

EU Report on Turkey's Accession: Implications for U.S. Policy

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Brief Analysis

On October 14, the Commission of the European Union (EU) will issue its annual progress report evaluating accession talks with Turkey. The following statements by EU leaders demonstrate the growing uncertainty in the EU -- even among Turkey's friends -- regarding Ankara's ability to reform and join the union.

Strong Support

Spain: Supports Turkey's EU bid • "Turkey has always received Spain's support on the way to EU membership. Turkey will continue to receive Spain's support ... Spain will never change its position."

-- Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Spanish prime minister, April 6, 2009

Portugal: EU Needs Turkey • "Portugal has lent full support to Turkey from the very beginning. Turkey's strategic position is very important for world peace ... The European Union needs Turkey."

-- Anibal Cavaco Silva, Portuguese president, May 12, 2009

Poland: Prime Minister Backs Turkey's EU bid • "Poland will unwaveringly participate in the process of negotiating and integrating Turkey with EU countries"

-- Donald Tusk, Polish prime minister, May 14, 2009

Britain: Strides toward Reforms • "Everyone wants to see Turkey making strides toward reforms. But equally we want to see a European Union that has got the right orientation and outlook, an open EU -- that is something we have to work on, especially at a time of economic downturn."

• "Britain is more convinced than it has ever been that the strategic decision to support Turkey's accession to the European Union is the right one ... It is good for Europe as well as for Turkey."

-- David Miliband, British foreign secretary, May 27, 2009

Sweden: Modernized Turkey Will Add Vibrancy to EU • "The new modernized Turkey that will be fit for EU membership will have great opportunities building a prosperous and free society ... and it should be crystal clear that we have a profound strategic interest as well as a moral commitment [to] the eventual membership of Turkey in the European Union."

-- Carl Bildt, Swedish foreign minister, May 2009

Conditional Support

Resume Political Reform • "Dear prime minister, [speaking to Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan] we now also have a real chance to recreate a positive, virtuous circle for Turkey's accession process, whereby the reforms lead to concrete progress in the accession negotiations ... We saw further proofs of that in early 2009 ... It is now time to resume with full energy the path of political reform to align Turkey with the EU's democratic standards."

-- Olli Rehn, EU enlargement commissioner, June 26, 2009

Solve the Cyprus Issue • "We have to remind Turkey, at every opportunity, of its obligation to fully implement the additional protocol to the Ankara Agreement, that is, to remove all restrictions on the free movement of goods with all member states and, thus, to open its ports to all vessels coming from Cyprus ... The Turkish government realizes that the Cyprus settlement will give a breath of fresh air to its negotiations with the EU."

-- Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, June 26, 2009

Cooperate with Greece • "We support Turkey's European prospects, on condition that the terms that have been agreed [on] are met. Our position is clear: full accession and full compliance. Turkey must cooperate more effectively with Greece and the EU."

-- Costas Karamanlis, Greek prime minister, July 13, 2009

Staunch Opposition

France: No room for Turkey in the EU • "[Turkey] is not intended to become an EU member."

-- Nicolas Sarkozy, French president, May 8, 2009

• "France will not be against the opening of new chapters under the Swedish chairmanship but, of course, these chapters should allow that Turkey should be an associate member of Europe and not a fully-fledged member."

-- Nicolas Sarkozy, July 6, 2009

• "We need a well-organized Europe. That means we cannot expand without borders. We shouldn't make any empty promises to Turkey."

-- Nicolas Sarkozy, May 11, 2009

Cyprus: Turkey will Pay a Huge Price for Intransigence • "In view of the progress report on Turkey's EU accession course in December, we wish to clearly warn that Ankara's accession will not be smooth if it continues to refuse to comply with obligations towards the EU and the Republic of Cyprus, emanating from the Ankara Protocol and the Statement of September 2005. Yes, Turkey will pay a huge price if it continues its intransigent and provocative behavior."

-- Marios Garoyian, president of the Cypriot house of representatives, July 27, 2009

• "We underlined that Turkey's position contradicts not only the international law but also the conditions included in Turkey's EU negotiating framework ... we warned that if Turkey continues to implement this obsolete tactic and strategy, to threaten with the use of violence and with violations, then there will be repercussions to its accession course."

-- Markos Kyprianou, Cypriot foreign minister, July 28, 2009

Germany: Privileged Partnership but Not Full EU Membership • "We have to talk about the borders of Europe. It makes no sense if there are ever more members, and we can't decide anything anymore ... It is right that we say to people in the European election campaign ... our common position is: a privileged partnership for Turkey, but no full membership."

-- Angela Merkel, German chancellor, May 11, 2009

Implications for U.S. Policy

Skepticism is steadily on the rise in the EU regarding Turkey's ability to reform and join the union. The United States, which supports Turkey's EU membership as a means to tie this important Muslim country to the West, can counter these trends by encouraging Ankara to embrace the reform process, as it did so well until 2005. As long as Turkey's reform process is stalled, anti-Turkish voices inside the EU will only solidify, eventually rendering Ankara's membership all but impossible.

Soner Cagaptay is the director of the [Turkish Research Program \(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateI02.php?SID=12&newActiveSubNav=Turkish%20Research%20Program&activeSubNavLink=templateI02.php%3F3FSID%3D12&newActiveNav=researchPrograms\)](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateI02.php?SID=12&newActiveSubNav=Turkish%20Research%20Program&activeSubNavLink=templateI02.php%3F3FSID%3D12&newActiveNav=researchPrograms) at The Washington Institute. Eva Outzen is a former intern in the Institute's Turkish Research Program. Institute interns Cansin Ersoz and Ruya Perincek also provided assistance with this article. ❖

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