

INTRODUCTION

In the meeting held on 10 January 2007 with the participation of Mr. Abdullah Gül, the Foreign Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Babacan, the Minister of State and the Chief Negotiator, members of the Monitoring and Steering Committee, and senior authorities of all our relevant institutions, there has been a general evaluation relating to the accession process of our country to the European Union and the strategy to be followed. The meeting resulted in a decision for the preparation of a comprehensive program that aims at achievement of harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* during the period 2007-2013 with a perspective of full membership to the EU.

In pursuit of this decision, Turkey's Program for Harmonization with the EU Legislation was prepared as including all chapters envisaged to be arranged following the screening process. Legislative measures, secondary legislation, and the main strategy and policy papers required in the relevant section were included in this Program. Furthermore, the institution responsible for and the time schedule relating to the legislation were identified.

In time scheduling of the Program prepared for the next seven year-period, the needs and priorities of our country were taken into consideration. Harmonization with the 9th Development Plan prepared with a view to full membership to the EU, the Medium-Term and Annual Programs prepared under such Development Plan, and the sectoral strategies adopted at the national level was pursued. Moreover, issues such as our historical responsibilities and the current stage of a certain arrangement were also taken into consideration in prioritization in time scheduling. Thereby, we aimed at, on the one hand, making arrangements and reforms beneficial for our country, and, on the other hand, enhancement of our level of harmonization with the European Union legislation simultaneously.

With respect to time scheduling, legislation periods were taken as the basis for legislative measures, and years were taken as the basis for secondary legislation. In consideration of the fact that we are already in the middle of the 01/01/2007 – 30/09/2007 period and that the agenda is quite full, the 01/01/2007 – 30/09/2008 period is selected as the first period for legislative measures. However, the legislative measures already at the agenda of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for the 01/01/2007 – 30/09/2007 period were included under the 01/10/2007 –30/09/2008 period with a different code. According to the studies carried out by our responsible institutions, some other arrangements which have not yet been passed to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey shall be probably made before the foreseen time schedule; and in case of legislation of such arrangements, the implementation of the Program shall be accelerated.

In connection of the arrangements to the EU legislation, the presentations and the lists of legislation delivered by the European Commission to the representatives of our country during the screening studies have been taken into consideration. Furthermore, the opening and closing criteria identified for the sections that are currently at the actual negotiation stage.

The Science and Research chapter was opened and then closed temporarily; the Enterprise and Industrial Policy chapter was opened and its closing criteria have also been identified; the opening criteria of 6 chapters have also been officially submitted to our side; and for the chapters of Education and Culture, Economic and Monetary Policy, Statistics and Financial Control, for which no opening criterion was envisaged, our country's negotiation position document has been prepared and submitted to the EU Presidency. Among all chapters the screenings of which have been completed by 13 October 2006, the screening reports of 11 chapters have not been submitted to our country yet. According to these reports, certain changes that are deemed necessary can be made in the Program.

During the preparation process of the Program, a participative approach has been adopted. In February, suggestions on arrangements planned be made under the harmonization process with the EU legislation were received from all our relevant institutions. For clarification of the issues relating to the Program, in March, meetings based on chapters were held with the relevant institutions. The draft Program established as a result of these studies was submitted to all relevant public agencies and non-governmental organizations to allow them to deliver their opinions. And these opinions were evaluated by the member institutions of the Monitoring and Steering Committee and those institutions responsible for the coordination of the relevant chapter.

The enactment date of the arrangements should not be seen exactly as the starting date of the implementation. The content of both legal and secondary arrangements shall be established on the basis of the opinions of the relevant public agencies and non-governmental organizations, and the time periods required for a smooth transition shall be identified.

This Program also includes the arrangements relating to our commitments arising from the association relationship between Turkey and the European Union. The implementation calendar of these arrangements shall be established in consultation with the opinions of the relevant sectors.

A significant portion of the arrangements envisaged for the period 2009-2013 is aimed to be completed until the end of 2011. However, some of these arrangements may, depending on the prospective impact analyses and the course of the negotiations, include post-membership transition periods.

For the sake of monitoring of the Program, in the column of the institution responsible for the preparation of the legislation, only one institution is mentioned as far as possible. However, in preparation of such legislation, the responsible institutions shall act in cooperation with the other relevant public agencies depending on the subject matter.

The implementation of the Program for Harmonization with the EU Legislation, which is a dynamic process, shall be effectively monitored and the Program shall be periodically updated.

As a complementary study, a separate document which covers the inventory of the legislative measures made on the basis of chapters since 3 October 2005 up to now has also been drafted. According to the implementation results to be identified on the basis of the periodical monitoring reports, the arrangements made under the Program

for Harmonization with the EU Legislation shall be removed from the Program and shall be added to such inventory that will establish the memory of the accession process.

Simultaneously with the efforts for harmonization with the European Union standards, there will also be studies on the economic and political criteria included among other fundamental issues besides the dialogue between the EU and Turkish societies.

With this respect, reforms will continue together with the Pre-Accession Economic Program, which was initiated in 2001 and updated annually with a three-year perspective, and growth at a sustainable pace shall be maintained in a stable and competitive structure.

In the area of political criteria, studies which started with the announcement of Turkey as a candidate country at the Helsinki Summit 1999 and which have attained a satisfactory harmonization level to proceed to the stage of membership negotiations by 2004 shall be continued within the framework of the Reform Monitoring Group. These studies shall also be predicated on the priorities of our country.

Efforts to promote our country deservedly in the European Union public opinion and raising the public awareness on the EU in our country shall be among the basic agenda items in the forthcoming years.

In all these areas, it is not possible to achieve the goals only with the effort of the public sector. All society, in particular the political parties, non-governmental organizations, workers' and employers' organizations, trade associations, universities, platforms of art and thought, and media, has a key position in the accession process. Implementation of the EU standards, maintenance of the economic performance, achievement of higher levels of democracy, and assurance of effective communication shall come true with the participation and contribution of all relevant sectors.