



**T.C.  
AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ BAKANLIĞI**

**Under the Auspices of the Minister for European Union Affairs and  
Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış**

**Ministry for EU Affairs Civil Society Dialogue Meetings-5**

**Press Release**

**14 February 2012, Istanbul**

The fifth of the civil society dialogue meetings, which is organized under the auspices of the Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış, was held on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Istanbul at the Marmara Taksim Hotel. Within the framework of the civil society dialogue meetings, previously 4 different meetings were held on “Civil Society in the European Union (EU) Accession Process”, “Women in the EU Accession Process”, “Turkey’s new EU Strategy and the Negotiation Process”, “EU Funds, Youth and the EU, Visa Issues and Local Governments”.

During the meeting held today the Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış has delivered the opening speech. The problems of our citizens belonging to different faiths were discussed and the opinions and recommendations of the civil society organizations regarding the solutions of these problems and some issues including Turkey’s accession process to the EU were assessed. As a strong indicator for the importance attached to the civil society dialogue, during the meeting today, Ms. Lolita Asil (Syrian Community, Secretary General of the Executive Board of the Foundation), Mr. Iva Molinas (Şalom

Newspaper, Chief Editor), Mr. Bedros Şirinođlu (Foundation of the Yedikule Surp Pırgıç Armenian Hospital), Mr. Rinaldo Marmara (Press Agent of the Latin Catholic Community), Mr. Andreas Rombopulos (İho Newspaper Chief Editor), who are representatives of the civil society organizations belonging to different faith groups, delivered their speeches.

Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bađıř shared his opinions and assessments on the social and political issues.

In his speech, Mr. Bađıř pointed out the importance of full implementation of the political reforms and the contributions of civil society organizations to these efforts. Recalling that the EU accession process is a modernisation project for Turkey, Mr. Bađıř emphasised that the ultimate aim of this process is to attain the highest level in the field of democracy, the rule of law and the freedoms that Turkish citizens deserve. He also expressed his pleasure to see that Turkish citizens are strongly committed to the modernisation and democratisation process and that the civil society organizations have made great contributions to this process.

Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator Bađıř also underlined the importance of polyphony which is a prerequisite for the participatory and pluralistic democracy and stated that the implementation of the reforms is crucially important. He also expressed that the civil society should play a pivotal role in implementing and embracing the reforms effectively and proceeding in practice with a great determination.