**ACTION PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR EU AFFAIRS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

**Executive Summary**

The Ministry for EU Affairs has actively undertaken many actions at the local level. Positive results of this work have been a driving force for the development of another project to be implemented. In this context, “**Technical Assistance for Building Capacity for EU Affairs in the Governorates” (VABpro)** was launched in December 2012.

The project was financed within the context of the financial cooperation between Turkey and the EU. The objective of the project is “*to increase service capacity of governorates on EU affairs in order to fully realize the projects implemented in the EU accession period within the scope of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, to follow-up these projects, to enable that the EU membership process is understood by all segments of the society clearly and without prejudices.”*

One of the most concrete outputs of VAPpro is the “**Action Plan for Strengthening Capacity for EU Affairs at the Local Level**”. This Action Plan is a roadmap that will provide a more systematic and sustainable base for EU related activities carried out by our Ministry and other relevant public institutions at local level.

The action plan is based on two strategic goals:

***“To strengthen the role and coordination of the Ministry for EU Affairs for capacity building in the management of EU affairs at local level”***

***“To strengthen the framework governing EU units within Governorates for the management of EU affairs at the local level”***

In line with these strategic goals, a number of targets have been determined. Among these targets are strengthening cooperation and coordination at the central level, further increasing the effectiveness of the participation of local actors, strengthening the legal and institutional bases of the “EU Units within the Governorates” and development of a monitoring and evaluation framework to follow-up the results of the implementation of the Action Plan. In order to attain each of these targets, detailed and effective steps for implementation of the Action Plan have been formulated.

A table summarizing the goals, targets and strategies related to the Action Plan for Strengthening Capacity on EU Affairs at Local Level is presented below:

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| 1 | **Strategic Goal:** To strengthen the role and coordination function of the Ministry for EU Affairs regarding capacity building with reference to govern/administer EU affairs at the local level |
| 1.1. | **Target** 1.1: Cooperation and coordination at the central level will be strengthened to administer EU affairs at local level.  |
|  | 1.1.1 To improve cooperation and coordination between the Ministry for EU Affairs and Ministry of Interior to govern EU affairs at the local level. |
|  | 1.1.2 To improve cooperation and coordination between the Ministry for EU Affairs and Ministry of Development to govern EU affairs at the local level |
|  | 1.1.3 To improve cooperation and coordination between the Ministry for EU Affairs and local administrations unions (UMT and Union of Provincial Services) to govern EU affairs at the local level. |
| 1.2 | **Target** 1.2 Awareness of the process of alignment with EU-related policies and *acquis* will be increased at the local level and the participation of the local level administrations in this process will be further improved. |
|  | 1.2.1 To improve the coordination capacity of the EU-related units within the Governorates with the aim of raising awareness of the effects at the local level of activities which are carried out at the central level for alignment with the EU *acquis.*  |
|  | 1.2.2 To ensure that actions to increase awareness of the process of alignment with main EU-related policies and the *acquis* and further increase participation are incorporated into the action plans of public institutions in the provinces.  |
| 1.3 | **Target** 1.3 Scope of the support and content of training provided by the Ministry for EU Affairs for capacity building to govern EU affairs will be reviewed. |
|  | 1.3.1 In line with policy priorities and strategic approach of the Ministry for EU Affairs, to ensure that necessary changes are made regarding the support and content of training provided by the Ministry to the Governorates to build capacity for EU affairs.  |
|  | 1.3.2 To ensure that some tasks pertaining to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities are carried outby the EU-related units of Governorates, so that the Ministry for EU Affairs can develop more macro scale policies for local level in the EU process and undertakes the functions of guidance and coordination rather than directly taking action at local level.  |
|  | 1.3.3 To identify examples of good practices among successful EU related activities carried out at local level and to support the dissemination of good practices. |
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| 2 | **Strategic Goal** 2: To strengthen the framework regulating EU units within governorates for the management of EU affairs at local level.  |
| 2.1 | **Target** 2.1 Legal and institutional basis of the EU units within governorates will be strengthened.  |
|  | 2.1.1 To identify and implement the most appropriate institutional structure for the short, medium and long term and to adopt the related legislation accordingly in order to strengthen the legal and institutional framework of the EU units within governorates.  |
|  | 2.1.2 Recruitment of permanent cadre needed by EU units within governorates, assignment of expert and qualified staff to this cadre and improvement of rights of human resources assigned to these units, to consider different options foreseen, to identify the best human resources assignment methods for the short, medium and long term and their legal and institutional basis and to ensure that such methods are applied in the short and medium term.  |
|  | 2.1.3 To eliminate main barriers to creation of resources for co-financing needed by EU units within governorates.  |
| 2.2  | **Target** 2.2 Capacity and operation of the EU units within governorates will be strengthened.  |
|  | 2.2.1 To ensure minimum standard and required flexibility in terms of job descriptions and process in the operation of EU units within governorates.  |
|  | 2.2.2 To ensure that all public institutions and agencies in the relevant province are aware of the job description and activity field of EU units within governorates.  |
|  | 2.2.3 To develop mechanisms in order to ensure that there is regular and continuous exchange of information and experience among EU units within governorates.  |
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| 2.3  | Effectiveness of EU Harmonisation, Consultation and Steering Boards (EU HCSC) will be enhanced. |
|  | 2.3.1 To review job description of the Boards in the light of problems stemming from the structure and operation of the Boards and to ensure that improvements are introduced in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Boards in practice. |
|  | 2.3.2 To take actions in order to ensure that EU HCSC contributes to the creation of positive public opinion in line with EU Communication Strategy and to encourage more effective engagement of provincial stakeholders in EU membership process. |
|  | 2.3.3 To strengthen the role of EU HCSC in the determination of education and capacity building needs in relation to EU affairs at local level and in the fulfilment of such needs. |

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| **Target 2.4:** To ensure that the EU funds are used efficiently at local level |
| 2.4.1 | In the coordination of EU units within governorates, to support institutional capacity building of public and private institutions, local administrations, non-governmental organizations, universities, occupational organizations etc. at local level on work related to EU a*cquis* and the utilisation of EU financial resources |
| 2.4.2 | To strengthen the coordination between the EU units within governorates and the other Ministries in implementation of the EU funded projects in addition to the projects implemented by the Ministry for EU Affairs. |
| 2.4.3 | To undertake necessary work in coordination with relevant public institutions in order to prepare a comprehensive inventory of the EU funds used in provinces. |
| **Target 2.5:** Coordination and cooperation between EU units within governorates and the local administrations will be strengthened. |
| 2.5.1 | To strengthen coordination and cooperation between the EU units within governorates and the local administrations. |
| 2.5.2 | To ensure coordination and cooperation between EU units within governorates and development agencies regarding EU affairs. |
| 2.5.3 | To ensure that capacities of relevant stakeholders are utilised in order to increase efficiency in EU affairs at provincial level by strengthening cooperation and coordination between EU units within governorates and other relevant stakeholders (private sector institutions, universities, professional chambers, non-governmental organizations and city councils)  |
| **Target 2.6:** Visibility and communication activities on EU affairs will be strengthened at the local level |
| 2.6.1 | To strengthen communication activities of EU units within governorates in order to promote Turkey EU Communication Strategy at local level better and extensively and to increase awareness of provincial stakeholders on EU affairs |
| 2.6.2 | To organize local events which will increase knowledge and awareness level of all segments of society regarding various aspects of EU membership process and to strengthen ownership |
| **Target 2.7:** A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed for monitoring the implementation results of the Action Plan |
| 2.7.1 | To measure regularly the implementation results in comparison with the strategic goals and targets set in the Action Plan and to update the Action Plan and implementation plan after evaluating compatibility and consistency of implementation results with the goals and targets. |

In the following sections of the Action Plan, the activities that are required to be implemented within the framework of the mentioned goals, targets and strategies are presented in detail. The complementary sections of the document, the “Current Situation Analysis” and the “Monitoring and Evaluation Framework” are enclosed as Annexes.