region to build better living conditions for people in North Africa. It is important to underline that Turkey’s accession process has played a pivotal role in strengthening Turkey’s influence as a “soft power.” Thanks to the reforms triggered by the EU accession objective, we have taken bold steps towards solving our domestic problems that transformed Turkey into a regional center of gravity from the Balkans to the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa. We are experiencing a decade of political stability in our country since AK Parti was elected. Our government is faithfully leading Turkey’s EU accession process and we have designed a strong EU accession policy strategy that emphasized the centrality of reforms and communication with the EU.

Both of these developments multiplied the fertility of our economy and effectiveness of our foreign policy.



The EU-Turkey Association Council, joint press conference, Brussels, 22.06.2012. From left to right: Egemen BAĞIŞ (Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator)- Ştefan FÜLE (Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy) - Nikolai WAMMEN (Minister for European Affairs of Denmark)

of an exclusionary approach based on cultural or religious differences, following a more inclusive enlargement policy would reassert EU's credibility in world politics. Turkey's membership will convey a positive message to our shared neighborhood and contribute to EU's foreign policy towards North Africa.

Turkey as a rising economic giant already enjoys a large trade volume with the countries in the region. By removing visa requirements, signing regional trade agreements and by opening new embassies, we have encouraged Turkish investors and Turkish enterprises to take active role in the reconstruction of these countries economic and social landscapes.

Turkey as a rising economic giant already enjoys a large trade volume with the countries in the region. By removing visa requirements, signing regional trade agreements and by opening new embassies, we have encouraged Turkish investors and Turkish enterprises to take active role in the reconstruction of these countries economic and social landscapes. We always encouraged a new dynamism to promote peaceful relations in our region. Despite negative effects of the Arab Spring in terms of political instability, compared to 2011 our exports to North Africa continued to increase in 2012 (41% increase). Considering the lasting effects of the economic crisis in the EU, Turkey's intensifying economic relations with these countries open new markets for investors from Europe. Likewise, Turkey's economic involvement offers new opportunities for investors from North Africa.

Turkey and EU's combined financial and institutional resources coupled with Turkey's impact in the region would push the reform process forward. Turkey's strong economy, multi-dimensional foreign policy, cultural and historical affinity with the region makes it an indispensable partner for the EU to achieve its enlargement and neighborhood policy objectives. We cannot envision a European future without Turkey. Turkey's EU membership creates a "win-win" situation for all. It means that at the global level both Turkey and the EU will have more influence on policy formulation that would contribute to peace, stability, security and prosperity in our shared neighborhood.

Egemen BAĞIŞ
Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator

In the area of cultural relations, Turkey's EU accession process would generate mutually beneficial results. Due to our deep historical, cultural, religious and social ties with the North Africa region, Turkey's EU membership will revitalize interest in EU and help establish deeper cultural dialogue between Europe and its neighborhood. At a time when our globe is facing the serious challenge of changing perceptions regarding Islam and Muslims, advancing intercultural dialogue will lead to the achievement of lasting peace and stability in our shared region. Therefore, closer integration of Turkey as an EU member would be a clear demonstration of EU's sincerity and of the Union's commitment to its fundamental values and principles. Turkey's membership would confirm that the Union values democratic pluralism and reforms undertaken in order to provide better standards and conditions of living in quantity and in quality for all citizens. Rather than the adoption



From left to right: Egemen BAĞIŞ (Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator)- Ştefan FÜLE (Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy) - Nikolai WAMMEN (Minister for European Affairs of Denmark)