

CPS

Corporate & Public Strategy
Advisory Group



EU Corridors

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- **Editorial**

In this edition of EU Corridors' editorial we discuss the impact of the 'positive agenda' towards potential progress in Turkey's EU accession process.

- **News**

This month's significant events concerning the EU agenda...

- **Agenda**

Crucial dates and milestones along Turkey's EU journey...

Editorial

Would a "Positive Agenda" clear the way for negotiations?

Jean-Maurice Ripert, who was recently appointed as head of the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey, defined the prevailing sentiment in Turkey regarding the EU, calling it 'disappointment'. Brussels is aware that the de facto suspension of the negotiation process, over the last two years due to political reasons, means the EU is no longer the driving force of reforms in Turkey. Turkey's friends in the EU proposed a so-called 'positive agenda' -- a means to achieve progress in the negotiations in an informal way. Turkey and the European Commission have agreed to form working groups, which will convene on eight chapters including company law, information society and media, judiciary and fundamental rights and justice, freedom and security, throughout May and June. While it is possible that some progress will be achieved on Turkey's path towards alignment with the EU acquis, the eight chapters will not be officially opened. Similar cooperation is sought concerning the energy chapter, which is not as yet part of the working groups.

Disturbance of Greek Cypriots

Southern Cyprus, which blocked the negotiation chapters, 'judiciary and fundamental rights' and 'justice, freedom and security,' is displeased with the Commission's "positive agenda" initiative to enter informal negotiations with Turkey on those chapters. The Greek Cypriot press interprets the initiative as an effort by the European Commission and Erdogan's government to create a showpiece political image. Turkey stated earlier that it refused to sit at the negotiating table with Southern Cyprus, during its EU Presidency as of July 1st. This adds further fuel to Greek Cypriot's reaction. In an effort to further challenge Ankara, the Greek Cypriot administration threatened that Turkey's EU membership becomes difficult if Turkey does not cooperate. Although the positive agenda is capable to achieve little progress in the negotiation process through informal ways, it is not sufficient to overcome political obstacles. It is just enough to ease the process a bit; particularly the liberalization or elimination of mandatory visas for Turkish citizens entering the EU. This would contribute to the expansion of the Customs Union process between Turkey and the EU. However, unless the primary issue in the EU process is resolved it would not be possible to complete Turkey's EU accession process. The main source of the problem, which is basically seen as a blockage by the Greek Cypriot's, is in fact the opposition of the locomotive countries of the EU, Germany and France! That's why the victory of Socialists at the French elections on May 22 is significant in terms of changing the direction of the wind.

Duygu Leloglu
Brussels

News

Notice from the EP: No EU Entry for Turkey without Women's Rights

European Parliament's (EP) Commission on Women's Rights and Gender Equality unanimously adopted the report entitled "2020 Perspective for Women in Turkey" drafted by Dutch MEP Emine Bozkurt with regard to women's rights in Turkey. The report calls for a zero tolerance of violence against women in Turkey and is reviewing the current situation with regard to women's education, employment and political participation. In addition, it lays down a strategy towards 2020. Concerning the report, Bozkurt stated that the big potential that Turkey has needs to be supported by proper enforcement and implementation of effective laws, through strategies that bring together the role models for young girls and boys, and via awareness-raising campaigns. "You cannot enter the EU on your own. Women's rights need to be placed at the centre of EU negotiations," she added. The report will be a recommendation decision after its vote at the EP Plenary in May.

EP adopted the Turkey 2011 Report

The Plenary of the European Parliament (EP) adopted the Turkey 2011 Report prepared by the Dutch MEP Ria Oomen-Ruijten. With an amendment to a paragraph warning Turkish Armed Forces regarding the terms of secularism in the draft report, the Report calls for the total control of the army by the civil judiciary. The language of the report, which emphasizes the press and expression of freedom and criticizes the long detention periods was softened as a result of the release of journalists Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener just before the report's adoption. The resolution calls for a fresh impetus in EU-Turkey relations and points to the new Turkish Constitution to comply with the European Human Rights Contract.

Turkey shifts to Single Window System

The 'Single Window' system to come into effect under EU customs in 2013 will also be applied in Turkey. According to the 'Single Window' mechanism all information and data concerning goods for international trade or shipment could be submitted to a single authority in an internationally standardized format. The new system aims to prevent delays in customs procedures. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has published a circular for the implementation of the single window system in Turkey.

EU adopts new Transportation Plan

The transport ministers of the EU countries arrived at an agreement on a plan of €31.7 billion in order to harmonize the transportation network in Europe. The plan, whose financing is not yet very clear, has to be adopted by the European Parliament. The EU executive organ, the European Commission, stated that the plan will be put into action during the first half of 2013 by political will. According to the plan, a core transportation network with 10 main corridors will be established by 2030. The plan aims to upgrade 86 ports having connection to highways and railways, 37 airports connected to downtown and a 15 kilometer-long railway and 35 cross-border projects to overcome congestion.

Europe agrees to boost debt crisis firewall to 800 billion Euros

It is reported that the overall volume of the debt crisis firewall is set to stand at 800 billion Euros. During the meeting held by the Finance Ministers of the Eurozone at the end of March, the total capacity of the EU's rescue fund was boosted to 700 billion Euros with the help of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) which will enter into force in July 2012, and comprises 500 billion Euros along with European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) which stands at 200 billion Euros. Along with the existing European funds, the ceiling on the European Union's financial firewall was upped to nearly 800 billion Euros.

Patent requests in the European Union reach record high in 2011

The patent requests across the European Union reached a record high in 2011. This signifies that the companies are struggling to survive despite the economic uncertainty and debt crisis. In total 244,437 requests for patents were recorded in 2011 at the Munich-based European Patent Office. This figure is 3.7 percent more than 2010. The European Patent Office (EPO) approved 62,115 patents last year. It is noteworthy that this figure is 6.9 percent more than 2010.

The European Union Supports Ankara-İstanbul High Speed Rail Line

The European Union will finance the last leg of the speed railway between Ankara and İstanbul which will reduce travel time to three hours, by providing a €136 million grant and a €1.45 billion loan by the European Investment Bank. Spain will contribute to this Project with a credit loan of €500 million. The Project is expected to generate more than €3 billion for the Turkish economy.

European Commission to execute reciprocity principle in foreign trade

According to the proposal issued by the European Commission, European public authorities will be able to exclude non-EU countries from EU public procurement, which exceed 5 million Euros, if those third countries exclude European companies from national public procurement. The proposal needs to be adopted at the European Parliament after being approved by the 27 Member States of the European Union. According to the figures of the EU, the public procurement, which amounts to 352 million Euros is open to third countries. This figure stands at 178 million Euros at the EU market while it equates to only 27 million Euros in Japan.

Ajanda

17 April

- Political and Security Committee
- The European Parliament Plenary

18 April

- Informal meeting of the EU Environment and Energy Ministers
- Political and Security Committee
- Coreper I
- Coreper II
- The European Parliament Plenary

19 April

- Meeting of the EU Environment and Energy Ministers
- Coreper II
- The European Parliament Plenary

20 April

- The European Parliament Plenary

23 April

- General Affairs Council
- Informal meeting of EU Ministers for Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

24 April

- Meeting of the EU Health Ministers
- General Affairs Council
- Political and Security Committee

25 April

- Coreper I
- Coreper II
- Budget Group meeting

26 April

- Meeting of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers
- Meeting of the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers
- Budget Group meeting

27 April

- Meeting of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers
- Political and Security Committee

02 May

- Political and Security Committee
- Coreper II

03 May

- Coreper II
- Coreper I

04 May

- Political and Security Committee
- Coreper I

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Brussels, Istanbul, Washington

The information in this document was compiled from various EU information sources.