



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Media Note
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May 2, 2008

Joint Communiqué: Turkey-United States Economic Partnership Commission

Following is the text of the joint communiqué from the Turkey-United States Economic Partnership Commission:

The Turkey-United States Economic Partnership Commission (EPC) met for the fourth time April 16-17, 2008, in Washington. The Turkish delegation was led by Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan and included officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Energy and Natural Resources, as well as the Foreign Trade and Treasury Undersecretariats, and the Turkish Investment Promotion Agency (TIPSA). Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs Daniel S. Sullivan, joined by officials from the Departments of State, Commerce, Energy, Treasury, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and the U.S. Small Business Administration, co-chaired the EPC at the State Department.

The U.S. Business Council for International Understanding organized a private sector event on April 16 at which the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and over 50 U.S. and Turkish business representatives raised trade and investment issues with U.S. and Turkish policymakers, which helped inform the government-to-government discussions on April 17.

The EPC is a strategic economic dialogue within the framework of the "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership" that Secretary of State Rice and then-Foreign Minister Gul concluded on July 5, 2006. Expanding economic ties is integral to advancing the strong and lasting friendship and strategic partnership between the United States and Turkey.

The two delegations talked about U.S., Turkish, and global economic trends and how continued structural reforms can help deepen the bilateral economic partnership and contribute to regional and global prosperity, as well as security. They reviewed the Action Plan from last year's EPC, most items of which were successfully completed.

A substantial portion of the EPC dialogue was committed to energy security, highlighting our valued energy relationship and addressing shared interests in a Southern Corridor and expanded regional cooperation on oil and gas, including the Nabucco and Turkey-Greece-Italy pipelines. Both delegations decided to deepen their cooperation and work together to ensure supply security for Turkey, as well as commercially viable transit of gas. Expanding energy supply, as well as diversifying sources and routes, is key to helping Turkey and Europe satisfy their energy needs. Both delegations also agreed on the need for enhanced cooperation on nuclear energy. In order to address energy security in the most comprehensive manner, the Turkish co-chair suggested establishment of a bilateral consultative mechanism on energy.

The two delegations also emphasized the importance of regional cooperation to foster global economic security and stability. The United States and Turkey pledged to cooperate on concrete initiatives, such as TOBB's Ankara Forum industrial zone project in the West Bank (Tarqumiya) and, if legislated by the U.S. Congress, the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in Afghanistan and on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Turkey's continuing reconstruction contributions to Afghanistan and Iraq were recognized. The United States expressed support for Turkey's vocation as a member of the European Union, which all agreed will strengthen relations between Turkey, the United States, and the European Union.

The delegations explored ways to strengthen the U.S.-Turkey relationship through innovative technologies, including scientific and technological cooperation among our technical government agencies, academic communities, and private sectors. Both agreed to expeditiously conclude the Framework Agreement on Science and Technology, and to establish a joint commission to implement the agreement. Academic exchanges were identified as a mechanism to help build an innovative society, and the two parties will explore opportunities for Turkish university rectors and deans to learn from their U.S. counterparts.

The two sides also agreed an environment of entrepreneurship and intellectual property protection and enforcement is important to investment and sustained growth. Both sides noted the progress achieved in intellectual property protection in Turkey and Turkey's ongoing efforts in modernizing its intellectual property regime.

The delegations talked about ways to increase trade and investment to narrow the gap of unrealized potential in the economic relationship. "Significant improvement" in Turkey's business climate was acknowledged. The two delegations further committed to encourage their private sectors to strengthen business links, including in numerous sectors, and to harness the power of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The two delegations agreed to meet again during 2009 in Turkey.

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