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Foreign Affairs Committee

UK–Turkey relations and Turkey's regional role

Twelfth Report of Session 2010–12

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written evidence*

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The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated agencies.

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Additional written evidence may be published on the internet only.

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Summary

The Government is right to continue to support Turkey's accession to the EU, subject to Turkey meeting the accession criteria, and subject to the imposition of restrictions on the right to free movement from Turkey to the UK after any accession by Turkey to the Union. Turkey's accession would be likely to boost the EU's economic growth and international weight.

However, Turkey's EU accession process is stuck, effectively hostage to the Cyprus dispute. Neither Turkey nor the EU is likely formally to suspend or abandon the accession process in the foreseeable future. However, by undermining the force of EU leverage, the stalemate in the accession talks is having consequences in Turkey that are detrimental to UK objectives there, as well as to Turkish citizens looking to the EU as an anchor for liberalising domestic reforms. This is especially regrettable at a time when Turkish democracy may be in a critical phase. By helping to create uncertainty over the timing, if not the fact, of Turkey's EU accession, the stalemate is also discouraging both the EU and Turkey from starting to address some of the most difficult issues that would be involved in Turkey's EU membership.

The Government's continuing support for Turkey's EU membership provides a strong basis for the development of enhanced UK-Turkey bilateral relations. The Government is correct to be seeking to strengthen the UK's relations with Turkey, as a "strategic partner" for the UK. Turkey possesses assets, characteristics and influence that potentially add value to UK foreign policy. It is also a rising regional economic power with which there is significant potential to expand the UK's economic and commercial relations, although the competitiveness of the market should not be underestimated.

However, shortcomings in the Turkish justice system are damaging Turkey's international reputation and leading to human rights abuses, in ways that make it harder to advocate close UK-Turkey relations and Turkey's EU membership. The current climate in Turkey is limiting freedom of expression and the media. Turkey's human rights record thus remains a problem for the "strategic partnership" with the UK, and for Turkey's EU accession prospects.

We have encountered no evidence that Turkey has made an overarching foreign policy realignment away from the West. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) should not underestimate the extent to which the increased independence and regional focus of Turkish foreign policy may generate differences between Turkish and UK perspectives and policies. However, as long as its foreign policy efforts are directed towards the same ultimate goals, Turkey may add value as a foreign policy partner precisely because it is distinct from the UK. The process of responding to the 'Arab Spring' has brought Turkey closer to its Western allies, including the UK, while also demonstrating the utility of Ankara's strong relations with the Arab League. Turkey has welcome influence in the Middle East and North Africa as an example of a predominantly Muslim secular democracy, albeit one that remains 'work in progress'.

The UK's visa regime for Turkish nationals is one of the greatest obstacles to the development of closer UK-Turkey ties. The regime undermines the credibility of the Government's wish for a "strategic partnership" with Turkey, as well as being a significant practical and psychological obstacle to intensified relations. The FCO should explore possibilities to make the acquisition of UK entry visas easier for Turkish nationals, especially frequent visitors.

The low visibility of Turkey in the UK, especially among the business community, appears to be a further obstacle to the development of close UK-Turkey ties. The British Council should ensure that the promotion of awareness of the UK in Turkey and Turkey in the UK is a central part of its role. The British Council and the FCO should take advantage of Turkey's embrace of 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy to welcome and assist efforts by their Turkish partners to improve understanding of contemporary Turkey in the UK.

Conclusions and recommendations

PART 1: TURKEY AS A UK “STRATEGIC PARTNER”

Strengthening the bilateral relationship

UK-Turkey “Strategic Partnership”

1. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified Turkey as a “strategic partner” for the UK and to be pursuing enhanced relations accordingly. We commend the Government for the concerted effort it has been making to this end, and we urge it to ensure that the effort is sustained and sustainable. (Paragraph 15)

FCO resources

2. We welcome the fact that the FCO is expanding its diplomatic presence in Turkey. We believe that this will signal to Turkey and others the seriousness of the Government’s intent to develop the UK’s relationship with Turkey, as well as help to deliver enhanced co-operation in key policy areas. (Paragraph 21)
3. The effectiveness of UK diplomatic staff posted overseas is reduced if they cannot speak the language of their host country. We welcome the FCO’s decision to require Turkish language skills of those taking up the new UK-based staff positions in its Turkey network. Although we want to see country experts shaping FCO policy-making in London, we are perturbed that so many of the department’s Turkish speakers are deployed outside Turkey, and we regard this as symptomatic of the drawbacks of the FCO’s current system for filling staff positions. We recommend that the FCO reform its recruitment system so that it can actively manage the language expertise it has at its disposal, to ensure that such expertise is deployed effectively and on an ongoing basis in the service of UK diplomatic objectives. (Paragraph 22)

UK visa regime

4. We conclude that the operation of the UK’s visa regime for Turkish nationals is undermining the credibility of the Government’s wish for a “strategic partnership” with Turkey, as well as being a significant practical and psychological obstacle to intensified relations. We welcome the fact that the FCO appears to recognise this and is taking steps to try to ease the UK regime. We recommend that the FCO start discussions with the UK Border Agency and the main academic, cultural and trade bodies engaged in the effort to build UK-Turkey relations on possibilities for: reducing visa fees; reducing the quantity of information required with visa applications, certainly for frequent visitors; introducing a ‘fast-track’ service for certain categories of applicants; and opening more centres in Turkey for the submission of biometric data and the collection of returned documents. (Paragraph 30)

People-to-people contacts and public opinion

5. We are concerned that the cut to the FCO grant to the BBC World Service which was made under the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review has caused the World Service to discontinue radio broadcasts in Turkish, losing the Service a radio audience of 450,000 (a fifth of its total audience in Turkey). In line with our overall view on the cuts to the World Service, we question whether the savings made are proportionate to the resulting loss of UK influence. (Paragraph 33)
6. We conclude that the Government's ambitions for a new "special relationship" between the UK and Turkey appear to find little popular resonance, but that this may be due to what appears to be Turkey's relatively low visibility in the UK, and that the situation may therefore be capable of being improved. (Paragraph 38)
7. We recommend that the British Council in Turkey should guard against any risk of becoming 'just' an English language-learning organisation. We recommend that the British Council should use the vital contact which it is building up with Turkish young people through its English language work to further their awareness of the UK; and that it should ensure that the wider promotion of awareness of the UK in Turkey and Turkey in the UK is a central part of its role. The FCO and the British Council should take advantage of Turkey's embrace of 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy to welcome and assist efforts by their Turkish partners, such as the new Yunus Emre Turkish Culture Centre in London, to improve understanding of contemporary Turkey in the UK. (Paragraph 42)
8. There must be a doubt over the extent to which locally-engaged staff, however enthusiastic, can represent the UK to the British Council's host countries if they have had little exposure to the UK themselves. The concomitant of the cost savings achieved by making increased use of locally-engaged staff must be that the British Council commits to bringing such staff on visits to the UK on a regular basis. We recommend that in response to this Report the British Council should set out its practice and plans with respect to ensuring that its locally-engaged staff are regularly exposed to the UK. (Paragraph 44)
9. We recommend that the British Council and FCO should exploit the fact that Turkey is bidding for the 2020 Summer Olympics to use the public diplomacy programmes associated with the 2012 London Games to promote the UK in Turkey in a particularly intensive way. However, we further recommend that the British Council should not allow the Olympics 'brand' to take over the broader promotion of UK identity and culture in Turkey. We recommend that the FCO and British Council should report to us after the 2012 London Games on the Olympics-related work which they have conducted in Turkey and its impact on Turkish attitudes towards the UK. (Paragraph 47)
10. We recommend that in its response to this Report the FCO should set out its rationale for pursuing, its key objectives for, and its plans for securing, a new UK-Turkey cultural agreement to update that concluded in 1956. (Paragraph 49)

Turkey's domestic political development and human rights

The nature of AKP rule

11. We have encountered little evidence that the AKP government is seeking to 'Islamicise' the Turkish state. We conclude that the AKP is best seen as akin to a socially conservative Christian Democrat party, continuing to govern within a secular state. However, some among Turkey's secular population are uneasy lest the effort to make Turkish public life more welcoming to openly devout Muslims comes to tip into disadvantage for secular citizens. We recommend that the FCO should remain vigilant on issues of religious freedom and discrimination and should ensure that its Turkish partners are clear about its stance in this respect. (Paragraph 57)
12. We recommend that the FCO should ensure that its Turkish partners are in no doubt that the shortcomings in the Turkish justice system are damaging Turkey's international reputation and leading to human rights abuses, in ways that make it harder to advocate, or imagine the realisation of, close UK-Turkey relations and Turkey's EU membership. We further recommend that the FCO should offer support to the package of reforms announced by the Turkish Justice Minister in January 2012 and should let its Turkish partners know that it would welcome the opportunity to assist in its further development and in further reforms in the justice system as they may request, involving also the Home Office and Ministry of Justice as appropriate. (Paragraph 68)
13. Turkey has made welcome improvements in human rights standards in many areas over the last decade, but there is the appearance of a reversal in some respects. Many of the most potentially worrying developments concern legal proceedings, so it is often hard to form an assessment in the absence of firm public information about the relevant evidence, but we are clear that the current climate in Turkey is limiting freedom of expression and the media. This is despite the release on bail of four prominent journalists in March 2012, which we welcome. We conclude that Turkey's human rights record remains a problem for the "strategic partnership" with the UK which we support, and for Turkey's EU accession prospects. We recommend that the FCO should suggest that the Turkish government encourage prosecutors and judges to exercise restraint in the use of arrest and pre-trial detention, pending more thorough-going reform of the justice system. We further recommend that the FCO should seek every opportunity to help Turkey in practical ways to achieve further improvements in its human rights practices, including as regards freedom of expression and the media. (Paragraph 76)

Kurdish situation

14. Prospects for peaceful steps towards reconciliation between Kurds in the south-east and the Turkish state appear to be receding and in the process of being replaced by a return to confrontation and armed conflict. We are concerned about the civilian casualties—both inside and outside Turkey—which are being caused by the upsurge in the use of violence by both the PKK and the Turkish state. We recommend that the FCO should urge the Turkish government to make clear that the peaceful participation of representatives of the Kurdish community in Turkish public life

remains welcome. We further recommend that the FCO should urge representatives of the Kurdish minority to condemn PKK violence and clearly spell out their wishes for enhanced cultural rights and sub-national government within Turkey. We further recommend that the FCO should offer the parties assistance, on the basis of the UK experience with Northern Irish terrorism and UK devolution, in exploring practical steps that could be taken now towards ending violence and achieving an accommodation between the Turkish state and Turkey's Kurdish minority. (Paragraph 85)

New constitution

15. We conclude that a new constitution could be a unique opportunity to advance democratic, liberalising and pluralistic reform in Turkey and signal both at home and abroad a decisive break with the country's more authoritarian past. We welcome the Turkish government's ambitions in this respect, but we are concerned lest the constitutional momentum is lost amid renewed confrontation between government and opposition and Kurds and the Turkish state. We are further concerned in case the new constitution raises fresh risks to the independence of the judiciary. We recommend that the FCO should continue to remind its Turkish partners of the international importance that would attach to a successful constitutional reform effort. (Paragraph 90)

Turkey as a foreign policy partner

Turkey's international position and policy

16. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified Turkey as possessing assets, characteristics and influence that potentially add value to UK foreign policy, and to be seeking a stronger foreign policy partnership accordingly. (Paragraph 97)

Non-Western turn?

17. We have encountered no evidence to suggest that Turkey has made an overarching foreign policy re-alignment away from the West. Rather, Turkish foreign policy is best regarded as becoming more 'normal', in the sense of focusing on Turkey's region, pursuing national security and economic interests, and better reflecting Turkish public attitudes. The FCO should not underestimate the extent to which this shift may generate unavoidable differences between Turkish and UK perspectives and policies. However, we conclude that—as long as its foreign policy efforts are directed towards the same ultimate goals—Turkey may sometimes add value as a foreign policy partner precisely because it is distinct from the UK. (Paragraph 103)
18. We conclude that the process of responding to the 'Arab Spring' has brought Turkey closer to its Western allies, including the UK, while also demonstrating the utility of Ankara's strong relations with the Arab League. (Paragraph 112)
19. We conclude that Turkey has a particular value for the UK as a friendly state able to talk to Iran. However, Turkey's alignment with the West and the Arab League in the Syrian crisis, and Ankara's hosting of an element of the NATO missile defence

system, may put its capacity to continue to fulfil this function vis-à-vis Tehran under severe strain. Nonetheless, we further conclude that Turkey's decision to contribute materially to the implementation of NATO's new Strategic Concept in respect of ballistic missile defence is welcome. (Paragraph 119)

Exaggerated influence?

20. We conclude that the fact that Turkey has experienced foreign policy setbacks, and may not wield as much influence as is sometimes thought, should not disqualify it as a foreign policy partner for the UK. Ankara has been addressing longstanding issues and conflicts that continue to challenge many other powers, including the UK. We recommend that the FCO should approach foreign policy co-operation with Turkey positively and in a spirit of realism. (Paragraph 125)
21. We conclude that Turkey is a more valuable partner for the UK when it has strong relations with Israel than when it does not. (Paragraph 129)

Turkey as 'model'?

22. With respect to Turkey's potential influence on democratising states in North Africa and the Middle East, we conclude that the FCO is correct to treat Turkey as an 'inspiration' in broad terms, rather than as a specific 'model'. We agree with the FCO that Turkey has welcome influence as an example of a predominantly Muslim secular democracy, albeit one that remains 'work in progress'. We recommend that the FCO should make clear to Turkey that it would be able to support Turkey's 'inspirational' role more strongly were Turkey to improve its democratic and human rights practices, and, above all, to resume progress towards an accommodation with its Kurds. (Paragraph 134)

Energy security

23. We conclude that the FCO is correct to have identified Turkey's crucial importance for EU access to Caspian gas. However, the stalling of Turkey's EU accession process is losing the EU influence over Turkey's energy policy decisions. (Paragraph 143)

Economic and commercial relations

Turkish economy

24. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified Turkey as a rising regional economic power. We recommend that the Government should not allow any short-term setbacks to Turkey's economic performance to cause it to weaken its efforts to intensify UK-Turkey economic ties over the longer term, which must remain its focus. (Paragraph 149)

UK-Turkey trade and commercial relations

25. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified significant potential to expand UK commercial relations with Turkey, although the competitiveness of the market should not be under-estimated. While we welcome the galvanising effect of the Prime Minister's target of doubling bilateral trade from 2009 to 2015, we recommend that the Government and its partners should bear in mind the need to build much longer-term relationships if the UK is to strengthen significantly its commercial presence in Turkey. The FCO needs to be clear about the balance between the trade and the investment potential of specific sectors in Turkey, and about the lessons that the UK may learn from the relative success in Turkey of other countries such as Italy. We further recommend that in its response to this Report the FCO should update us on the Government's activities aimed at increasing Turkey's visibility to the UK business community. (Paragraph 159)
26. As UKTI's Defence and Security Organisation seeks to expand the UK's share of the Turkish defence and security market, we will—as one of the Committees on Arms Export Controls—closely scrutinise UK exports of strategic goods to Turkey, to ensure that they comply with the Consolidated Criteria for licensed arms exports. (Paragraph 161)

EU-Turkey Customs Union

27. We conclude that the EU-Turkey Customs Union is not working as effectively as it should to liberalise trade, partly because the lack of movement in Turkey's EU accession process appears to be contributing to Turkey's unwillingness to implement fully its Customs Union obligations. We further conclude that the Customs Union is anyway unsatisfactory because it excludes the services sector, including legal services. Given the UK's comparative advantage in the sector, we recommend that the Government should explore any options open to it on a bilateral basis to encourage Turkey to liberalise access to its market for UK services, particularly lawyers and legal services firms. (Paragraph 165)

PART 2: TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION

Membership goal

UK support for Turkey's EU membership

28. We conclude that the Government is correct to continue to support Turkey's accession to the EU, subject to Turkey meeting the accession criteria. Turkish accession would be likely to boost the EU's economic growth and international weight. We further conclude that the Government's continuing support for Turkey's EU membership provides a strong basis on which to develop enhanced UK-Turkey bilateral relations. (Paragraph 173)
29. Although the UK would not be expected to hold a referendum on any EU Accession Treaty with Turkey, we recommend that the Government should seek to foster

popular support for Turkish accession as part of its broader efforts to enhance Turkey's standing with the British people. (Paragraph 175)

30. We conclude that the Government is correct to be planning to impose restrictions on the right to free movement from Turkey to the UK following any accession to the EU by Turkey (although it is by no means certain that Turkey's accession negotiations will reach this stage before the next UK General Election). We recommend that the FCO should if necessary take steps to mitigate the risk that the Government's stance on this issue might damage the UK's standing among Turkey's population. (Paragraph 179)

What kind of EU?

31. We recommend that, if and when it is required again to consider the possible incorporation of the new intergovernmental 'fiscal compact' into the EU Treaties, the Government should bear in mind the implications of EU Treaty change of this sort for possible future accession countries such as Turkey. (Paragraph 183)

Blocked accession process

Stalemate costs

32. Turkey's EU accession—a key Government objective with respect to the country—is stuck, effectively hostage to the Cyprus dispute. By undermining the force of EU leverage, the stalemate in the accession talks is having consequences in Turkey that are detrimental to UK objectives there, as well as to Turkish citizens looking to the EU as an anchor for liberalising domestic reforms. We regard this as especially regrettable at a time when Turkish democracy and work on the proposed new constitution may be in a critical phase. By helping to create uncertainty over the timing, if not the fact, of Turkey's EU accession, the stalemate is also discouraging both the EU and Turkey from starting to address some of the most difficult issues that would be involved in Turkey's EU membership. (Paragraph 194)

Cyprus breakthrough?

33. We recommend that the Government should offer every assistance to UN Secretary-General Ban and Special Adviser Downer that they might feel would contribute to the securing of a Cyprus settlement by mid-2012. We further recommend that if this effort fails and there is still no settlement on Cyprus once Cyprus's period as President of the EU Council is completed at the end of 2012, the Government should consider whether any alternative approach to the Cyprus situation, by itself and the international community, might be more likely than previous efforts to yield a settlement. We further recommend that the FCO should support the use of prospective revenues from possible gas reserves off Cyprus to facilitate a settlement on the island. (Paragraph 200)

EU-Turkey partnership?

34. We recommend that the Government should encourage EU personnel and institutions, including High Representative Ashton, to explore with Turkey ways of developing a partnership outside—but not prejudicial to—its EU accession process, which we continue to regard as having key strategic value. (Paragraph 205)

1 Introduction

1. The Government has set out to strengthen the relationship between the UK and Turkey. In July 2010, in Ankara, the Prime Minister signed a renewed UK-Turkey “Strategic Partnership” agreement with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.¹ The Government’s ambitions with respect to Turkey form part of its strategy of strengthening the UK’s bilateral relations with a range of emerging states, beyond the UK’s traditional US and EU ties. This is a major element in its foreign policy.² Reflecting this, when the Foreign Affairs Committee was formed in July 2010 we decided that over the course of the Parliament we would conduct inquiries into UK relations with and Government policy towards several emerging powers, including Turkey. We conducted our first such inquiry, into *UK-Brazil Relations*, in spring 2011.³ In June 2011, we decided to launch our Turkey inquiry as the second in the series.

2. The Foreign Affairs Committee last conducted an overarching inquiry into Turkey in 2001–02, after the EU gave Turkey official EU candidate state status in 1999, and before the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won office in November 2002.⁴ More recent select committee work on Turkey has focused on its EU candidacy: our predecessor Committee considered Turkey’s EU accession process as part of its 2006 Report on *Developments in the EU*, following the UK’s Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2005;⁵ and the then Business and Enterprise Committee conducted an inquiry into Turkey’s EU accession in 2008.⁶ In the 2010 Parliament, the Home Affairs Committee conducted an inquiry in spring 2011 into *Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*.⁷

3. We conducted our inquiry at a timely moment. During 2011 and into 2012, the unfolding of the ‘Arab Spring’ highlighted and intensified Turkey’s emergence as an important regional influence.⁸ Meanwhile, as we prepared our Report early in the year, Turkey’s EU accession process in 2012 appeared to face either a breakthrough (after eighteen months of stalemate), or continued stagnation and possible deterioration (when Cyprus assumes the rotating Presidency of the EU Council on 1 July)—depending on the outcomes of the French presidential election in April-May and the UN-sponsored effort to reach a settlement on Cyprus by mid-year.

4. We announced our terms of reference in July 2011. We invited submissions of evidence which addressed the following questions in particular:

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- 1 “Turkey/United Kingdom Strategic Partnership”, Ankara, 27 July 2010, via FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk)
 - 2 For example, William Hague, “Britain’s Foreign Policy in a Networked World”, speech at the FCO, London, 1 July 2010, via FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk)
 - 3 Foreign Affairs Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2010–12, *UK-Brazil Relations*, HC 949
 - 4 Foreign Affairs Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2001–02, *Turkey*, HC 606
 - 5 Foreign Affairs Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2005–06, *Developments in the EU*, HC 768
 - 6 Business and Enterprise Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2007–08, *Keeping the door wide open: Turkey and EU accession*, HC 367
 - 7 Home Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2010–12, *Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*, HC 789
 - 8 We are conducting a separate inquiry into *British foreign policy and the ‘Arab Spring’: the transition to democracy*.

- How should the Government's efforts to strengthen UK-Turkey relations be assessed, especially with respect to the economic and commercial spheres?
- To what extent is Turkey a helpful partner for the Government's foreign and security policy, in the Middle East and North Africa, the South Caucasus, Central Asia or the Western Balkans? To what extent is Turkey such a partner for the UK in NATO?
- To what extent do Turkey and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) function as models for other Muslim countries and organisations in a way that is helpful for UK Government policy, particularly in the context of the 'Arab Spring'? How should Turkey's role in this respect affect UK Government policy towards it?
- Should the UK Government be concerned about trends in the quality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Turkey, including the rights of ethnic and religious minorities (including the Kurds) and freedom of expression?
- Is the Government correct to continue to support Turkey's membership of the EU? If so, what should the Government do to reinvigorate Turkey's EU accession process—for example, with respect to other EU Member States and EU policies, or the issue of Cyprus, as well as Turkey itself? Does Turkey still want to join the EU?
- How important is Turkey to UK and EU energy security? How compatible are UK and EU, and Turkish, energy interests? How should Turkey's energy role affect UK Government policy towards the country?⁹

We did not seek to duplicate the work conducted in 2011 by the Home Affairs Committee on Turkey and EU justice and home affairs issues (which included consideration of legal and illegal migration from and through Turkey). We have drawn on the Home Affairs Committee evidence and Report where relevant.¹⁰

5. We held four evidence sessions, two before and two after we visited Turkey at the beginning of November 2011. We took evidence from Dr Gülnur Aybet, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of Kent at Canterbury; Katinka Barysch, Deputy Director, Centre for European Reform; Sir David Logan, KCMG, former British Ambassador to Turkey (1997–2001) and Chairman, British Institute at Ankara; John Peet, Europe Editor, *The Economist*; John Roberts, Energy Security Specialist, Platts (giving evidence in a personal capacity); Dr Philip Robins, Reader in Middle East Politics and Faculty Fellow, St Antony's College, University of Oxford; Dr Mina Toksoz, Head of Country Risk, Standard Bank International (giving evidence in a personal capacity); and the Minister for Europe, Rt Hon David Lidington MP, and officials. We received 35 written submissions—from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the British Council and the BBC World Service; the Turkish Embassy in London; a number of academic and think-tank specialists; and a range of representative and campaign groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). We list on page 91 the written evidence we received.

9 Foreign Affairs Committee, "Announcement of new inquiry: *UK-Turkey Relations and Turkey's Regional Role*", press notice, 15 July 2011

10 Home Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2010–12, *Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*, HC 789

6. In Turkey in early November 2011, we visited Ankara and Istanbul. We held informal discussions with representatives of the Turkish government and all four parliamentary parties, our counterpart Committee and a range of NGO representatives, academics, think-tank specialists and journalists, representatives of the Turkish and international business community, students and third country diplomats. We publish an outline of our programme in Turkey as an Annex to this Report. Before travelling to Turkey, we were hosted to lunch in London by the Turkish Ambassador, HE Ünal Çeviköz. Later in November, we were especially pleased to be able to hold an informal meeting in London with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was accompanying President Gül on his State Visit. We would like to thank all those who provided evidence, spoke to us, hosted us or otherwise assisted us in our inquiry, including British Ambassador to Ankara David Reddaway and Consul-General Jessica Hand, the relevant UK teams in Ankara and Istanbul and the FCO in London, Meltem Büyükkarakaş at the Turkish Embassy in London, Fadi Hakura at Chatham House and staff of the House of Commons Library.

7. We have also discussed Turkey-EU relations in the context of our ongoing 'rolling' inquiry into *EU Enlargement and Foreign Policy*, including during a short visit to EU and NATO institutions in Brussels in September 2011 and in an evidence session in November with Baroness Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission.¹¹ We also met informally with Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle on two occasions in 2011 when he was in London.

8. We identified two overarching strands in the Government's Turkey policy:

- an effort to strengthen the bilateral relationship with Turkey, as a "strategic partner" for the UK, and
- support for Turkey's accession to the EU.

Accordingly, we have arranged our Report into two parts. In Part One, we assess the Government's effort to cultivate Turkey as a "strategic partner", focusing on the overall effort (Chapter 2), Turkey's domestic political development and human rights (Chapter 3), Turkey as a foreign policy partner (Chapter 4), and economic and commercial relations (Chapter 5). In Part Two, we assess the Government's support for Turkey's EU accession, focusing on the objective (Chapter 6), the current process (Chapter 7), and ideas about an EU-Turkey partnership distinct from the accession process (Chapter 8). Throughout, we have sought to be alert to linkages between the two strands of Government policy.

11 Oral evidence taken before the Foreign Affairs Committee on 21 November 2011, HC (2010–12) 1642-i

PART 1: TURKEY AS A UK “STRATEGIC PARTNER”

2 Strengthening the bilateral relationship

UK-Turkey “Strategic Partnership”

9. The Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP, signalled his intention to strengthen the UK’s relationship with Turkey by visiting the country—accompanied by the Foreign Secretary—within three months of taking office, on his fourth official overseas bilateral visit. This sequencing placed Turkey after only France, Germany, Afghanistan and the US among the Prime Minister’s initial destinations for such visits.¹² In Ankara, in July 2010, Mr Cameron made a major and notably positive speech about Turkey and his ambitions for the UK-Turkey relationship, which he described as a “vital strategic” tie.¹³ Mr Cameron also signed with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a “Strategic Partnership” document which set out joint commitments on bilateral relations, regional stability, defence, international security issues (including counter-terrorism), illegal migration, energy security and low carbon development, intercultural dialogue, and education and culture.¹⁴ The FCO told us that the document set the agenda for measuring the Government’s success in its relationship with Turkey.¹⁵

10. Since Mr Cameron’s July 2010 visit, the Government has continued its effort to build relations with Turkey. Three elements have been especially prominent:

- High-level visits. Among Government ministers, Mr Cameron has been followed to Ankara by Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Minister for Europe (October 2010); Lord Sassoon, Commercial Secretary to the Treasury (March 2011); Lord Green, Minister of State for Trade and Investment (April 2011); Rt Hon Vince Cable MP, Business Secretary (September 2011); and Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Home Secretary (October 2011). Prime Minister Erdoğan returned Mr Cameron’s visit in March 2011, accompanied by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who has made three other official visits to London since the current UK Government took office. Most notably, President Gül made a State Visit to the UK in November 2011, the first by a Turkish Head of State since 1988. An article by the Foreign Secretary published to coincide with the Visit referred to the UK-Turkey tie as a “new special relationship”.¹⁶

12 May-July 2010 transparency data release for the Prime Minister, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk). Mr Cameron also held bilateral talks in the United Arab Emirates during a stopover as part of his Afghanistan visit.

13 David Cameron, speech in Ankara, 27 July 2010, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk)

14 “Turkey/United Kingdom Strategic Partnership”, Ankara, 27 July 2010, via FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk)

15 Ev 52

16 William Hague, “Britain and Turkey: a new special relationship”, *Telegraph* website (www.telegraph.co.uk), 22 November 2011

- New UK-Turkey Forum. During Mr Erdoğan's visit to London in March 2011, he and Mr Cameron established a UK-Turkey Forum to be known as "Tatli Dil" ("Sweet Talk"). The Forum is made up of figures from politics, business, academia, the media and the arts. It is to meet annually, alternating between the UK and Turkey, and to have one UK and one Turkish co-chair. The first "Tatli Dil" meeting was held at Ditchley Park in October 2011. EU High Representative Baroness Ashton and Minister for Europe Rt Hon David Lidington MP were the scheduled speakers. Among our witnesses, Dr Aybet of the University of Kent, Katinka Barysch of the Centre for European Reform, former Ambassador to Ankara Sir David Logan, John Peet of *The Economist* and Dr Robins of St Antony's College, University of Oxford, were participants. Sir David thought that "Tatli Dil" would add value by encompassing a broader range of people and issues than existing forums for UK-Turkey exchange. Dr Aybet thought that the forum would be useful in enabling an exchange of views outside the framework of Turkey's stalled EU accession process (see Chapters 7 and 8).¹⁷ We heard of "Tatli Dil" being compared to the long-established UK-German Königswinter Conference.
- Military co-operation. In November 2011, the Defence Secretary, Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, signed a Military Co-operation Treaty with the Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff, who was accompanying President Gül on his State Visit to London. The Treaty is aimed at facilitating greater bilateral co-operation across a range of military activities. Mr Hammond said that the Treaty would take such co-operation "to a new level".¹⁸ David Lidington told us that the Treaty would enable UK forces to train in Turkey, on a mixture of terrains useful in preparing for service in Afghanistan, for example.¹⁹

11. The Government's drive to upgrade the UK's ties with Turkey forms part of its strategy of strengthening the UK's bilateral relations with a number of emerging powers, primarily in Latin America, Asia and the Gulf. This strategy reflects the Government's view that global political and economic power is shifting away from the UK's traditional US and EU allies, and that bilateral relations are crucially important in this changing international environment. The Government sees the development of stronger bilateral relations with key emerging states as a means of both securing sustainable economic recovery and preserving international political influence, including in multilateral forums.²⁰ Under the National Security Council, the Government has established an Emerging Powers Sub-Committee, chaired by the Foreign Secretary, to agree cross-Government strategies for the

17 Qq 61–63 [Sir David Logan], Ev 65 [Dr Aybet]

18 "MOD signs a co-operation treaty with Turkey", Ministry of Defence press release 171/2011, 23 November 2011

19 Q 176

20 For example, William Hague, "Britain's Foreign Policy in a Networked World", speech at the FCO, London, 1 July 2010, via FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk); HM Government, *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, Cm 7953, paras 1.10–1.18; HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, Cm 7948, paras 5.3–5.8; FCO Business Plan 2011–15, November 2010 and May 2011 update, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk); Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, HC 665, Ev 77 ff. [FCO]

UK's relations with a number of emerging states.²¹ The Sub-Committee reviewed delivery against the UK-Turkey “Strategic Partnership” in July 2011.²²

12. In identifying Turkey as a “strategic partner” and maintaining strong relations with the country, the Government is continuing a policy pursued by its predecessor—although the intensity of the current Government's effort appears particularly marked. The former Prime Minister, Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, and Mr Erdoğan first announced a UK-Turkey “Strategic Partnership” when the latter visited London in October 2007. The document signed by Mr Cameron in 2010 to a large extent re-stated and renewed commitments made three years earlier. Mr Erdoğan made a further visit to London before the General Election, in March 2010; and President Gül's State Visit to the UK in 2011 returned a State Visit which Her Majesty The Queen made to Turkey in 2008, the first for 37 years. When Tony Blair was Prime Minister, he visited Turkey in 2004 and 2006. The continuing cross-party nature of successive UK Governments' positive approach to Turkey was highlighted by the appointment of the former Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, as the UK co-chair of the “Tatli Dil” forum.

13. We consider in the rest of Part One of our Report the Government's rationale for seeking to develop relations with Turkey in particular fields, and the results of its efforts so far. Overall, our witnesses agreed with the Government's assessment of Turkey as a rising economic and foreign policy power, with characteristics, assets and potential which could benefit the UK. For example, Sir David Logan described Turkey as “an increasingly important prize as a partner for the United Kingdom”.²³ Our witnesses therefore felt that the Government was correct to be pursuing an enhanced UK relationship with the country. The Turkish Area Study Group told us that the UK was “ideally placed to seek new avenues of co-operation with Turkey”.²⁴

14. Our impression is that the Government's effort to cultivate Turkey has been noticed and welcomed there, certainly in elite circles. When Mr Cameron was in Ankara in July 2010 Mr Erdoğan suggested that UK-Turkey relations were in a “golden age”.²⁵ Dr Robins told us that “viewed from the Turkish end, the coalition Government seem to have got things right”; he felt that its period in office had been “good for bilateral relations”. He suggested that Turkey would find especially gratifying the fact that the Government was pursuing enhanced relations with it as part of a wider strategy to strengthen relations with emerging global powers of the likes of India and China.²⁶

15. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified Turkey as a “strategic partner” for the UK and to be pursuing enhanced relations accordingly. We commend the Government for the concerted effort it has been making to this end, and we urge it to ensure that the effort is sustained and sustainable.

21 Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, HC 665, para 122

22 Ev 71 [FCO]

23 Q 59; see also Dr Aybet at Q 106.

24 Ev 121

25 Transcript of press conference with Turkish Prime Minister, 27 July 2010, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk)

26 Q 156

FCO resources

16. The FCO has seven posts in Turkey. As of the start of autumn 2011, their staffing levels were approximately as follows, subject to minor fluctuations:

Table 1: Staffing levels in the FCO Turkey network, early autumn 2011

Ankara	128 (including 4 SOCA, 2 UKBA, 7 UKTI, 2 Metropolitan Police, 5 MOD Defence Attachés)
Istanbul	146 (including 6 SOCA, 43 UKBA, 12 UKTI)
Izmir	7
Antalya	4
Bodrum	3
Marmaris	3
Fethiye	2
Total	293

SOCA—Serious Organised Crime Agency; UKBA—UK Border Agency; UKTI—UK Trade and Investment Staff of departments/organisations other than the FCO are counted among post staff whether the relevant department/organisation has office space in an FCO building, sole occupancy of an FCO property, or its own building within the FCO compound.

Sources: Ev 56–57 [FCO]; Public Accounts Committee, Forty-Eighth Report of Session 2010–12, Spending reduction in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, HC 1284, Ev 17ff. [FCO]

In March 2012, the FCO told us that it had 22 UK-based staff in Ankara, and 24 in Istanbul.²⁷

17. In line with the Government's effort to strengthen UK-Turkey ties, the FCO is expanding its diplomatic presence in Turkey. The country is one of 24 to be gaining diplomatic staff as part of the FCO "network shift" announced by the Foreign Secretary in May 2011. Under the plans, the FCO is expanding its presence in states to which the Government is giving increased priority (primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America), by reducing staff in some subordinate posts in Europe. An additional 72 UK-based diplomats and 107 locally-engaged staff are expected to be deployed to the favoured countries by 2015.²⁸ Of the 24 countries, China and India are gaining the most personnel (30–50), while Turkey is in a second group with Brazil, Mexico and Indonesia receiving a "substantial" expansion in the UK diplomatic presence.²⁹ Turkey is to gain 14 members of staff—three UK-based and 11 locally-engaged.³⁰ Of the three new UK-based officers, one is to work on counter-proliferation issues, and two in the commercial and economic field.³¹ In March 2012, one of the new officers was already in post, in Istanbul; the remaining two (one for

²⁷ Ev 79

²⁸ Oral evidence from Simon Fraser, Permanent Under-Secretary, FCO, taken before the Foreign Affairs Committee on 8 November 2011, HC 1618-i, Q 26. UK-based staff are recruited in the UK for potential deployment either in the UK or in overseas posts. Locally-engaged staff are recruited in-country, exclusively to fill positions at FCO posts there.

²⁹ HC Deb, 11 May 2011, cols 1166–69

³⁰ Ev 56 [FCO]

³¹ Q 244 [David Lidington]

Ankara and one for Istanbul) had been appointed but had not yet taken up their positions.³²

18. In our Report on *The Role of the FCO in UK Government* in 2011, we stressed the continuing importance of language skills among FCO diplomats.³³ The Foreign Secretary has committed himself to giving greater weight to language expertise in the FCO, as part of his “Diplomatic Excellence” programme of reform and intended improvement.³⁴ In our Report, we also welcomed indications from the FCO that it might “take a more strategic approach to managing the careers of its staff, in the interests of developing and maintaining specific bodies of corporate expertise”.³⁵ In his evidence to that inquiry, Sir David Logan already expressed disquiet about a lack of Turkish language skills among FCO staff in Turkey.³⁶

19. In its evidence to our current inquiry, the FCO told us that around 100 of its UK-based staff had Turkish language skills in some form.³⁷ Of these officers, around 20 had passed the FCO operational exam in Turkish, and around 25 the extensive exam.³⁸ However, in early December 2011, only one of the roughly 20 FCO staff who had passed the operational exam, and only one of the roughly 25 who had passed the extensive exam, were deployed in Turkey.³⁹ All the other 40+ FCO staff with an FCO operational or extensive Turkish language qualification were deployed in London or in overseas posts other than in Turkey. Meanwhile, only around half the designated Turkish-speaking positions in the FCO’s Turkey network were filled by staff with Turkish language skills of some sort.⁴⁰ This situation reflected the FCO’s current recruitment system, under which staff apply for particular positions according to preference, subject only to grade. This is despite the fact that the FCO-supported training from beginner to extensive level in Turkish is for a recommended 960 hours of one-to-one tuition; and that holders of FCO language qualifications receive additional remuneration for a number of years which we were told in March 2012 could total up to £5,165 a year for holders of the extensive qualification in Turkish.⁴¹

20. David Lidington told us that all the new UK-based staff positions in the Turkey network had a Turkish language requirement; and that as those positions were filled, the

32 Ev 79 [FCO]

33 Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, HC 665, paras 23, 157–164

34 Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, HC 665, paras 155, 157–164; Letter to the Chair from Simon Fraser, Permanent Under-Secretary, FCO, 13 October 2011, published on the Committee’s website as evidence to its inquiry into *FCO Performance and Finances*; William Hague, “The best diplomatic service in the world: strengthening the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as an institution”, speech at the FCO, London, 8 September 2011, via FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk).

35 Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, HC 665, paras 165–167

36 *Ibid.*, para 158

37 Ev 57

38 Ev 71 [FCO]. FCO language exams are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The FCO operational exam is equivalent to CEFR level C1 and the extensive exam to CEFR level C2.

39 Ev 71 [FCO]

40 Ev 71 [FCO]

41 Ev 79 [FCO]

number of UK-based staff in Turkey with Turkish language skills would rise. The FCO was encouraging UK-based staff in Turkey in non-speaker positions to learn the language in any case.⁴² As regards the presence of Turkish-speaking UK diplomats in London rather than Turkey, Pat Phillips, Head of the Enlargement and South East Europe Department at the FCO, said that several of them were dealing with Turkish issues.⁴³ Mr Lidington said that it would be the FCO's "expectation" that a diplomat who learned Turkish in London would shortly seek a posting in Turkey. However, he also said that he would take to the Foreign Secretary and Permanent Under-Secretary the suggestion that the FCO might require Turkish speakers among its diplomats to serve in the country.⁴⁴

21. We welcome the fact that the FCO is expanding its diplomatic presence in Turkey. We believe that this will signal to Turkey and others the seriousness of the Government's intent to develop the UK's relationship with Turkey, as well as help to deliver enhanced co-operation in key policy areas.

22. The effectiveness of UK diplomatic staff posted overseas is reduced if they cannot speak the language of their host country. We welcome the FCO's decision to require Turkish language skills of those taking up the new UK-based staff positions in its Turkey network. Although we want to see country experts shaping FCO policy-making in London, we are perturbed that so many of the department's Turkish speakers are deployed outside Turkey, and we regard this as symptomatic of the drawbacks of the FCO's current system for filling staff positions. We recommend that the FCO reform its recruitment system so that it can actively manage the language expertise it has at its disposal, to ensure that such expertise is deployed effectively and on an ongoing basis in the service of UK diplomatic objectives.

UK visa regime

23. Sir David Logan told us that "British visa policy is the issue which impacts most negatively on the UK's bilateral relations with Turkey".⁴⁵ Until late 2011, all Turkish passport holders were required to obtain a visa to visit the UK. Visa applicants must apply online, submit original documents, and submit biometric data at a pre-booked time at one of five centres, in Ankara, Bursa, Gaziantep, Istanbul or Izmir. Visa fees must be paid online; from the end of January 2012, they must be paid in US dollars. Long-term and multiple-entry visas are available. In February 2012, UK visa fees ranged from \$125 (for a visa for up to six months, or a year for academic visitors) to \$437 (two years), \$802 (five years) and \$1,158 (ten years). Applicants or their authorised representatives must collect their returned documents only from Ankara or Istanbul, or pay an additional fee for courier delivery.⁴⁶ In February 2012, applications made in Turkey for all types of non-

42 Q 179

43 Q 240

44 Q 242

45 Ev 60

46 UKBA website, March 2012 (www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/countries/turkey)

settlement visa were being processed within 60 working days (of receipt of biometric data), and almost all well within 40.⁴⁷ The refusal rate for visa applications in 2010 was 8%.⁴⁸

24. In both formal evidence and our discussions in Turkey, we heard complaints from Turkish interlocutors not so much about the fact of having to acquire a visa to visit the UK, as about the time, inconvenience and sometimes humiliation involved in having to submit so much personal and financial information and go through the relevant UKBA procedures and checks. We heard of complaints about the UK entry process both before acquiring a visa and, sometimes, during the journey to the UK. Sir David Logan told us that “many Turks, for example business people and academics who would otherwise come to the UK, decide not to submit themselves to [the] process”.⁴⁹ Dr Toksoz of Standard Bank International, for one, said that her father refused to visit her in the UK because of the visa issue.⁵⁰ Sir David thought that UK-Turkey trade and academic exchanges were probably both suffering from the visa problem;⁵¹ Dr Toksoz, the CBI and the financial services lobby organisation TheCityUK confirmed that the issue was affecting business relationships.⁵² John Peet of *The Economist* reported that the UK’s visa regime was the top issue raised by most Turkish participants at the UK-Turkey “Tatli Dil” meeting in October 2011.⁵³ Both Sir David and Dr Aybet of the University of Kent said separately that the visa regime was an “irritant” in the bilateral relationship and “inconsistent” with the UK’s interests and policy towards Turkey.⁵⁴ The European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), a Brussels-based NGO, said that the visa regime for travel into the EU, including the UK, was one of the reasons why Turkish citizens were turning away from the Union (see paragraphs 186 and 191).⁵⁵

25. Turkish passport holders require a visa for entry to the EU’s Schengen zone, as well as for the UK (which does not participate in the Schengen arrangements). As of late 2011, the Schengen states were expected soon to start to require biometric data from Turkish applicants. Turkey—and several of our witnesses—would like the Schengen countries to ease their visa regime, as they have for a range of Western Balkan and East European EU candidate and non-candidate countries;⁵⁶ but the relevant Member States have been unable for over a year to agree to launch formal negotiations with Ankara aimed at making it easier for Turkish nationals to obtain Schengen visas.⁵⁷

47 UKBA website, March 2012 (www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/countries/turkey)

48 Before Entry data tables, in Immigration Statistics July-September 2011, via the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research.

49 Ev 60

50 Q 170

51 Qq 70-72

52 Q 170 [Dr Toksoz], Ev 139 [CBI], 137 [TheCityUK]

53 Q 37

54 Ev 50 [Sir David Logan], Q 109 [Dr Aybet]

55 Ev 126

56 Q 95 [Ms Barysch], Ev 86 [Dr Bechev], 96 [Turkish Embassy], 101–102 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman], 126–128 [European Citizen Action Service], 130–132 [Economic Development Foundation]

57 Home Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2010–12, *Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*, HC 789, paras 66–70; “The time is now: changing EU visa policy on Turkey”, European Stability Initiative (ESI) Newsletter 2/2012, 13 March 2012

26. Turkey imposes a visa requirement on UK nationals, as it does on the nationals of some—but not all—Schengen and other EU states.⁵⁸ We discovered ourselves that the visa application form is quite lengthy and detailed, but biometric data is not required, and visas obtained in advance are free. We were told during our inquiry that Turkey introduced its current visa application form for UK nationals after the UK began using its similar lengthy document for Turkish applicants.

27. In its evidence to the Home Affairs Committee's 2011 inquiry into *Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*, the Home Office said that it needed to “ensure that HMG's visa policy strikes the right balance between security and prosperity”.⁵⁹ David Lidington told us that there was an “inherent tension” between the two considerations.⁶⁰ Sir David Logan said that abolishing altogether the UK's visa requirement for Turkish nationals might be “unrealistic”, but that “it should be possible to find ways to operate [the current visa regime] more efficiently and in a manner which does not appear to visa applicants to be unnecessarily arbitrary, intrusive and obstructive”.⁶¹ He also suggested that trade and academic bodies could be invited to participate in a body or process aimed at proposing improvements to the current system. Sir David said that the UK “urgently need[ed] a fair, transparent and simplified process which would enable *bona fide* intending visitors to come to the UK and develop links with the UK, rather than turn them elsewhere”.⁶² The European Citizen Action Service implied that the UK could and should take the lead among EU countries in liberalising entry conditions for Turkish nationals.⁶³

28. David Lidington told us that the Government had recently agreed to waive the UK visa requirement for holders of Turkish diplomatic passports. He also reported that discussions were underway at official level on a possible fast-track visa system for business visitors.⁶⁴

29. Despite the dissatisfaction which we encountered among our interlocutors with the UK's visa regime, applications for UK visas from Turkish nationals are on an upward trend:

58 Among nationals of EU Member States, ordinary passport-holders from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia do not require an entry visa for Turkey.

59 Home Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2010–12, *Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*, HC 789, Ev 34

60 Q 206

61 Q 70

62 Ev 60

63 Ev 128

64 Q 206

Table 2: UK entry clearance visas in all categories applied for and issued, Turkish nationals, 2005–2011

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Jan-Sep
Entry clearance visa applications	73,182	84,571	86,037	92,527	86,373	97,876	Not yet available
Entry clearance visas issued	67,652	78,698	80,016	84,021	79,740	87,822	70,145

Source: *Before Entry data tables, in Immigration Statistics July-September 2011, via the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research. Of applications, in addition to those refused some may be withdrawn or not resolved during the relevant time period.*

30. We conclude that the operation of the UK's visa regime for Turkish nationals is undermining the credibility of the Government's wish for a "strategic partnership" with Turkey, as well as being a significant practical and psychological obstacle to intensified relations. We welcome the fact that the FCO appears to recognise this and is taking steps to try to ease the UK regime. We recommend that the FCO start discussions with the UK Border Agency and the main academic, cultural and trade bodies engaged in the effort to build UK-Turkey relations on possibilities for: reducing visa fees; reducing the quantity of information required with visa applications, certainly for frequent visitors; introducing a 'fast-track' service for certain categories of applicants; and opening more centres in Turkey for the submission of biometric data and the collection of returned documents.

People-to-people contacts and public opinion

31. In 2010, there were estimated to be 72,000 Turkish-born people and 40,000 Turkish nationals resident in the UK.⁶⁵ UK nationals come into contact with Turkey primarily as tourists and, increasingly, as longer-term residents and property-owners there. We heard when we were in Turkey that there were over 10,000 British residents and over 30,000 property-owners there. During the Home Secretary's visit to Turkey in October 2011, she signed an agreement with her Turkish partners allowing the residence permit fee for UK residents in Turkey to remain permanently at a reduced rate.⁶⁶ As regards UK-Turkey visits, UK residents made 1.8 million visits to Turkey in 2010, a figure that rose by 6.5% annually on average between 2006 and 2010. Turkey was the eighth most popular destination for overseas visits by UK residents in 2010, up from tenth in 2009.⁶⁷ The UK ranks third as a source of tourists to Turkey, behind only Russia and Germany.⁶⁸ However, Turkey was not among the top 10 sources of overseas visitors to the UK in 2010: Turkish

65 *Population by country of birth and nationality*, Office for National Statistics

66 "Ambassador David Reddaway's message to British Citizens", 31 October 2011, via the website of the British Embassy in Turkey (www.ukinturkey.fco.gov.uk).

67 *Travel Trends 2010*, Office for National Statistics: Table 4 (p 15), Figure 14 (p 27), Table 3.10 (p 70)

68 Ev 120 [Turkish Area Study Group]

residents made 129,000 visits to the UK that year, a figure which fell by an average of 3.8% each year between 2006 and 2010.⁶⁹

32. The BBC World Service continues to provide a Turkish-language service, but it discontinued radio broadcasts in Turkish in March 2011. Turkish was one of seven language services which halted radio broadcasts as a result of the cut made to the World Service's FCO grant under the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review.⁷⁰ In our Report in April 2011 on *The Implications of Cuts to the BBC World Service*, we called for the Spending Review cut in funding for the World Service to be reversed.⁷¹ Closure of the Turkish service's radio broadcasts meant the loss of an audience of 450,000, and five jobs. The closure was expected to save £222,000 a year in content and production costs, with further savings arising in distribution, overhead and support costs.⁷² The World Service accounted for its decision to halt Turkish-language radio by saying that Turkey had low levels of radio listenership (below 30% in major population centres), with television being far more important, and internet availability standing at 45% of the population and rising.⁷³ The World Service said that it would increasingly focus on television and online content in Turkish: it introduced a TV service with a local partner in 2008 which it said had 1.7 million weekly viewers; and in October 2011 its Turkish-language online service was reaching 500,000 weekly unique users (462,000 in Turkey).⁷⁴ The World Service put its total post-cuts audience in Turkey at 1.65 million.⁷⁵

33. We are concerned that the cut to the FCO grant to the BBC World Service which was made under the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review has caused the World Service to discontinue radio broadcasts in Turkish, losing the Service a radio audience of 450,000 (a fifth of its total audience in Turkey). In line with our overall view on the cuts to the World Service, we question whether the savings made are proportionate to the resulting loss of UK influence.

34. The Turkish Area Study Group drew our attention to UK-Turkish exchanges in higher education.⁷⁶ For example, in 2005 Prime Minister Erdoğan announced the creation of a Chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies in the European Institute at the London School of Economics, endowed by the Turkish government and four other Turkish public- and private-sector donors.⁷⁷ The British Council told us that there were 70 partnerships between the UK and Turkey in higher education, with 55 UK universities active in Turkey (up from 35 in 2008).⁷⁸ The FCO has provided 102 Chevening Scholarships to Turkish

69 *Travel Trends 2010*, Office for National Statistics: Table 3 (p 15), Table 2.10 (p 48)

70 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The Implications of Cuts to the BBC World Service*, Sixth Report of Session 2010–11, HC 849, para 18

71 *Ibid.*, para 16

72 *Ibid.*, Ev 32–35, 38–39 [BBC World Service]

73 *Ibid.*, Ev 33 [BBC World Service]

74 Ev 139 [BBC World Service]

75 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The Implications of Cuts to the BBC World Service*, Ev 39 [BBC World Service]

76 Ev 40–41

77 www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/ContemporaryTurkishStudies

78 Ev 133

nationals in the last five years to study in the UK.⁷⁹ We heard in Turkey that the number of Turkish students coming to the UK to study was rising strongly, mainly in economics, business and management, but that English-language and visa requirements could present difficulties. We also heard during our inquiry about the work of the British Institute at Ankara, an overseas institute of the British Academy, which funds and facilitates academic research in Turkey, and UK study and visits for Turkish scholars, in various fields of the humanities.⁸⁰ However, the Turkish Area Study Group said that there had been a “serious contraction” in Turkish studies in UK universities in recent years, with only the University of Oxford and the School of Oriental and African Studies left offering degree programmes in the subject.⁸¹

35. Among the UK population, our impression is that Turkey does not have an especially high standing. For example, in the Chatham House–YouGov Survey 2011, when UK respondents were asked to identify European countries about which they felt especially favourable from a list of 14, Turkey came twelfth, above only Poland and Russia. Turkey came third in the ranking of selected European countries about which UK respondents felt especially unfavourable, below only Greece and Russia. In the equivalent 2010 survey, Turkey came fifteenth of 16 in the ‘positive’ ratings and second in the ‘negative’ list. Asked in 2011 about UK diplomatic ties with Turkey, more UK respondents (20%) thought that they should become weaker than stronger (11%), with 49% preferring no change. In his summary of the 2010 survey, Peter Kellner of YouGov identified Turkey as one of the emerging powers which the Government was targeting for an enhanced partnership but which had a “negative image among the general public”.⁸²

36. Our impression is that Turkey’s relatively low standing with the UK public results partly from low visibility, away from fields other than tourism, and perhaps football. David Lidington suggested that Turkey lost out partly because its history was little taught in UK schools.⁸³ The Turkish Area Study Group urged the Government to promote Turkish studies in the UK education sector.⁸⁴ Sir David Logan suggested that “negative opinion [about Turkey] is soft and could be turned round in the right circumstances”,⁸⁵ although David Lidington acknowledged that public opinion could be changed only slowly.⁸⁶ We have been struck by the way in which British people—including the Minister,⁸⁷ and ourselves—often seem to form a more positive impression of Turkey in some respects after having visited the country. The Turkish Area Studies Group recommended that the Government consider promoting “twinning” relationships between UK and Turkish

79 Ev 71 [FCO]

80 Q 59 [Sir David Logan], Ev 120 [Turkish Area Study Group]

81 Ev 121

82 *British Attitudes Towards the UK’s International Priorities: A Chatham House–YouGov Survey*, Chatham House, July 2010; *The Chatham House–YouGov Survey 2011: British Attitudes Towards the UK’s International Priorities: Survey Results*; and Robin Niblett, *The Chatham House–YouGov Survey 2011: British Attitudes Towards the UK’s International Priorities: Survey Analysis*, both Chatham House, July 2011. Turkey’s inclusion in the group of European (rather than worldwide) countries for comparison may have affected the survey results.

83 Q 191

84 Ev 121

85 Q 75

86 Q 191

87 Q 191

towns, or perhaps London boroughs and Istanbul municipalities, in order to promote greater mutual awareness.⁸⁸

37. In recent years, Turkey has begun to open a network of “Yunus Emre” centres overseas, along the lines of the British Council, Goethe-Institut or Institut Français. This is an element in Turkey’s newly-ambitious foreign policy (which we discuss in Chapter 4), especially its ‘soft power’ component. Turkey opened the first Yunus Emre centre in Western Europe in London, in late 2010.⁸⁹

38. We conclude that the Government’s ambitions for a new “special relationship” between the UK and Turkey appear to find little popular resonance, but that this may be due to what appears to be Turkey’s relatively low visibility in the UK, and that the situation may therefore be capable of being improved.

British Council in Turkey

39. The British Council has been working in Turkey since 1940. It has offices in Ankara and Istanbul, with staffs of 22 and 31 people, respectively, in March 2012.⁹⁰ It told us that it would have face-to-face contact with over 400,000 people in Turkey in 2011, and engagement of some form with 20 million, including through its digital presence. The British Council’s budget for its Turkey operation is £3.1 million in 2011–12, with a further £1.8 million expected to be earned through exam services.⁹¹ The British Council’s work in Turkey is facing some reduction in grant funding from the FCO as a result of the department’s settlement in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review,⁹² but we heard on our visit that it is being protected compared to the scale of some of the cuts being made to British Council work elsewhere, owing to the priority status which Turkey enjoys.

40. The British Council is focusing much of its work in Turkey on the education sector, particularly English language learning, for which we heard there is huge demand from Turkey’s large young population. The British Council was obliged to cease face-to-face English teaching in Turkey in 2004, following the terrorist attacks on the British Consulate-General in Istanbul and other UK targets in Turkey the previous year; but it hopes to re-enter the market soon, subject to the resolution of some tax and status issues. In the British Council’s portfolio of English language-learning work in Turkey, direct teaching would stand alongside teacher training work, the provision of exam services and English language teaching content, and the holding of various public language-learning activities and events. The British Council is also engaging with the Turkish authorities on education reform and innovation more widely.⁹³

41. The British Council in Turkey is also engaged in a range of programmes in the arts, culture and society.⁹⁴ We heard on our visit that the British Council regards raising

88 Ev 121

89 Ev 121 [Turkish Area Study Group]

90 Ev 142. The British Council’s staff in Istanbul included four UK-appointed personnel with a wider regional role.

91 Ev 132 [British Council]

92 Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2010–11, *FCO Performance and Finances*, HC 572, paras 74–86

93 Ev 132–134 [British Council]

94 Ev 133–134 [British Council]

Turkey's profile in the UK as an important part of its work. In that context, we were pleased to hear that Turkey will be the featured country at the 2013 London Book Fair; the British Council said that the event would provide "an unparalleled opportunity [...] to build a cultural partnership programme that promotes greater understanding of the UK in Turkey and of Turkey in the UK".⁹⁵

42. We recommend that the British Council in Turkey should guard against any risk of becoming 'just' an English language-learning organisation. We recommend that the British Council should use the vital contact which it is building up with Turkish young people through its English language work to further their awareness of the UK; and that it should ensure that the wider promotion of awareness of the UK in Turkey and Turkey in the UK is a central part of its role. The FCO and the British Council should take advantage of Turkey's embrace of 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy to welcome and assist efforts by their Turkish partners, such as the new Yunus Emre Turkish Culture Centre in London, to improve understanding of contemporary Turkey in the UK.

43. Like the British Council in other overseas locations (and the FCO), the British Council in Turkey is making increased use of locally-engaged staff, as opposed to personnel deployed from the UK. In March 2012, the British Council told us that only two of its 22 staff in Ankara, and six of its 31 staff in Istanbul, were UK-appointed.⁹⁶ While the British Council's locally-engaged staff in Ankara were clearly enthusiastic and in possession of valuable local knowledge, we were struck when we visited the office that very few appeared ever to have visited the UK.

44. There must be a doubt over the extent to which locally-engaged staff, however enthusiastic, can represent the UK to the British Council's host countries if they have had little exposure to the UK themselves. The concomitant of the cost savings achieved by making increased use of locally-engaged staff must be that the British Council commits to bringing such staff on visits to the UK on a regular basis. We recommend that in response to this Report the British Council should set out its practice and plans with respect to ensuring that its locally-engaged staff are regularly exposed to the UK.

45. The British Council will be delivering in Turkey the 2012 London Olympics international legacy programme, "International Inspirations", which is aimed mainly at children.⁹⁷ In our 2011 Report on the public diplomacy aspects of the London Olympics, we concluded that the FCO was "right to use the [2012] Games to promote British culture and values at home and abroad".⁹⁸ When we visited the British Council in Ankara, we were struck by the extent to which its branding and promotional material was dominated by the 2012 Olympics, to the exclusion of other markers of British identity and culture.

46. Turkey (Istanbul) has announced that it is bidding to host the 2020 Summer Games (against Baku, Doha, Madrid and Tokyo). The host city will be announced in 2013.

95 Ev 133

96 Ev 142

97 Ev 134; see Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2010–11, *FCO Public Diplomacy: The Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012*, HC 581, paras 37, 42.

98 Foreign Affairs Committee, *FCO Public Diplomacy: The Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012*, para 51

47. We recommend that the British Council and FCO should exploit the fact that Turkey is bidding for the 2020 Summer Olympics to use the public diplomacy programmes associated with the 2012 London Games to promote the UK in Turkey in a particularly intensive way. However, we further recommend that the British Council should not allow the Olympics 'brand' to take over the broader promotion of UK identity and culture in Turkey. We recommend that the FCO and British Council should report to us after the 2012 London Games on the Olympics-related work which they have conducted in Turkey and its impact on Turkish attitudes towards the UK.

48. The activities of the British Council in Turkey, as well as of the British Institute at Ankara, are governed by a bilateral cultural agreement which dates from 1956. We heard in Turkey that the Government would like to pursue an updated version of the agreement.

49. We recommend that in its response to this Report the FCO should set out its rationale for pursuing, its key objectives for, and its plans for securing, a new UK-Turkey cultural agreement to update that concluded in 1956.

3 Turkey's domestic political development and human rights

50. Turkey's democratic and human rights practices matter for the UK Government's ambitions for the UK-Turkey relationship. We therefore decided to devote a chapter of our Report to their consideration. Supporting further improvements in Turkey's democratic and human rights standards is among the aims of FCO policy.⁹⁹ Given the Government's declared support for human rights as a central element in its foreign policy,¹⁰⁰ it would face a reputational risk in developing a "strategic partnership" with Turkey if Turkey's democratic and human rights standards were poor or deteriorating. Turkey's practices in this respect, especially its legal and judicial systems, affect the environment for UK nationals working, living and visiting in Turkey; and a perception that Turkey has a poor democratic and human rights record seems likely to be partly responsible for the country's relatively low standing with the UK public.¹⁰¹ If the Government is to achieve its aim of seeing Turkey inside the EU, the Member States will need to be able to state that Turkey fulfils the political criterion for accession, of exhibiting "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities".¹⁰² Finally, the UK holds the six-monthly Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from November 2011. The Government's top priority for its Chairmanship is reform of the European Court of Human Rights, with the intention, among other objectives, of reducing its backlog of cases.¹⁰³ At the end of 2011, of the 47 states whose citizens can apply to the Court, Turkey accounted for 10.5% of the 151,600 pending cases requiring a judicial decision, second only to Russia.¹⁰⁴

The nature of AKP rule

51. Turkey's recent politics have consisted most prominently of a struggle between, on the one hand, the secular republican establishment (including the military), committed to perpetuating what it sees as the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic; and, on the other, political forces with 'Islamist' roots. The struggle has been conducted through constitutional amendment, judicial proceedings and military intervention as well as elections. Since the parliamentary elections of 2002, which re-ordered Turkey's political landscape, the main Kemalist political party has been the social democratic Republican People's Party (CHP), while the 'Islamists' have been represented by the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Having won office in 2002 and re-election in 2007, the AKP won a third successive victory in the election held in June 2011. It again

99 Ev 54 [FCO]

100 See Foreign Affairs Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2010–12, *The FCO's Human Rights Work 2010–11*, HC 964, paras 7–12.

101 Ev 113 [Fadi Hakura]

102 Conclusions of the European Council, Copenhagen, 21–22 June 1993

103 "Foreign Secretary announces UK priorities for UK Chairmanship of Council of Europe", FCO press release, 7 November 2011; Prime Minister David Cameron, Speech on the European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg, 25 January 2012, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk)

104 European Court of Human Rights, *Analysis of Statistics 2011*, January 2012, Chart 3, via www.echr.coe.int

increased its share of the vote, to 49.8%. Dr Dimitar Bechev of the European Council on Foreign Relations told us that the AKP had “largely won [the] battle to emerge as [the] dominant force in Turkish politics”.¹⁰⁵

52. The degree and pace of change being wrought in Turkey under AKP rule was one of the main themes to emerge from our inquiry. Professor Dodd described the changes as “little short of revolutionary”,¹⁰⁶ and one of our independent interlocutors in Turkey said that the country was one of the fastest-changing in Europe.

53. Our witnesses and interlocutors were in agreement, in particular, that AKP rule has seen a decisive and welcome assertion of civilian over military political authority. The resignations and replacements of the chief of the general staff and all three service chiefs in July 2011 were seen as especially significant.¹⁰⁷ We heard from no-one who thought that another military intervention in politics was likely in the foreseeable future.¹⁰⁸ Dr Robins described the military as “chastened”, and said that it was seeking “almost a partnership with the government”, whereby it could still influence policy in security matters that were properly within its remit, while being aware that it could no longer define almost any subject as a security issue.¹⁰⁹ Some interlocutors attributed the military’s reticence partly to the AKP government’s continuing popularity, which might be vulnerable were the economy to deteriorate (see Chapter 5). Dr Robins speculated about an international turn back towards authoritarian rule, under extreme economic conditions, in which case a military comeback in Turkey might “seem less outlandish”. However, under current circumstances, he advised that “the working position would be that the weakening of the military’s influence is irreversible”.¹¹⁰ Some of our interlocutors said that there was still a way to go to entrench in lasting institutional terms a proper role for the military and comprehensive civilian oversight of it. The new constitution planned by the re-elected AKP government was highlighted as an important opportunity in this respect (see paragraphs 86–90).

54. Western responses to AKP rule have typically been conditioned by the party’s ‘Islamist’ roots. This has been the case especially because of the charged international atmosphere surrounding the relationship between political Islam on the one hand, and democracy and the West on the other, in the aftermath of the September 2001 attacks on the US and the 2004 and 2005 bombings in Madrid and London. We heard that President Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan and others in the core AKP circle were personally pious Muslims. We also heard that the AKP’s rule reflected and fostered the values of its often devout electorate, which were undoubtedly more socially conservative than those of opposition voters.¹¹¹ However, all our witnesses who addressed the subject distinguished these characteristics from an ‘Islamist’ political agenda and said that it would be a misconception

105 Ev 85

106 Ev 115; see also Ev 85 [Dr Bechev], Q 60 [Sir David Logan].

107 Q 138 [Dr Robins]

108 Ev 87 [Dr Bechev], 100 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman], 119 [Turkish Area Study Group]

109 Q 138

110 Q 140

111 Qq 84 [Sir David Logan], 164 [Dr Toksoz, on the position of women]; Ev 116 [Professor Dodd]

to see the AKP as seeking to 'Islamicise' the Turkish state.¹¹² John Peet told us that the AKP had "governed in many respects as a fairly normal centre-right party, akin to a European Christian Democratic party".¹¹³

55. During his high-profile visit to Cairo in September 2011, aimed at promoting Turkey's influence in Egypt and other revolutionary Arab states (see paragraphs 104 and 132), Prime Minister Erdoğan advocated the secular state as wholly compatible with individuals' practice of Islam. He said that Egyptians were "mistaken" if they thought that secularism meant that religion would be removed from the state, or that the population would be atheist; rather, Mr Erdoğan said that secularism meant respect for all religions, and for atheists. His remarks were reportedly poorly received by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which did not furnish a large sending-off crowd for Mr Erdoğan like the one which had greeted him enthusiastically on his arrival in Cairo and in which Muslim Brotherhood members had featured prominently.¹¹⁴

56. We were made aware that there was some unease among some of Turkey's secular population in case the AKP had more 'Islamist' ambitions which were yet to become evident; and/or in case informal and societal pressures and expectations came to disadvantage secular citizens, even without formal institutional or policy measures. Professor Dodd told us that "many Turks are deeply worried that society is becoming more Islamic and will not easily continue to accept it".¹¹⁵

57. We have encountered little evidence that the AKP government is seeking to 'Islamicise' the Turkish state. We conclude that the AKP is best seen as akin to a socially conservative Christian Democrat party, continuing to govern within a secular state. However, some among Turkey's secular population are uneasy lest the effort to make Turkish public life more welcoming to openly devout Muslims comes to tip into disadvantage for secular citizens. We recommend that the FCO should remain vigilant on issues of religious freedom and discrimination and should ensure that its Turkish partners are clear about its stance in this respect.

Legal cases and justice system

58. John Peet told us that "the real danger with the [AKP] in government was never Islamism [...] but rather the autocratic instincts of Prime Minister Erdoğan".¹¹⁶ Mr Peet was sufficiently concerned about Turkey's direction of travel under Mr Erdoğan to advocate, in his editorial capacity at *The Economist*, a vote for the opposition CHP in the June 2011 election.¹¹⁷ He told us that while he had been an admirer of the AKP government, he had

112 For example, Q 84, Ev 58 [Sir David Logan]

113 Q 32. The AKP is a member of the European People's Party, the largest grouping of European Christian Democrat, conservative and centre-right parties.

114 "Seeking Mideast influence, PM presents Turkey as model for Arabs and for challenging Israel", Associated Press, 13 September 2011; "In Cairo, Brotherhood irked at Erdogan's call for secular constitution. Islamists tell Turkish leader region's future will be decided by Arabs alone", *Jerusalem Post*, 15 September 2011; "Moderate Egyptians said to welcome Turkish premier's remarks on secularism", BBC Monitoring report of article on Hurriyet website, 16 September 2011; Khaled Diab, "Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Arab hero?", *Guardian Unlimited*, 22 September 2011

115 Ev 116–117; see also Q 164 [Dr Toksoz, on the position of women].

116 Q 32

117 "One for the opposition", *The Economist*, 4 June 2011; see also John Peet, "Turkey after the 2011 Election: Challenges for the AK Government", Chatham House transcript, 5 July 2011.

“legitimate grounds for worry about the future direction of the country” under its rule, in particular owing to some of Mr Erdoğan’s apparent personal traits.¹¹⁸ Dr Bechev, Dr Robins, and Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffmann all expressed concern that there was a concentration of power in AKP hands.¹¹⁹ Professor Dodd said that the government did “not take criticism easily”,¹²⁰ and David Logan suggested that it was “impatient with restraints on its exercise of power”.¹²¹

59. International concern about the quality of democracy in Turkey rose through 2011 and into 2012 largely owing to developments associated with the justice system. Human Rights Watch told us that “the weakness in Turkey’s criminal justice system coupled with vaguely drawn laws [...] lead to persistent human rights violations”.¹²² In January 2012, the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, published a report on the administration of justice in Turkey based on a visit there which he made shortly before our own.¹²³ Mr Hammarberg concluded that there were “some long-standing, systematic dysfunctions in the domestic justice system adversely affecting the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Turkey, as well as the public’s perception of the system’s effectiveness, independence, and impartiality”.¹²⁴ In its commentary on Mr Hammarberg’s report, as well as other developments, the *Financial Times* identified “disturbing signs of a growing authoritarianism” in Turkey.¹²⁵ The Turkish government rebutted many of the claims in Mr Hammarberg’s report in the response which it annexed to it.

60. Many of the most prominent controversial legal proceedings are being pursued as part of one of two overlapping groups of cases:

- “Ergenekon”. Proceedings began against those allegedly involved in the so-called “Ergenekon” conspiracy in 2007. The conspiracy was allegedly aimed at the violent overthrow of the AKP government, but the case has broadened into investigations of the so-called “deep state” extending back well before the AKP took office. The “deep state” allegedly united Turkish military and security personnel with terrorist and organised crime figures in defence of what was seen as the established Kemalist order. Numbers can be hard to pin down, but “Ergenekon” is reckoned to have caught up hundreds of military officers, civil servants and journalists; as of March 2012, two CHP MPs were among those imprisoned pending trial. In January 2012, the former chief of the general staff became one of the latest high-profile figures to be detained.

118 Qq 32, 41

119 Ev 86–87 [Dr Bechev], 99–10 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman], Q 141 [Dr Robins]

120 Ev 116

121 Ev 59

122 Ev 89

123 “Administration of justice and protection of human rights in Turkey”, Report by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, 10 January 2012, CommDH(2012)2; hereafter, Hammarberg

124 Hammarberg, para 125

125 “Erdogan, justice and the rule of law”, *Financial Times*, 11 January 2012

- “Sledgehammer”. The “Sledgehammer” proceedings are being brought against those allegedly involved in an alleged military coup plot dating to 2003. As of March 2012, an MP of the nationalist MHP opposition party was among those detained.¹²⁶

As a consequence of the “Ergenekon” and “Sledgehammer” cases, in early 2012 over 250 former and serving military officers were reported to be in detention, including around 10% of serving generals and admirals.¹²⁷ No convictions had been secured in either set of cases.

61. Dr Robins explained that there were two opposed views of the cases:

One side says that this is payback time from the AKP for hostile actions in the past against it by former military figures, former journalists, former bureaucrats *etc.* Others say [...] there has been a history in Turkey of conspiracies of hidden activity aimed at subverting the government of the day [...] even at bringing the military back to power.¹²⁸

In its latest annual ‘progress report’ on Turkey, in October 2011, the European Commission said that the cases “remain[ed] an opportunity for Turkey to shed light on alleged criminal activities against democracy and to strengthen confidence in the proper functioning of its democratic institutions and the rule of law”.¹²⁹ Dr Robins told us that “it may have suited the [...] government to intimidate, a little bit, some of its opponents”, but that the situation was now more likely to damage the government’s reputation, as the protracted nature of the “Ergenekon” case “begins to infringe ideas of natural justice”.¹³⁰

62. On 12 March 2012, as we finalised this Report, the two most prominent journalists imprisoned as part of the “Ergenekon” inquiry were released on bail, together with two others.¹³¹ The releases were welcomed by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and by the international press freedom NGOs the Committee to Protect Journalists and Reporters without Borders.¹³²

63. A third set of controversial legal cases concerns the Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK). The KCK is an umbrella Kurdish organisation with links to the armed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). The UK lobby group Peace in Kurdistan told us that the Turkish state regards the KCK as a front for the PKK, which is proscribed in Turkey, the EU and the US as a terrorist organisation.¹³³ Most of those arrested in the KCK cases are

126 Ev 99 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman]

127 “Turkey clips military’s wings while top brass leave the field”, *Financial Times*, 2 August 2011; Gareth H. Jenkins, “The changing objects of fear: The arrest of Ilker Basbug”, *Turkey Analyst*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 9 January 2012; “‘Treason’ in Turkey; Prosecutors wage war on suspected coup conspirators-but at what cost to the country?”, *Newsweek*, 5 March 2012

128 Q 139

129 European Commission, Turkey 2011 Progress Report, SEC(2011) 1201 final, 12 October 2011, p 7

130 Q 139

131 “Turkey: Court Frees 4 Journalists Accused in Plot”, *New York Times*, 13 March 2013

132 “OSCE media freedom representative welcomes release of Turkish journalists”, press release, Vienna, 12 March 2012; “Turkey releases journalists, grave concerns remain”, Committee to Protect Journalists, 12 March 2012; “Four journalists released but fight goes on for dozens still held”, Reporters without Borders, 13 March 2013

133 Ev 107

suspected of terrorism-related offences. Over 150 people are on trial in the main KCK proceeding, with thousands reported to be on trial in total and hundreds in pre-trial detention.¹³⁴ As of March 2012, the detainees included six MPs of the main Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), including one who had been convicted. There was an intensified wave of arrests in late 2011 and early 2012 for alleged KCK connections (see paragraph 80).

64. On our visit to Turkey, we were taken aback by much of what we heard about Turkish legal proceedings and practices, finding them inconsistent with our experience otherwise of an open and democratic country pursuing EU membership. We were struck by shortcomings we heard about in four inter-linked areas, in particular:

- Legislative and other statutory provisions. Despite reforms introduced in recent years, Turkish law allows prosecutors a wide latitude to launch proceedings. This applies especially with regard to membership of, or propaganda in favour of, a criminal organisation (under Article 220 of the Criminal Code), and with regard to terrorism-related offences under the Anti-Terrorism Act. Turkish law also continues to set long maximum periods for detention on remand—up to 10 years in state security cases.¹³⁵
- Judicial capacity. The Turkish justice system appears to be suffering from a serious lack of capacity. This is helping to generate a major backlog of cases: 1.4 million pending criminal cases and 1.1 million civil cases at the end of 2010.¹³⁶ Lack of capacity is also a cause of excessively long proceedings, which are the grounds for many of the judgments made against Turkey by the European Court of Human Rights. It is not uncommon for cases to last for over a decade.¹³⁷ The length of judicial proceedings in turn contributes to the length of time for which many suspects are imprisoned on remand.¹³⁸
- Disclosure. Suspects are sometimes not able to access full information about the grounds for their detention or the evidence against them.¹³⁹ Clear public information about detainees and cases is also often hard to come by.
- Judicial independence and professional structure and culture. We heard from interlocutors in Turkey that in some sense Turkish judges and prosecutors may almost be too independent—in the sense of comprising a unified, homogenous *cadre* with a set of long-established norms and sense of professional identity and purpose, based on common socialisation and career incentives. However, Dr

134 Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012*, p 504

135 Ev 89 [Human Rights Watch]; Hammarberg, para 38

136 European Commission, Turkey 2011 Progress Report, SEC(2011) 1201 final, 12 October 2011, p 17

137 Of cases in 2009, 2010 and 2011 in which the Court found at least one violation by Turkey, 28%, 36% and 33%, respectively, were for excessive length of proceedings; “Table of violations” for the relevant year, on the Statistics page of the Court’s website (www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Reports+and+Statistics/Statistics/Statistical+data).

138 Ev 89 [Human Rights Watch]; Hammarberg, p 2 and Section I. Mr Hammarberg reported that, as of April 2011, 43% of Turkey’s prison population had not been finally sentenced. In its response, the Turkish government said that it was incorrect to include in the tally those appealing their sentences, and that their exclusion brought the figure down to 28%.

139 Ev 89 [Human Rights Watch]

Robins also set out the more commonly-heard concern about the Turkish judiciary, namely that it is insufficiently independent: he said that it was difficult for the judiciary to remain independent in the face of “a single, dominant party with a very clear leader whose *modus operandi* leans in the direction of populist politics”.¹⁴⁰ Either way, in his report Mr Hammarberg characterised the attitudes exhibited by judges and prosecutors as “state-centred” rather than rights-centred.¹⁴¹ Given these circumstances, he suggested that, even where legislation had been reformed, its intention could be subverted by the way in which it was interpreted and applied by courts and prosecutors.¹⁴² Developments since the September 2010 constitutional referendum (which included reforms to the judiciary) and up to early 2012 surrounding a number of cases and legal amendments have tended to strengthen concerns about judicial independence in Turkey.¹⁴³ In this context, the proposed new constitution is likely to have particular significance for the independence of the judiciary.

65. We encountered a widespread view that torture had largely been eliminated from the Turkish criminal justice system, following significant efforts by the authorities. In 2011, Turkey ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, which obliges States Party to maintain an independent national preventative mechanism for monitoring places of detention.¹⁴⁴ However, Human Rights Watch highlighted continuing concerns about ill-treatment in custody, police violence against demonstrators, and impunity for police abuses. It advocated the creation of an independent police complaints authority, a step also urged by Mr Hammarberg in his report.¹⁴⁵

66. David Lidington told us bluntly that “Turkey is, regrettably, not yet in a place where one would have the same confidence in the judicial system as one would in the judicial systems of the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Norway and so on”.¹⁴⁶

67. We found Turkish officials aware of the shortcomings in the Turkish justice system. In Turkey, we heard about plans to recruit more judges and prosecutors (although Mr Hammarberg said in his report that this process has been underway for some years, even as case backlogs had continued to grow). In January 2012, the Justice Minister announced a major package of reforms to streamline procedures, eliminate some offences, reduce some sentences and narrow grounds for pre-trial detention.¹⁴⁷ In a commentary, Mr Hammarberg of the Council of Europe said that the proposals were “positive overall, [but did] not go far enough to resolve the issues they seek to address [and were] unlikely to

140 Q 142

141 Hammarberg, p 4 and para 113

142 Hammarberg, pp 4–6

143 Gareth H. Jenkins, “From politicization to monopolization? The AKP’s new judicial reforms”, *Turkey Analyst*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 7 February 2011; “Turkey must do more to ensure independent, impartial judiciary—UN rights expert”, press release, Gabriela Knaul, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, 14 October 2011; “Erdogan, justice and the rule of law”, *Financial Times*, 11 January 2012; “Erdogan moves to block inquiries”, *Financial Times*, 16 February 2012

144 Ev 90

145 Ev 90; Hammarberg, para 58

146 Q 212

147 “Turkey reform package seeks to streamline legal process”, *Financial Times*, 19 January 2012

represent a substantial improvement regarding the human rights situation in Turkey".¹⁴⁸ While welcoming some elements of the package, Human Rights Watch was similarly critical overall.¹⁴⁹ The FCO Minister Lord Howell told the House of Lords on 12 March that the Government welcomed the package, and that he understood further reforms to be planned. He also noted that the UK Embassy in Ankara was involved with a number of projects with the Turkish Ministry of Justice, including the training of judges and judicial reform. The legal reform package may be passed into law during March 2012, as this Report was being approved and published.¹⁵⁰

68. Some of the measures that appear to be required in the Turkish justice system, such as judicial and prosecutorial recruitment and training, and deep-seated attitudinal change, will necessarily take time. Others, such as reform of some judicial institutions, or statutory change to tighten definitions of offences and reduce maximum pre-trial detention periods, could be undertaken more quickly. **We recommend that the FCO should ensure that its Turkish partners are in no doubt that the shortcomings in the Turkish justice system are damaging Turkey's international reputation and leading to human rights abuses, in ways that make it harder to advocate, or imagine the realisation of, close UK-Turkey relations and Turkey's EU membership. We further recommend that the FCO should offer support to the package of reforms announced by the Turkish Justice Minister in January 2012 and should let its Turkish partners know that it would welcome the opportunity to assist in its further development and in further reforms in the justice system as they may request, involving also the Home Office and Ministry of Justice as appropriate.**

Human rights

69. Among human rights, freedom of expression and the media appear to be significant casualties of the shortcomings in the justice system. The FCO told us bluntly that "Turkish law does not currently guarantee freedom of expression in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and case law from the European Court of Human Rights".¹⁵¹ Large numbers of journalists have been caught up in the "Ergenekon" and KCK cases: following the wave of KCK arrests at the end of 2011, the number of journalists in detention may reportedly have reached around 100. This would put the number of journalists in jail in Turkey above that in China or Iran.¹⁵² In this environment, the FCO said that its media contacts reported a climate of self-censorship, something echoed by Professor Dodd and Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman, and which we also heard during our

148 Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, "Comments on the Turkish Bill on judicial reform of January 2012", Strasbourg, 20 February 2012, at www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Source/CommHR_comment_on_Turkish_Bill_on_judicial_reform.pdf

149 "Turkey: Draft Reform Law Falls Short", Human Rights Watch, 13 February 2012

150 HL Deb, 12 March 2012, col 34WA

151 Ev 54

152 Committee to Protect Journalists, 2011 Prison Census (as of 1 December 2011); "Turkish journalists arrested in sweep", *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 21 December 2011; "Charges against journalists dim the democratic glow in Turkey", *New York Times*, 5 January 2012; "Erdogan, justice and the rule of law", *Financial Times*, 11 January 2012; "104 Journalists and 30 Distributors in Prison", report by the Turkish human rights news website www.bianet.org/english, 31 January 2012; "Turkey leaves China standing when it comes to jailing journalists", *The Guardian*, 14 March 2012

visit.¹⁵³ Turkey has dropped from 102 (of 173) in Reporters without Borders' press freedom index in 2008 to 122 (of 175) in 2009, 138 (of 178) in 2010 and 148 (of 179) in 2011–12.¹⁵⁴ Turkish government figures and officials told us consistently that journalists were not being detained for their journalistic activities; in late January 2012, the number being reported by independent organisations for those definitely detained only for their journalistic activities seemed to range between five and eight.¹⁵⁵

70. Human Rights Watch also drew our attention to Turkish government plans for an internet filtering system. Since the June 2011 election, the AKP government has softened its earlier proposals, but Human Rights Watch still saw cause for concern in the fact that the Turkish executive and courts were blocking an estimated 15,000 websites, sometimes owing to their political content.¹⁵⁶

71. David Lidington told us that the Turkish Ministry of Justice had initiated a visit to London for its officials to discuss freedom of expression, following criticisms made by the European Commission in its October 2011 'progress report'. He described this as an "encouraging sign".¹⁵⁷ Changes aimed at enhancing freedom of expression are among the legal reforms announced by the Turkish government in January 2012.

72. Human Rights Watch also drew our attention to women's rights in Turkey. It welcomed the fact that in 2011 Turkey became the first signatory of the Council of Europe's new Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Turkey also became the first state to ratify, on 14 March 2012. (As of mid-March 2012, the UK had not signed the Convention.) However, Human Rights Watch said that overall "women's rights in Turkey [were] still given insufficient protection and priority". It urged the UK Government to press its Turkish counterpart to amend the Law on the Protection of the Family, to widen the law's applicability, as a first further step against violence against women.¹⁵⁸ The FCO said that there had been improvements in women's rights, but that honour killings, domestic violence, sexual assault and forced marriage still gave cause for concern.¹⁵⁹

73. The FCO told us that Turkey had committed to an extensive reform programme on religious freedoms.¹⁶⁰ We were pleased to hear about the return of many expropriated properties to religious foundations, under amendments to the law on foundations adopted in 2011, but we remain disappointed that there appears to have been little movement

153 Ev 54 [FCO], 100 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman], 116 [Professor Dodd]

154 Reporters without Borders Press Freedom Index 2011–12, via www.en.rsf.org. In 2011–12, the next lowest-ranked EU candidate country was at 94 (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and the lowest-ranked EU member was Bulgaria at 80.

155 "CPJ condemns journalist arrests in Turkey", Committee to Protect Journalists, Open Letter to Prime Minister Erdogan, 22 December 2011, via www.cpj.org; Committee to Protect Journalists, 2011 Prison Census (as of 1 December 2011); Roy Greenslade, "Trying to get at the truth of Turkey's jailed journalists", *Guardian Unlimited*, 9 January 2012

156 Ev 90; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012*, p 505

157 Q 193

158 Ev 89

159 Ev 54

160 Ev 54

towards the reopening of the Orthodox seminary at Halki, which is crucial for the long-term health of the Orthodox Church in Turkey.

74. Overall, the FCO said that there had been “significant and positive changes in recent years” as regards human rights in Turkey. Our witnesses agreed.¹⁶¹ When they gave evidence in autumn 2011, John Peet and Sir David Logan also felt that Turkey’s human rights situation was continuing to improve.¹⁶² However, David Lidington acknowledged that Turkey still had “further to travel”.¹⁶³

75. Human Rights Watch said that the Government should attach higher priority to human rights issues in its relations with Turkey.¹⁶⁴ Professor Dodd advised the Government to channel its efforts on democracy and human rights in Turkey through the EU, rather than appear to advance the UK as a model—although he recognised that having reforms advanced by the EU brought its own risks, given resentment in Turkey about the current blocking of its EU accession process (see paragraphs 186 and 191).¹⁶⁵ Several other witnesses felt that the UK was especially well-placed to promote democratic and human rights improvements in Turkey, because of the goodwill accumulated there as a result of successive UK Governments’ support for the country and its EU accession ambitions; witnesses felt that Turkish partners would not suspect the UK of raising human rights concerns in order to derail Turkey’s EU membership prospects.¹⁶⁶ We wondered whether the Government might be cautious about raising such concerns, at least in public, in case Turkey’s EU ambitions were damaged as a result; but Dr Bechev said that UK Government pressure on democracy and human rights was in any case best exerted in a “friendly, behind the scenes” way.¹⁶⁷ Sir David Logan said similarly that it was most important to try to find practical ways to assist Turkey on democracy and human rights issues, rather than simply state concerns.¹⁶⁸

76. Turkey has made welcome improvements in human rights standards in many areas over the last decade, but there is the appearance of a reversal in some respects. Many of the most potentially worrying developments concern legal proceedings, so it is often hard to form an assessment in the absence of firm public information about the relevant evidence, but we are clear that the current climate in Turkey is limiting freedom of expression and the media. This is despite the release on bail of four prominent journalists in March 2012, which we welcome. We conclude that Turkey’s human rights record remains a problem for the “strategic partnership” with the UK which we support, and for Turkey’s EU accession prospects. We recommend that the FCO should suggest that the Turkish government encourage prosecutors and judges to exercise restraint in the use of arrest and pre-trial detention, pending more thoroughgoing reform of the justice system. We further recommend that the FCO should seek

161 For example, Professor Dodd at Ev 116

162 Qq 43 [Mr Peet], 60 [Sir David Logan]

163 Q 193

164 Ev 88

165 Ev 116

166 Q 45 [Mr Peet], Ev 87 [Dr Bechev]

167 Ev 87

168 Q 79

every opportunity to help Turkey in practical ways to achieve further improvements in its human rights practices, including as regards freedom of expression and the media.

Kurdish situation

77. Two of our academic witnesses separately described the Kurdish issue as the “litmus test” for Turkish democracy.¹⁶⁹ In 2009, the AKP government initiated a ‘Democratic Opening’ towards the Kurds which Human Rights Watch said represented “a groundbreaking shift of language”.¹⁷⁰ Most notably, a 24-hour Kurdish-language state television channel was launched; some greater use of the Kurdish language was allowed; and channels of communication were opened with Abdullah Öcalan, the jailed leader of the armed Kurdish nationalist organisation, the PKK. The FCO told us that the democratic and cultural rights of Kurds had improved in recent years,¹⁷¹ and Sir David Logan said that the AKP government had done more than any predecessor in terms of talking to the PKK and challenging anti-Kurdishness in the nationalist press.¹⁷²

78. The ‘Democratic Opening’ ran into the ground relatively quickly.¹⁷³ In 2011, and especially since the June parliamentary election, the security situation and relations between the Turkish government and the Kurdish community in the south-east have deteriorated significantly. A renewed cycle of PKK attacks and counter-terrorist operations by the authorities began in May. Turkey re-started cross-border aerial and artillery attacks on PKK targets in northern Iraq in July, and made a brief land incursion in October. By January 2012, “hundreds of rebels, including senior commanders” were reported to have been killed in the Turkish operations, while dozens had died in PKK attacks.¹⁷⁴ On 28 December, a Turkish air raid just inside the Turkish-Iraqi border killed 34 Kurds who proved to be cross-border smugglers, not PKK fighters.

79. The UK Representation of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the party of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, told us that Turkish and Iranian attacks on Kurdish targets in northern Iraq were in breach of international law and threatening the security and stability of the country. It condemned what it said was the UK Government’s silence over the issue.¹⁷⁵ The UK lobby group Peace in Kurdistan urged the Government to try to persuade its Turkish counterpart to halt the strikes.¹⁷⁶ David Lidington told us that the Government was “not comfortable” with Turkey’s cross-border operations, but that the Turkish deaths being caused by PKK attacks were putting the government in Ankara under domestic political pressure, and that the UK Government felt it was “important to show solidarity”.¹⁷⁷

169 Ev 87 [Dr Bechev], 112 [Mr Hakura]

170 Ev 89

171 Ev 54

172 Q 80

173 International Crisis Group, “Turkey: Ending the PKK Insurgency”, Europe Report No. 213, 20 September 2011

174 “Death upon death”, *The Economist*, 7 January 2012

175 Ev 122

176 Ev 108

177 Q 215

80. In Turkey there has also been an intensified and sweeping wave of arrests of activists, journalists and lawyers, and officials and elected politicians of the main Kurdish political party, the BDP, for terrorism-related offences, on the basis of alleged links to the KCK. By early 2012, thousands of people were reckoned to be on trial for such offences, with hundreds subject to pre-trial detention; the BDP's functioning had been severely disrupted.¹⁷⁸ Peace in Kurdistan said that Kurds "widely regard [the KCK proceedings] as a mass show trial designed to criminalise all Kurdish civil society organisations".¹⁷⁹ Meanwhile, official communication with Mr Öcalan appeared to have ceased, and he was being denied access to his lawyers.¹⁸⁰

81. Human Rights Watch told us that the Turkish government tended to "view [the Kurdish] issue through the prism of counter-terrorism".¹⁸¹ Peace in Kurdistan made the same contention. It said that "Turkey's apparent current preference for a combined military and legalistic strategy to eliminate Kurdish resistance is very much a step backwards from the hopes of a 'democratic opening' announced only a couple of years ago".¹⁸² In the parliament elected in June 2011, the BDP has 29 MPs, a rise from the previous legislature; but Peace in Kurdistan argued that the subsequent launching of legal proceedings against non-violent, legal, political and civil society organisations was likely only to dissuade dissatisfied Kurds from pursuing peaceful and constitutional politics.¹⁸³

82. The BDP struck us as advancing a moderate programme which represented a potentially fruitful basis for engagement with the Turkish government—comprising enhanced Kurdish cultural rights (such as Kurdish-language education), and the decentralisation of power from Ankara to a system of sub-national government covering all of Turkey, not only the Kurdish-populated areas. The BDP seemed to us to be in a less close relationship to the PKK than, for example, Sinn Féin was to the IRA in Northern Ireland. However, this might carry disadvantages as well as advantages in terms of the BDP's ability to 'deliver' in support of any settlement process the disaffected Kurds in the south-east, among whom support for Mr Öcalan remains considerable.

83. As regards the most advisable way forward, there was some difference in approach among our witnesses. Human Rights Watch and Peace in Kurdistan prioritised Kurdish cultural rights, especially the right to mother-tongue education. Professor Dodd cautioned that Turkish nationalists tend to see requests for enhanced minority rights as leading to a 'slippery slope' that ends in independence, so he suggested that "British policy may need to be somewhat muted in this area".¹⁸⁴ Rather than Kurdish collective rights, he preferred the further integration into Turkish political structures of Kurds with some standing in Kurdish society (rather than 'Turkicised Kurds'), floating the notion of a "Kurdish Lloyd-

178 Human Rights Watch, "Turkey: Arrests expose flawed justice system", 1 November 2011; "Turkey's human rights challenges", 19 December 2011; *World Report 2012*, p 504

179 Qq 183–184

180 International Crisis Group, "Turkey: Ending the PKK Insurgency", Europe Report No. 213, 20 September 2011

181 Ev 88

182 Ev 105

183 Ev 107–108. The BDP's 29 MPs do not include a further five who were elected but have been prevented from taking their seats because they are under arrest; and a further one who was elected but stripped of his seat following conviction.

184 Ev 117

George” as a future leader of Turkey.¹⁸⁵ All our witnesses agreed that there could be no military solution to the Kurdish situation in the long term.¹⁸⁶

84. David Lidington implied that the Government had a two-track policy: encouraging reconciliation between the Kurdish population and the rest of Turkey, on the basis of improved rights to freedom of expression and Kurdish language use; but also supporting and co-operating with Turkey against PKK terrorism.¹⁸⁷ The FCO told us that recent police operations against the PKK in the UK had led to several arrests, asset seizures and a significant reduction in funding revenue.¹⁸⁸ Peace in Kurdistan charged the UK and EU with encouraging the Turkish government to see the Kurdish issue primarily as one of terrorism. However, the FCO said that PKK attacks “damage[d] the political will to make difficult compromises towards solving the Kurdish problem”.¹⁸⁹

85. Prospects for peaceful steps towards reconciliation between Kurds in the south-east and the Turkish state appear to be receding and in the process of being replaced by a return to confrontation and armed conflict. We are concerned about the civilian casualties—both inside and outside Turkey—which are being caused by the upsurge in the use of violence by both the PKK and the Turkish state. We recommend that the FCO should urge the Turkish government to make clear that the peaceful participation of representatives of the Kurdish community in Turkish public life remains welcome. We further recommend that the FCO should urge representatives of the Kurdish minority to condemn PKK violence and clearly spell out their wishes for enhanced cultural rights and sub-national government within Turkey. We further recommend that the FCO should offer the parties assistance, on the basis of the UK experience with Northern Irish terrorism and UK devolution, in exploring practical steps that could be taken now towards ending violence and achieving an accommodation between the Turkish state and Turkey’s Kurdish minority.

New constitution

86. Several of our witnesses made clear that many of the shortcomings which they identified in the quality of Turkey’s democracy and human rights practices derived from deep-rooted ideas about the nature of Turkish identity and the Turkish state that were encapsulated in the current constitution, which reflected Ataturk’s founding secular settlement. The constitution was put in place in 1982, under military rule, and several witnesses saw its defensive, state-centred spirit as underlying key negative features of Turkish public life.¹⁹⁰

87. The AKP promised a new constitution as a major plank of its 2011 election campaign. The AKP’s idea of the new constitution would appear to form part of its project to achieve significant change in the fundamental principles of the Turkish state, almost amounting to

185 Ev 117

186 For example, Peace in Kurdistan at Ev 108

187 Qq 183, 216–217

188 Ev 72

189 Ev 54

190 For example, Sir David Logan at Ev 59, Q 77; Human Rights Watch at Ev 88

the foundation of a Second Republic. Witnesses, including the FCO, saw the prospective new constitution as a unique opportunity to signal decisively Turkey's move away from its more authoritarian and military-dominated past, and to entrench and develop the democratising and liberalising reforms introduced in recent years.¹⁹¹ Witnesses stated that the Kurdish question, in particular, could only be addressed through fundamental constitutional reform.¹⁹² Human Rights Watch said that the new constitution should:

remove existing restrictions on freedom of expression and association, uphold the rights of all groups in Turkey and end discrimination against Turkey's various ethnic and religious minorities [...] guarantee the separation of powers, strengthen the role of parliament and limit the powers of the president, ensure the independence of the judiciary, and secure full civilian oversight of the military.¹⁹³

Witness including the FCO welcomed the wide consensus that appeared to exist in Turkey about the idea of a new constitution.¹⁹⁴

88. In the 2011 elections, the AKP failed to win the parliamentary super-majority that would have enabled it, if not to pass, then certainly to put to a referendum a new constitution without involving other political parties. Professor Dodd called this “good news for democracy”.¹⁹⁵ The FCO also welcomed what it called Prime Minister Erdoğan's “focus on compromise, dialogue and broad consultation across Turkish society” in his initial remarks about his plans for the constitutional process following the 2011 election.¹⁹⁶ In October, a parliamentary commission was established—comprising three MPs from each of the four parliamentary parties—to receive submissions and develop a proposed text. The parliamentary Speaker has said that he hopes to see a new constitution in place by the end of 2012.¹⁹⁷ However, Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman drew on the way in which the AKP government handled Turkey's previous referendum, in September 2010, to suggest that the constitutional process might not prove to be as inclusive and consensual as was promised.¹⁹⁸

89. Dr Robins told us that the renewed upsurge in conflict between the Turkish authorities and the PKK had “completely changed the national agenda as far as the direction of political reform [was] concerned”. He said that the new constitution held out the promise of being “a new document for a new partnership between Turks and Kurds living together within the overall community of Turkey as citizens with equal rights”, but that that prospect had been derailed.¹⁹⁹

191 Q 147 [Dr Robins]; Ev 53 [FCO]

192 Q 80 [Sir David Logan], Ev 88 [Human Rights Watch]

193 Ev 88

194 Ev 54 [FCO]

195 Ev 114

196 Ev 54

197 “End of 2012 deadline for new constitution”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 31 October 2011

198 Ev 99–100

199 Q 147

90. We conclude that a new constitution could be a unique opportunity to advance democratic, liberalising and pluralistic reform in Turkey and signal both at home and abroad a decisive break with the country's more authoritarian past. We welcome the Turkish government's ambitions in this respect, but we are concerned lest the constitutional momentum is lost amid renewed confrontation between government and opposition and Kurds and the Turkish state. We are further concerned in case the new constitution raises fresh risks to the independence of the judiciary. We recommend that the FCO should continue to remind its Turkish partners of the international importance that would attach to a successful constitutional reform effort.

4 Turkey as a foreign policy partner

Turkey's international position and policy

91. The Government wants to strengthen the UK's relations with Turkey in large part because it sees the country as a foreign policy partner. The Foreign Secretary announced in his first major speech in office that the Government would "make a particular diplomatic effort to work with Turkey".²⁰⁰ The FCO identified Turkey as having assets and characteristics potentially useful in a partner for the UK: membership of international organisations including NATO, the G20, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe; a "strong network of relationships and influence in regions where UK interests are significant", including North Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Western Balkans; and a status as a Muslim democracy.²⁰¹ Sir David Logan argued that Turkey was especially well-placed as a potential partner for the UK in its region, since its "geographical location, [...] historical (Ottoman) links and [...] shared (Muslim) religion are assets not otherwise available to the UK among our NATO allies and EU partners".²⁰² Mr Park highlighted Turkey's influence in the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (formerly the Organisation of the Islamic Conference),²⁰³ and several witnesses said that Ankara had developed a close relationship with the Arab League.²⁰⁴ The Turkish Area Study Group also highlighted Turkey's possession of significant fresh water resources, suggesting that this could become a further asset shaping the country's regional role.²⁰⁵

92. The FCO also said that it wanted to strengthen the UK's foreign policy partnership with Turkey because of the latter's rising international influence. Turkey's emergence as an international and especially regional force has been one of the more commented-upon international phenomena of recent years, above all in the context of the 'Arab Spring' (see paragraphs 104–112). For example, in November 2011 Philip Stephens in the *Financial Times* contended that "anyone with half an eye on the Middle East [...] will have noticed Turkey's emergence as the pivotal regional power";²⁰⁶ and in January 2012 researchers at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy said that Turkey's international outreach meant the country was best seen as a "Eurasian China".²⁰⁷ In terms of Turkey's exposure to

200 William Hague, "Britain's Foreign Policy in a Networked World", speech at the FCO, London, 1 July 2010, via FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk)

201 Ev 52–53

202 Ev 58

203 Ev 82

204 Qq 117 [Dr Aybet], 144 [Dr Robins]

205 Ev 120

206 Philip Stephens, "A story of Brics without mortar", *Financial Times*, 25 November 2011

207 Soner Cagaptay and others, "Op-Chart: Turkey's Changing World", Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 30 January 2012. Recent academic and think-tank commentary on Turkey's international rise includes "Turkey's foreign policy in a changing world", conference report, South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX), 30 April–2 May 2010; Meliha Benli Altunişik, Kemal Kirişçi and Nathalie Tocci, "Turkey: Reluctant Mediterranean Power", German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2011; "Turkey's policies for engagement in the contemporary world", conference report WP1031, Wilton Park, 24–27 March 2011; and Dominic Ryan, "The infallibility of Turkish foreign policy", *RUSI Newsbrief*, Vol. 31 No 5, September 2011. On Turkey, the Middle East and the 'Arab Spring', see "Turkey and the Middle East: Ambitions and constraints", International Crisis Group Europe Report No. 203, 7 April 2010; "Turkey's bid to raise influence in Middle East", IISS Strategic Comments, October 2010; Amanda Paul and Demir Murat Seyrek, "Turkish foreign policy and the Arab Spring", European Policy Centre Commentary, 15 July

international issues and partners, Dr Robins highlighted the importance of its experience winning a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2009–10, for the first time since 1961.²⁰⁸ In May 2011, Turkey announced its candidacy for another UNSC term in 2015–16.

93. Turkey's rise to international and especially regional influence has resulted partly from the conscious pursuit by the post-2002 AKP government of a more proactive foreign policy—although several witnesses reminded us that Turkey had started to exhibit greater international activism from the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the end of the Cold War opened up new opportunities and risks for the country.²⁰⁹ Witnesses suggested that Turkey's traditional allies had been of little use in helping it to meet its post-Cold War challenges; and that a lack of a consistent US/EU strategy towards Eurasia, the sclerotic nature of many Arab regimes, and the US' loss of influence in the region after the 2003 Iraq war—and latterly its more conscious retreat from regional leadership—had also all enabled, encouraged and obliged Turkey's assumption of a greater regional role.²¹⁰

94. The policy being pursued by the AKP in government is associated especially with Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was Prime Minister Erdoğan's foreign policy adviser before becoming Foreign Minister in 2009. Sir David Logan summarised the change in approach under the AKP as follows:

before the advent of the AKP government, Turkish governments regarded all Turkey's neighbours as problematical and potentially hostile. Besides, Atatürk's vision of making Turkey a part of (European) civilisation left Turkey as a supplicant on the border of Europe which, however, persistently rejected it. So Turkey's potential as a partner was limited. The AKP government's new vision is of a Turkey at the centre of its own region, whose interests are best served by good relations with its neighbours. This approach has transformed Turkey's relations with the Arab world, Iran, the Western Balkans, and to some extent with Russia and the South Caucasus, not just politically but also economically and socially.²¹¹

The AKP's policy is commonly summarised under Mr Davutoğlu's slogan “zero problems with neighbours”. Dr Bechev said that AKP foreign policy aimed to: engage neighbouring countries to enhance Turkey's security, especially with respect to the Kurdish question; open new markets for Turkish business; “grandstand” internationally in order to score points at home; and “advance Turkey's claim for a place in the new pecking order of emergent powers”.²¹² In autumn 2011, Dr Aybet saw Turkish foreign policy as operating in three spheres:

- “a transatlantic security community grounded in Euro-Atlantic institutions” including NATO and the EU, as well as liberal and democratic values;

2011; “Arab Awakening boosts Turkey's confidence”, IISS Strategic Comments, October 2011; Fadi Hakura, “Turkey and the Middle East”, Chatham House Briefing Paper, November 2011; and Sinan Ulgen, “From Inspiration to aspiration: Turkey in the New Middle East”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2011.

208 Q 153

209 Ev 81 [Mr Park], 85 [Dr Bechev]

210 Q 106, Ev 62 [Dr Aybet], 85 [Dr Bechev]

211 Ev 58

212 Ev 86

- “a regional emerging security community based on values of religious and ethnic identity”, a strand which encompassed strong support for Palestinian statehood and resistance to Israeli occupation, as well as, for example, support for Muslim Uighurs in China, and
- “a regional proactive policy based on *realpolitik*, devoid of any value based sentiments”. Until the ‘Arab Spring’, this strand encompassed good relations with regional leaders, including Syria’s President Assad, as well as strong relationships with Iran and Russia based partly on energy imports.²¹³

95. Among features of AKP foreign policy, witnesses highlighted:

- Mediation efforts, between and within states, which Dr Robins said Ankara had pursued “tirelessly”.²¹⁴ Turkey has engaged in such efforts between Israel and Syria, Syria and Iraq, Iran and the US, Afghanistan and Pakistan, in Lebanon, Iraq, the Palestinian territories and Libya, and in the southern Caucasus and Western Balkans.²¹⁵ Jointly with Spain, Turkey also launched the ‘Alliance of Civilisations’ initiative in 2005 under UN auspices, to promote post-9/11 cross-cultural understanding.²¹⁶ David Lidington highlighted Turkey’s efforts in the Western Balkans as especially useful for the UK; during President Gül’s 2011 State Visit to London, the UK and Turkey agreed on ongoing official-level contacts and meetings on the region.²¹⁷
- The deployment of ‘soft power’, in the form of trade, people-to-people contacts and cultural diplomacy, as opposed to the previous priority given to military capability (see paragraph 37).²¹⁸ Several witnesses stressed in particular the extent to which AKP foreign policy both utilised and was driven by trading relationships with nearby states. Turkey has abolished entry visa requirements for nationals of a number of regional countries, including Russia, Iran and Syria, and has free-trade agreements with states including Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.²¹⁹ Several witnesses suggested that Turkey’s efforts to build regional political relations through trade echoed one of the founding principles of the EU.²²⁰

96. Our witnesses said that the FCO was correct to have identified Turkey’s potential value to the UK in foreign policy terms. Dr Aybet, Sir David Logan and the Turkish Area Study Group all felt that the ambition and activism which Turkey was displaying in its international relations increased its value as a foreign policy partner for the UK.²²¹

213 Ev 63

214 Q 153

215 Ev 82 [Mr Park]

216 Ev 82 [Mr Park]

217 Q 181

218 Q 146 [Dr Robins], Ev 83 [Mr Park], 87 [Dr Bechev], 131 [Economic Development Foundation]

219 Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey (www.mfa.gov.tr)

220 Ev 86 [Dr Bechev]

221 Q 106 [Dr Aybet], Ev 58 [Sir David Logan], 121 [Turkish Area Study Group]

Conversely, Sir David warned that Turkish opposition to UK objectives could now represent a “significant handicap”.²²²

97. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified Turkey as possessing assets, characteristics and influence that potentially add value to UK foreign policy, and to be seeking a stronger foreign policy partnership accordingly.

Non-Western turn?

98. In its submission, the FCO made no reference to potential difficulties associated with the idea of Turkey as a foreign policy partner for the UK.²²³ Despite their overall support for the idea, our witnesses raised two. The first was the potential for divergence between Turkish interests and policy and those of the UK, or of the EU or the West more widely. In the West, Turkey’s intensified regional outreach has prompted a debate over whether the country is re-aligning itself ‘eastwards’, away from the West.²²⁴ In the US in particular, the debate has extended to sometimes impassioned argument about whether Turkey has been ‘lost’, and if so, who might be responsible.²²⁵ Dr Bechev set out the evidence as follows:

The crisis in Libya has shown that Turkey’s support for NATO is qualified. Ankara prefers engaging rather than containing Iran, and is comfortable talking to Hamas, Hezbollah and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. Until recently Turkey was amongst Bashar al-Assad’s closest friends as well. Its once warm relations with Israel are now in tatters. [...] Ties with Russia are thriving.²²⁶

The stalling of Turkey’s EU accession process is part of the context for this debate (see Chapter 7).

99. Our witnesses were in agreement that, by definition, the AKP government’s focus on Turkey’s region and regional interests meant a downgrading in the relative priority which Turkey was giving to Western ties.²²⁷ Dr Bechev, Sir David Logan, Bill Park and John Peet also all agreed that Turkey’s interests in its region could sometimes diverge from those of the UK, EU or US, and that Ankara was now prepared to pursue its interests even in opposition to Western preferences.²²⁸ Mr Park described Turkey as “frequently at odds with the West” on regional issues, and Dr Aybet identified several cases where there were “considerable differences” between Turkey and the UK.²²⁹ Overall, Mr Park advised that “although the UK should be relaxed about Turkey’s quite natural endeavours to ingratiate itself with its more immediate region(s), it should also be aware that this will not invariably

222 Ev 58

223 Ev 52–57

224 Ev 82 [Mr Park]

225 For example, Nick Danforth, “How the West Lost Turkey”, *Foreign Policy*, 25 November 2009; Mark Steyn, “Who lost Turkey?”, *The Washington Times*, 4 June 2010; Daniel Pipes, “Who lost Turkey?”, *National Review Online* blog, 10 June 2010; Bernhard Zand, “How the West Is Losing Turkey”, *Der Spiegel*, 15 June 2010; James Kitfield, “Who lost Turkey?”, *National Journal*, 21 June 2010; Caroline B Glick, “Who lost Turkey?”, *Jerusalem Post*, 20 September 2010

226 Ev 85

227 For example, Mr Park at Ev 84

228 Ev 58 [Sir David Logan], 83–84 [Mr Park], 85–86 [Dr Bechev], Q 51 [Mr Peet]

229 Ev 84 [Mr Park], Q 111 [Dr Aybet]

lead to policies that London will find comfortable".²³⁰ Dr Aybet warned of a longer-term risk that Turkish and Western threat perceptions might increasingly diverge.²³¹

100. We heard three considerations to set against possible concerns about Ankara pursuing a distinct foreign policy path:

- Dr Aybet said that Turkey continued to act in good faith as a NATO member (see paragraphs 113–114).²³²
- Sir David Logan argued that, as an increasingly prosperous democracy, Turkey's fundamental interests would increasingly converge with those of its Western partners.²³³
- Dr Aybet argued that Turkey could sometimes add value in foreign policy terms for the UK or the West precisely because its identity or policy was different. In her view, "the important thing is Turkey is engaged and in a position to talk to all sides concerned. At a time when international or 'western' presented norms are challenged by regional norms, Turkey's diplomatic ventures as an 'independent actor' from the West could be crucial in harbouring stability in the region".²³⁴ This argument was made above all with respect to Iran (see paragraphs 115–119). To set alongside the potential diplomatic value to the UK of Turkish distinctiveness, Dr Robins did not think that Turkey would penalise the UK for itself having a different stance on, for example, Palestinian statehood.²³⁵

101. Compared to Turkey's previous Western orientation, several witnesses suggested that Ankara's greater focus on regional security and prosperity, and its willingness to advance its own interests, should be regarded as a 'normalisation' of Turkish foreign policy.²³⁶ Katinka Barysch of the Centre for European Reform described Turkey's previous Western focus and regional isolation as "weird".²³⁷ John Peet also suggested that many of the stances taken by the AKP government—such as on Israel and the Palestinian issue—should be seen as a consequence of Turkey's democratisation and the more politically responsive nature of the AKP government compared with earlier administrations.²³⁸ Overall, Dr Bechev advised that the UK Government should assess Turkish policy on a case-by-case basis, expecting it sometimes to converge, sometimes to agree on goals but not methods, and sometimes to clash.²³⁹

102. Dr Aybet argued that, given the difficulties which sometimes arose in Turkey's relations with the US, and the lukewarm nature of Ankara's relations with other leading

230 Ev 84

231 Q 113

232 Ev 62

233 Ev 58

234 Ev 63; see also Q 114.

235 Q 152

236 Q 90 [Ms Barysch], Ev 83 [Mr Park]

237 Q 90

238 Q 54

239 Ev 86

EU states such as Germany and France, the UK had a particular role in anchoring and stabilising Turkey's place in the West.²⁴⁰

103. We have encountered no evidence to suggest that Turkey has made an overarching foreign policy re-alignment away from the West. Rather, Turkish foreign policy is best regarded as becoming more 'normal', in the sense of focusing on Turkey's region, pursuing national security and economic interests, and better reflecting Turkish public attitudes. The FCO should not underestimate the extent to which this shift may generate unavoidable differences between Turkish and UK perspectives and policies. However, we conclude that—as long as its foreign policy efforts are directed towards the same ultimate goals—Turkey may sometimes add value as a foreign policy partner precisely because it is distinct from the UK.

Turkey and the 'Arab Spring'

104. The need to respond to the 'Arab Spring' from 2011 has been one of the greatest tests so far of the degree of convergence that exists between Turkey's 'new' foreign policy and that of the UK and the West. Dr Bechev said that, with respect to the 'Arab Spring', Turkey faced "the same transformation-vs.-stability dilemma" with which US and EU policy-makers had long been grappling.²⁴¹ Mr Park described Ankara as "delicately poised between its friendships with many of the region's regimes on the one hand, and its support for democratisation, economic development, and the people's will on the other".²⁴² Turkey's initial stance was often to be cautious in the face of the Arab uprisings. However, Dr Aybet said that "once the leaders become delegitimised [Turkish policy-makers] tend to waver, but eventually the Government start supporting the other side".²⁴³ In September 2011, almost coinciding with Prime Minister Cameron and President Sarkozy's appearance in Libya, Prime Minister Erdoğan made a high-profile visit to Libya, Egypt and Tunisia to position Turkey as a key external backer of the post-revolutionary regimes. We referred in paragraph 55 to the way in which Mr Erdoğan's statements in Cairo in favour of secularism appeared to be poorly received by the Muslim Brotherhood.

105. David Lidington told us that the UK and Turkey had "not agreed at every stage" in their responses to the 'Arab Spring', but that overall the period had "shown a coming together of interest and objective".²⁴⁴ Dr Robins told us:

What the Turks did in Tunisia and Egypt in particular, and then later, admittedly after a delay, in Libya, was to instinctively say, 'The people must decide' [...] Turkey was falling back on first principles, which shows just how far Turkey has come in becoming socialised into the values of, maybe not liberal democracy, but certainly democracy that is somewhere between the liberal and illiberal ends of the continuum.²⁴⁵

240 Ev 65

241 Ev 87

242 Ev 84

243 Q 116

244 Q 189

245 Q 145

The Foreign Secretary said in October 2011 that, primarily owing to the ‘Arab Spring’, he was speaking to Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu about as often as to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.²⁴⁶

Libya and the NATO operation

106. In spring 2011 Turkey was cautious about international military action in Libya, and it appeared initially to favour trying to broker a ceasefire between the Gaddafi regime and its opponents. Turkey did not take part in the NATO action against Libyan targets in implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973. However, it provided ships and aircraft to NATO to assist in the enforcement of the UN-mandated arms embargo, and it allowed NATO use of the flight control centre at Izmir. Turkey also participated in the DFID-led international stabilisation team which was deployed to the rebels’ base of Benghazi to prepare for the end of the conflict. Turkey was a member of the Libya Contact Group from its inception at the London Conference in March 2011, and it twice hosted meetings of the Group in Istanbul, including on the occasion in July 2011 when the Group recognised the National Transitional Council (NTC) as Libya’s legitimate government.²⁴⁷ By summer 2011, it was revealed when Foreign Minister Davutoğlu made an early visit to Benghazi that Turkey had been channelling funds to the NTC.²⁴⁸

107. Dr Aybet told us that—in addition to its ties to Libya under Gaddafi—Turkey’s initial stance on the crisis reflected one of its traditional foreign policy tenets, of avoiding involvement in regional conflicts or the giving of support to external military intervention. Once it became clear that such intervention would take place, however, she said that Turkey “really pushed” to bring all aspects of the operation under NATO control, to ensure its own influence, rather than allowing command to remain with an *ad hoc* coalition.²⁴⁹ In this respect, Turkey’s position converged with that of the UK. Fadi Hakura of Chatham House commended London for bringing Turkey into the military campaign.²⁵⁰ Dr Aybet concluded that Turkey dealt with the Libya crisis “cleverly, because they were able to contribute to the operation without becoming militarily involved, as well as having oversight of it all in the North Atlantic Council”.²⁵¹

108. Between February and May 2011, after the British Embassy in Tripoli was evacuated amidst the fighting between pro- and anti-Gaddafi forces, and before it closed its own Embassy in the city, Turkey represented UK interests in Libya.²⁵²

Syria

109. Of the Arab states which have experienced ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings, Turkey’s position is most important with respect to Syria. After the previous Turkish government achieved a

246 Interview, *The Observer*, 2 October 2011

247 Ev 52–53 [FCO], 95 [Turkish Embassy]

248 “The Fight for Tripoli: Turkey Reveals Quiet Rebel Payments”, *Wall Street Journal*, 24 August 2011

249 Q 122

250 Ev 111

251 Q 122; see also Ev 64–65.

252 HC Deb, 28 February 2011, col 23–26; HC Deb, 30 November 2011, col 959–971

breakthrough in relations between Ankara and Damascus in 1998 by securing Syrian co-operation against the PKK, Turkey under the AKP government made a high-profile effort to cultivate Syrian President Assad. Turkey and Syria had visa-free travel and free-trade agreements, and cross-border exchanges grew significantly. In the face of the Syrian uprising in 2011, David Lidington told us that Turkey retained confidence for longer than the UK in President Assad's willingness to reform.²⁵³ Ankara finally called in November for President Assad to step aside.²⁵⁴

110. Having broken with President Assad, Turkey became a leading force in the international effort to encourage him to leave office. By early 2012, when we prepared this Report, Turkey was hosting the Syrian National Council, the most prominent opposition group, composed largely of exiles. Leading personnel of the Free Syrian Army and other oppositionist military defectors were also operating from Turkey. In November 2011, Turkey announced bilateral economic sanctions against Syria. Ankara co-sponsored the draft UN Security Council resolution backing the Arab League plan for Syria which was supported by the UK, US and France but vetoed by China and Russia in early February 2012. Later in February, Turkey participated in the first meeting of the international 'Friends of Syria' group which was backed by the UK and US following the failure of the UNSC resolution. Turkey was expected to host the second meeting of the group in Istanbul, on 2 April 2012.

111. Once Turkey had broken with President Assad, the strength of its support for the effort to see him step down seemed partly to reflect the prospective awkwardness of its position were the Syrian leader to remain in power. John Peet thought that Turkish-Syrian relations under those circumstances would be "quite fraught".²⁵⁵ Turkish diplomatic premises in Syria were attacked in November 2011, along with those of France, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, after the Arab League suspended Syria's membership at a meeting in which Turkey participated. In March 2012, Turkey was maintaining its Ambassador in Damascus, unlike the UK and several Arab and other EU states.²⁵⁶ We encountered some unease in Turkey about the idea of the country becoming heavily involved in a conflict with its neighbour, but we also heard of rising outrage at the violence which President Assad's Alawite-dominated regime was inflicting on Turks' fellow Sunni Muslims across the border. Refugee flows from Syria were a further consideration for Ankara: in March 2012, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said that Turkey was hosting around 13,000 refugees from Syria.²⁵⁷

112. We conclude that the process of responding to the 'Arab Spring' has brought Turkey closer to its Western allies, including the UK, while also demonstrating the utility of Ankara's strong relations with the Arab League.

253 Q 189

254 "Turkey's message to Assad: you have lost our trust, and it is time for change", *The Guardian*, 22 November 2011; "Erdogan calls on Assad to resign after bus attack", *Financial Times*, 23 November 2011

255 Q 53

256 As we approved this Report in mid-March, Turkey said that it would suspend its consular services in Syria and advised its nationals to leave; "4 Gulf states to close Embassies in Syria as Turkey warns its citizens to leave", *New York Times*, 17 March 2012.

257 "UNHCR appoints regional refugee coordinator for Syrian refugees", UNHCR press release, 13 March 2012

NATO, the US and missile defence

113. In discussing the degree of convergence between Turkish and Western foreign policies, Dr Aybet highlighted Turkey's role in NATO.²⁵⁸ In March 2012, Turkey was continuing to contribute to other NATO missions, in addition to the assistance which it extended to the NATO operation in Libya. For example, Turkey contributed troops to the NATO operation in Afghanistan since the latter's inception in 2001; in December 2011 Ankara had 1,845 troops deployed (the ninth-largest of the 49 national contingents). Turkey was running two of the 28 Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, and it was providing training to the Afghan National Army and Police.²⁵⁹ Turkey was also providing troops to the NATO force in Kosovo, KFOR. Dr Aybet said that, notwithstanding the decline in the Turkish military's political power, having the capability to contribute significantly to NATO operations remained a matter of national pride for Turkey.²⁶⁰

114. In September 2011, it was announced that Turkey would host a land-based early warning radar as part of the NATO missile defence system agreed at the Alliance's Lisbon summit in November 2010. In the context of speculation about the strength of US-Turkey ties, given divergences over Iran (see paragraphs 115–119) and the breakdown of Turkey's relations with Israel (see paragraphs 126–129), Dr Aybet told us that Turkey's decision to host the radar was driven primarily by its wish to maintain its long-term strategic relationship with the US. She said that Ankara had been made aware of, and responded to, the importance of the missile defence project to the US Administration in domestic political terms.²⁶¹ For its part, Turkey was receiving live intelligence from the US on the PKK in northern Iraq, and was seeking US assistance in the provision of surveillance drones.²⁶²

Turkey and Iran

115. Turkey's relations with Iran have been the phenomenon cited most consistently by those who contend that Turkey has turned decisively away from the West. Such claims were triggered above all by a sequence of events in late spring 2010, comprising Turkey's apparently independent nuclear fuel initiative with Brazil (under which Iran would have shipped low-enriched uranium abroad for conversion into fuel for its nuclear research reactor), followed immediately by Ankara's vote on the UN Security Council against the next proposed round of UN sanctions against Tehran. Dr Robins told us that the idea that the fuel-swap deal had represented an anti-Western turn was "overcooked", and that the episode rather reflected a misunderstanding between Turkey and Brazil on the one hand, and the US on the other, about the leeway available to Ankara and Brasilia.²⁶³ However, Turkey has remained unconvinced about the efficacy of sanctions against Iran, one of the

258 Ev 62

259 Ev 53 [FCO], 82 [Mr Park], 95 [Turkish Embassy]; ISAF 'placemat', via www.nato.int

260 Q 131

261 Q 125

262 "Pentagon officials agree to sell Turkey 3 attack helicopters", *Washington Post*, 2 November 2011; "Iraq says US drones may fly in its skies", *Washington Post*, 17 December 2011

263 Q 154

key planks of UK and international policy towards the country. Turkey is legally obliged to implement the relevant UN sanctions, but as of March 2012 it had declined to join the EU's more extensive sanctions regime, and it was reportedly requesting a waiver from the latest US penalties on dealings with the Central Bank of Iran, primarily because of the impact which they would have on its imports of energy from Iran.²⁶⁴ The FCO told us that it was "keen to see Turkey [...] continue to exert pressure on Iran, through rigorous implementation of UN sanctions".²⁶⁵

116. More broadly, Dr Robins told us that Turkey's strategy towards Iran since the Islamic Revolution had been "to conspicuously try to avoid riling [it]".²⁶⁶ For example, Dr Aybet detailed how, while agreeing to host the missile defence radar for NATO, Turkey had successfully resisted the identification of Iran as a threat in the new NATO Strategic Concept document agreed at the Lisbon Summit in 2010.²⁶⁷

117. As a result of Ankara's continuing relations with Iran, the Turkish Embassy said that Turkey was "one of the very few countries [with] the will and the ability to reinvigorate the diplomatic negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 about Iran's nuclear programme".²⁶⁸ Similarly, in his Ankara speech in July 2010, the Prime Minister described Turkey as the "European country [...] [with] the greatest possible chance of persuading Iran to change its course on nuclear policy".²⁶⁹ In January 2011, Turkey hosted what were (as of mid-March 2012) the most recent talks on the nuclear issue between Iran and EU High Representative Cathy Ashton, representing the international P5+1 powers; Turkey may again host in Istanbul the next round, which were in prospect in March 2012 as we finalised this Report. More broadly, David Lidington told us that Turkey could have contacts with Iran that were not available to the UK and that, as a predominantly Muslim state, it carried more weight there.²⁷⁰

118. Our witnesses were in agreement that Turkey's hosting of the NATO missile defence radar, plus its siding with the opposition to President Assad in Syria, were by autumn 2011 putting its relations with Tehran under severe strain. Dr Robins said:

Given the very close strategic relationship between Iran and Syria and that Turkey is becoming a leading state as far as the condemnation of Syria is concerned, Turkey has put itself on the other side as far as the fault line of regional politics is concerned. Assuming that the Syrian situation gets worse, that will be a big difficulty. It will put a big strain on the relationship which otherwise has been managed but has always had a combustible potential to it.²⁷¹

264 "Iran ready to discuss nuclear program, Turkish official says", *Washington Post*, 11 February 2012

265 Ev 53

266 Q 155

267 Q 125

268 Ev 94

269 David Cameron, speech in Ankara, 27 July 2010, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk)

270 Qq 180, 187

271 Q 155

119. We conclude that Turkey has a particular value for the UK as a friendly state able to talk to Iran. However, Turkey's alignment with the West and the Arab League in the Syrian crisis, and Ankara's hosting of an element of the NATO missile defence system, may put its capacity to continue to fulfil this function *vis-à-vis* Tehran under severe strain. Nonetheless, we further conclude that Turkey's decision to contribute materially to the implementation of NATO's new Strategic Concept in respect of ballistic missile defence is welcome.

Exaggerated influence?

120. If the first possible risk in the idea of Turkey as a UK foreign policy partner raised by our witnesses was the potential for divergence between Western and Turkish policy, the second was that Turkey may not have the regional influence that some commentary would suggest, or that it sometimes appears itself to assume.²⁷² This might reduce the country's attractiveness as a foreign policy partner. Several of the cases which our witnesses cited when discussing possible Turkish-Western divergence were also raised with respect to the strength of Turkey's influence. For example, Ankara's efforts to instigate a dialogue between the Assad regime and its opponents in Syria in 2011 represented a case in which Turkish attempts to mediate through personal engagement at the highest levels met with a very public rebuff. Turkey's mediation of peace negotiations between Israel and Syria before they were broken off on Israel's launch of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in December 2008 was an earlier instance. Witnesses listed Bosnia, Lebanon and Turkey's relations with Armenia as further cases where, as of autumn 2011, Ankara's settlement efforts had come to little.²⁷³ Witnesses also suggested that the failure of Turkey's ambitions had contributed to a situation in which, rather than "zero problems with neighbours", its relations with Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Iraq, Iran, and Syria had all deteriorated.²⁷⁴

121. Bill Park identified overstretch as part of Ankara's problem. He said: "Turkey's diplomacy is over-dependent on [Foreign Minister] Davutoğlu's ambition and energy. Turkey's foreign ministry is small, its list of foreign policy issues long and complex, and it is overcommitted to a range of mediation and other foreign policy initiatives".²⁷⁵

122. Several witnesses argued that Turkey's international difficulties often reflected tensions between the various strands of its foreign policy—for example, between the "Transatlantic" pull towards opposition to the Iranian or (latterly) Syrian regimes, and the "regional *realpolitik*" pull towards engagement.²⁷⁶ Dr Aybet said that further tensions arose between the "macro"—*i.e.* government-to-government—and "micro" levels of Turkish policy, the latter being based on popular attitudes and contacts both inside and outside

272 Ev 81 [Mr Park], 111 [Fadi Hakura]

273 Ev 64 [Dr Aybet], 87 [Dr Bechev], 131 [Economic Development Foundation]

274 Qq 90 [Ms Barysch], 146, 148–151 [Dr Robins], Ev 63–64 [Dr Aybet]; see also "Dormant power revival", *The Economist*, 5 November 2011; Peter Harling and Hugh Pope, "Turkey and the Arab uprisings: from 'zero problems' to losing count", International Crisis Group, 25 November 2011.

275 Ev 84

276 Ev 63 [Dr Aybet], 84 [Mr Park]

Turkey. For example, she said—like Dr Robins—that Turkey's relations with Israel would not have deteriorated so far had Turkish public opinion not been engaged.²⁷⁷

123. Witnesses also said that Turkey's regional environment posed difficulties for its ambitions for regional influence:

- Dr Aybet and Mr Park said that universally good Turkish regional relations were rendered almost impossible by the existence of unresolved bilateral and regional conflicts among Turkey's prospective partners—such as between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia, Israel and the Palestinians, or Iran and Sunni Arab states. Mr Park noted: “A ‘zero problems with neighbours’ approach is not easy in a region that is characterised by so many rivalries”.²⁷⁸
- Mr Park suggested that many of the regional states with which Turkey was seeking to build ties had external influences that might be more compelling than Ankara—the EU, in the case of the Western Balkans; or Russia, in the case of the South Caucasus or Central Asia. He raised the prospect that, rather than being a central power, Turkey might find itself peripheral to a number of alternative regional foci, and without firm allies.²⁷⁹

124. David Lidington said that Turkey could not be held responsible for the Syrian crisis, the standoff between the international community and Iran, or the state of the Middle East Peace Process. He said that Turkey's mediation efforts still had value, even if they did not always succeed.²⁸⁰ Dr Aybet took a similar line.²⁸¹ Dr Robins suggested that Turkey had perhaps “learned a lesson or two about how difficult” international mediation can be: “If it was that easy, these things would have been done a long time ago”.²⁸²

125. We conclude that the fact that Turkey has experienced foreign policy setbacks, and may not wield as much influence as is sometimes thought, should not disqualify it as a foreign policy partner for the UK. Ankara has been addressing longstanding issues and conflicts that continue to challenge many other powers, including the UK. We recommend that the FCO should approach foreign policy co-operation with Turkey positively and in a spirit of realism.

Turkey and Israel

126. The breakdown of Turkey's relations with Israel since 2010 is one of the leading developments cited by those who highlight difficulties in Turkey's regional policies, as well as by those who see Turkey turning away from the West. Until 2010, Turkey was one of Israel's leading allies among predominantly Muslim states. In May 2010, Israeli military forces killed eight Turkish civilians and one US civilian of Turkish descent when they met resistance when boarding the ship ‘Mavi Marmara’, owned by a Turkish NGO, which had

277 Ev 64

278 Ev 84

279 Ev 84; Mr Hakura made a similar point, at Ev 111.

280 Q 188

281 Ev 61–64

282 Q 154

left Istanbul carrying humanitarian supplies intended for Gaza. In response to the incident, Turkey recalled its Ambassador from Tel Aviv and made the restoration of relations conditional on Israel apologising and paying compensation to the families of those killed. Despite Turkey understanding on several occasions that an apology was to be forthcoming, the Israeli government has not agreed to make one.²⁸³ In September 2011, the Palmer panel of inquiry into the incident, commissioned by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, found that the Israeli naval blockade of Gaza was lawful, but that the Israeli action against the Mavi Marmara had been “excessive and unreasonable”.²⁸⁴ Following the release of the Palmer Report, Turkey downgraded its diplomatic relations with Israel to Second Secretary level (a level not seen since 1980) and suspended military co-operation.²⁸⁵

127. Dr Robins told us that the kinds of military contacts and contracts between Turkey and Israel that had been cancelled were of a sort that would have been maintained during previous downturns in the two states’ bilateral relations. He said that their cancellation in the present instance suggested that the ‘Mavi Marmara’ incident had had a “profound impact”.²⁸⁶

128. Our witnesses suggested that Turkey’s previous good relations with Israel had been part of its attraction as a foreign policy partner for the UK, because they enabled Turkey to talk to ‘all sides’.²⁸⁷ The FCO told us that “a strong Turkey-Israel relationship has an important role to play in establishing stability and progress in the Middle East” and said that it wanted to see the relationship restored.²⁸⁸ Our witnesses were in agreement that Israel and Turkey would probably both wish to restore their ties, if they could see their way back from the domestic positions they had adopted over the ‘Mavi Marmara’ incident.²⁸⁹ David Lidington admitted that the UK had “limited leverage” over the issue.²⁹⁰

129. We conclude that Turkey is a more valuable partner for the UK when it has strong relations with Israel than when it does not.

Turkey as ‘model’?

130. The FCO attributed importance to Turkey as a foreign policy partner partly because of the country’s status as a predominantly Muslim democracy, and its potential international influence as such.²⁹¹ Our impression is that this was initially less important for the current Government than it was for its predecessor, in the more immediate aftermath of the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent claims about a ‘clash of civilisations’ between Islam and the West, but that the outbreak of the ‘Arab Spring’ has

283 “Lieberman deplores Netanyahu for leaning toward apology to Turkey”, *www.haaretz.com*, 21 July 2011; “Israel and Turkey were tossed a lifeline and didn’t take it”, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 September 2011

284 Report of the Secretary-General’s Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident, September 2011, p 4

285 “In anger, Turkey ejects Israeli envoy; Turks demand apology over fatal raid on flotilla trying to break blockade”, *International Herald Tribune*, 3 September 2011

286 Q 150

287 Ev 63–64 [Dr Aybet]

288 Ev 53

289 Qq 56 [Mr Peet], 100 [Ms Barysch], 151 [Dr Robins]

290 Q 190

291 Ev 53

given it renewed weight. However, Sir David Logan cautioned against over-stressing Turkey's Muslim identity in this context, suggesting that "many Turks would be offended by the thought that there might be something distinctive in Turkish governance which appeals particularly to Muslim countries".²⁹²

131. Our witnesses were unanimously cautious about any idea of Turkey as a 'model' for democratising North African and Middle Eastern states, for two sets of reasons:

- First, they doubted the extent to which Turkey could function in this way. For example, Fadi Hakura of Chatham House said that the historical Western-oriented role of the Turkish military was quite different from that of many Arab militaries.²⁹³ Sir David Logan noted that, unlike newly democratising Arab states, Turkey had had a functioning multiparty democracy for fifty years.²⁹⁴ Mr Hakura also highlighted the fact that the European Convention and Court on Human Rights, key sources of pressure for human rights improvements in Turkey, were not available to North African and Middle Eastern states.²⁹⁵ The same point may be made with respect to the lack of any prospect of EU membership for the 'Arab Spring' countries.
- Second, witnesses argued that Turkey should not be seen as a 'model', given the continuing shortcomings in its democratic and human rights practices which we outlined in Chapter 3. Mr Hakura highlighted Turkey's centralised and majoritarian nature in this respect, while Mr Park said in general terms that the unconsolidated nature of Turkish democracy limited its potential as a model, and Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman said similarly that Turkey should be regarded as a "work in progress rather than a transferable model".²⁹⁶ A number of witnesses said that Turkey's continued failure to reach an accommodation with its Kurds was the single greatest obstacle to the country's being recommended as a 'model' to others in the region.²⁹⁷

132. For its part, the Turkish Embassy said that there could be no single template for democratising states in the Middle East and North Africa, and that it preferred Turkey to be thought of as a "source of inspiration" rather than a "model".²⁹⁸ On this point, the FCO followed Turkey's lead.²⁹⁹ Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to North Africa in September 2011 seemed intended to promote Turkey's 'inspirational' role (see paragraphs 55 and 104).

133. While rejecting the idea of Turkey as a specific 'model', several of our witnesses said that there was evidence that Turkey's example had helped to inspire the Arab uprisings and

292 Ev 58

293 Mr Park made the same point, at Ev 83.

294 Ev 58; see also Professor Dodd, at Ev 118.

295 Ev 111

296 Ev 83 [Mr Park], 101 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman], 111 [Mr Hakura]; see also Human Rights Watch, at Ev 88.

297 For example, Ev 83 [Mr Park], 111 [Mr Hakura], Q 147 [Dr Robins]

298 Ev 95

299 Ev 53

was looked to in general terms by citizens in the region.³⁰⁰ The FCO drew our attention to a 2010 survey which it had co-funded, conducted in seven Arab states and Iran by the Turkish think-tank TESEV, which found that 66% of respondents felt that Turkey could be a model for the region, and that Turkey represented a successful blend between Islam and democracy.³⁰¹ In the 2011 iteration of the survey, conducted in 16 states in autumn 2011, the proportion seeing Turkey as a model had fallen slightly to 61%, but the share seeing it as a successful blend of Islam and democracy had shifted up to 67%.³⁰² Several witnesses highlighted Turkey's influence over popular culture in Arab states, such as via television soap operas dubbed into Arabic.³⁰³

134. With respect to Turkey's potential influence on democratising states in North Africa and the Middle East, we conclude that the FCO is correct to treat Turkey as an 'inspiration' in broad terms, rather than as a specific 'model'. We agree with the FCO that Turkey has welcome influence as an example of a predominantly Muslim secular democracy, albeit one that remains 'work in progress'. We recommend that the FCO should make clear to Turkey that it would be able to support Turkey's 'inspirational' role more strongly were Turkey to improve its democratic and human rights practices, and, above all, to resume progress towards an accommodation with its Kurds.

Energy security

135. The FCO regards Turkey's potential role as an energy transit state for the EU as a further reason to cultivate relations with the country.³⁰⁴ Turkey has no oil or gas of its own, but it is within reach of roughly 70% of the world's oil and gas reserves.³⁰⁵ Turkey would be the key transit state in any 'southern corridor' bringing piped hydrocarbons—primarily gas—from the Caspian, and potentially the Middle East, to EU markets. The 'southern corridor' is seen as a key means of reducing the EU's dependence on Russia, as both a supplier of gas and controller of export routes.³⁰⁶ John Roberts of the independent energy information firm Platts told us:

Turkish co-operation with Azerbaijan on this key issue helps open the way for a major diversification of both Azerbaijani gas exports and of European gas imports. The development of a major new source of imports for Europe in effect ensures that Europe would now be able to import gas via a sixth major system, to add to those that serve supplies from its own North Sea sources, from Norway's 'High North', from Russia, from North Africa and imports received as LNG. In addition, the arrival of a major new set of gas supplies—coupled with the all-important development of a new series of regional gas interconnectors in southern and eastern Europe—has the potential to increase gas-to-gas competition within Europe, to the benefit of European consumers, notably by putting increased commercial pressure

300 Q 104 [Ms Barysch], Ev 83 [Mr Park]

301 Ev 54; see *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East 2010*, TESEV, February 2011.

302 *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East 2011*, TESEV, January 2012

303 Ev 58 [Sir David Logan], 61 [Dr Aybet], 100 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman]

304 Ev 55–56

305 Ev 114 [Mr Hakura], 137 [CBI]

306 Ev 66 [Mr Roberts]

on Russia's Gazprom to adopt an increasingly commercial approach to its gas sales to European customers, particularly those for whom it is, in effect, currently a monopoly supplier. In time, such commercial pressure should also help further reform Russia's internal gas market. So, for Europe, much depends on both the strength and nature of Turkish co-operation.³⁰⁷

Mr Roberts said that, if they were realised, Turkey's ambitions for the amount of gas that might transit its territory in the long term would "pretty much cover any increase in demand that we expect in Europe over the next 10 years".³⁰⁸

136. The FCO said that the UK would be unlikely to receive any gas directly via Turkey were the 'southern corridor' to be developed, but that the UK would benefit from the more stable gas prices that would be likely to result from a diversification of European gas suppliers and import routes, and that development of the corridor would bring opportunities for UK firms in the downstream sector and pipeline infrastructure.³⁰⁹

137. Turkey already hosts a pipeline bringing Azerbaijani oil via Georgia to Turkey's Mediterranean coast at Ceyhan (the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan [BTC] pipeline), and a pipeline bringing Azerbaijani gas via Georgia as far as Erzurum in eastern Turkey. BP is a leading partner in both projects. Turkey's potential role in any 'southern corridor' now centres on arrangements for transporting gas from phase 2 of the giant Shah Deniz field off Azerbaijan to EU markets. BP operates Shah Deniz on behalf of the international consortium developing the field. Shah Deniz phase 1 came on stream in 2006; phase 2 is expected to start production in around 2017. Shah Deniz-2 is expected to produce 16 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas a year, of which Turkey will take 6 bcm for its domestic use and 10 bcm will be exported to continental Europe.³¹⁰ In October 2011, Azerbaijan and Turkey signed a long-delayed agreement finalising delivery and transit terms for Shah Deniz-2 gas in Turkey.³¹¹ This opened the way for the Shah Deniz consortium to make the key outstanding decision: on the export route for Shah Deniz gas to continental Europe. Bids were submitted by the deadline of 1 October 2011 from three projects:³¹²

- Nabucco. This would be a dedicated pipeline running across Turkey from east to west and then north through Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to the hub at Baumgarten in eastern Austria. The pipeline would be intended to carry 31 bcm a year. The project might cost €14 billion. The project would be implemented by a consortium of Botas (Turkey), Bulgargaz (Bulgaria), MOL (Hungary), Transgaz (Romania), OMV (Austria) and RWE (Germany), backed by an intergovernmental agreement between the relevant countries which was ratified in 2010. The project is backed by the EU. Azerbaijan also wants a dedicated export pipeline for its gas. However, its commitment to the agreements which have been reached on Nabucco has been complicated by the prospect that—because of delays to Nabucco—gas

307 Ev 69

308 Q 18

309 Ev 55–56

310 Ev 66–67

311 "Azerbaijani-Turkish Gas Deal Opens Southern Corridor", Radio Free Europe, 26 October 2011

312 Ev 68, Q 12 [Mr Roberts]

from fields other than Shah Deniz, on which no export agreements have been reached, may be on stream by the time that Nabucco would be operational. The key difficulty for Nabucco has been that the scale of the project requires more gas than the 10 bcm a year that Shah Deniz-2 can supply. This raises the prospect that supplies would need to be secured from other sources (such as Turkmenistan or Iraq) before Nabucco becomes viable—but further supplies are difficult to secure before an export line is guaranteed. Commenting on Nabucco in its 2011 Report on UK energy security, the Energy and Climate Change Committee concluded that the possible availability of smaller planned pipeline projects and of LNG, as well as unconventional gas production, had “the potential to make such very large pipelines uneconomic and redundant”.³¹³

- Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). This would carry 20 bcm a year from Turkey to Italy via Greece and Albania. The partners are Statoil (Norway), EGL (Switzerland) and EON Ruhrgas (Germany).
- Interconnector Turkey-Greece Italy (ITGI). This would link the existing connection from Turkey to Greece onwards to Italy. The system would aim to deliver three bcm a year to Greece and eight to Italy, with a spur to deliver a small amount to Bulgaria. The main drawback of both TAP and ITGI is that, absent a dedicated pipeline, they would require Turkey's network to be significantly upgraded to increase capacity.

As the operator of Shah Deniz, BP has also prepared a fourth, backup, option, known as the South East Europe Pipeline, whereby the Azerbaijani gas would simply be delivered through the existing Turkish and Balkan pipeline networks, upgraded.

138. Of these four options, Mr Roberts told us that Turkey officially backed Nabucco, but that its energy company Botas in practice favoured ITGI, because it wished to preserve strong links with Greece and Italy.³¹⁴ However, in February 2012 the Shah Deniz consortium rejected ITGI as an option. The consortium is to open negotiations on Nabucco, TAP and the South East Europe Pipeline.³¹⁵

139. In December 2011, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed a MoU to construct a gas pipeline across Turkey to the Bulgarian border (the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline [TANAP]). The line will be able to carry the 10 bcm from Shah Deniz-2 that is destined for European export plus the 6 bcm due to Turkey, with a subsequent increase in capacity foreseen to 24 bcm. The line will be 80% owned by Azerbaijan's state oil and gas company SOCAR, and 10% each by Botas and Turkish Petroleum, although other partners are invited to join. The agreement left unclear the onward transit option from the Turkish-Bulgarian border, and the position of the BP-led Shah Deniz consortium and its decision on export routes. The *Financial Times* said that the agreement “effectively guarantees the realisation of the EU's long-held policy aim of creating a ‘Southern Gas corridor’ into the Union” but “almost

313 Energy and Climate Change Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2010–12, *The UK's Energy Supply: Security or Independence?*, HC 1065, para 66

314 Ev 67–68

315 “Southern Corridor gets narrower”, *Platts International Gas Report*, 27 February 2012

certainly spells the end of the EU-backed Nabucco pipeline project”,³¹⁶ although there have been reports that the Nabucco consortium may drastically shorten its planned route and build a pipeline only onwards from Turkey.³¹⁷

140. The FCO said that EU and Turkish energy interests were compatible, because both parties wanted to diversify supplies from Russia.³¹⁸ However, Mr Roberts contended that “Turkey’s energy policy seems to be permanently characterised by ambivalence”. He doubted that Turkey was delivering as much in terms of energy co-operation as the FCO and EU assumed or wanted.³¹⁹ For example, Russia’s ‘South Stream’ project for a new gas line to Bulgaria under the Black Sea is commonly seen as a rival to Nabucco, on the assumption that there would be insufficient Caspian gas to supply both,³²⁰ but in December 2011 Turkey gave Russia its consent for the construction of the relevant section of ‘South Stream’ in Turkey’s territorial waters.³²¹ Ankara contends that ‘South Stream’ and Nabucco are compatible.³²²

141. Turkey’s position is crucially affected by its dependence on energy imports for its own use: its energy import dependence (net imports as a share of energy use) has risen from around 50% in the early 1990s to around 73%. In 2008, imports accounted for 91% of Turkey’s oil supply and almost 100% of natural gas. Of Turkey’s gas imports, in 2009 52% came from Russia, 16% from Iran, 15% from Azerbaijan and 14% from Algeria.³²³

142. Mr Roberts suggested that the EU lacked the power to encourage greater co-operation from Turkey on the ‘southern corridor’ and other energy issues because of the lack of progress on Turkey’s EU accession. The EU-Turkey accession negotiations have stalled, amid deadlock on the Cyprus dispute and opposition from France to Turkish membership. The negotiating ‘chapter’ on energy is one of those being blocked by Cyprus (see paragraph 190 and Table 6). Absent further progress on its EU accession, Turkey is declining to join the Energy Community Treaty (an EU-sponsored agreement among Eastern and South-East European states), a step which would involve a similar alignment with the EU energy regime as negotiating the energy chapter.³²⁴ Mr Roberts argued that it was difficult for the EU to expect co-operation from Turkey in pursuing the EU’s objective of energy diversification when the EU was blocking Turkey’s objective of EU accession.³²⁵

143. We conclude that the FCO is correct to have identified Turkey’s crucial importance for EU access to Caspian gas. However, the stalling of Turkey’s EU accession process is losing the EU influence over Turkey’s energy policy decisions.

316 “TANAP: the seasonal gift of gas”, *Financial Times* ‘Beyond Brics’ blog, 28 December 2011

317 “Pilot flame flickers on gas pipeline project; Moves are afoot to scale back an €8bn plan to reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian energy imports”, *Financial Times*, 1 February 2012

318 Ev 56

319 Q 1, Ev 66–67

320 Ev 67 [Mr Roberts]

321 “Turkey deal boosts Russia’s pipeline project”, *Financial Times*, 29 December 2011

322 “Turkey approves South Stream construction”, Associated Press, 28 December 2011

323 International Energy Agency, *Turkey 2009 Review* (July 2010) and “Energy balances of OECD countries”, August 2011

324 Q 16, Ev 69–70 [Mr Roberts]

325 Ev 69

5 Economic and commercial relations

Turkish economy

144. The Government wishes to strengthen UK-Turkey relations in large part because it sees Turkey as an emerging economic power of significant potential.³²⁶ In Ankara in July 2010, the Prime Minister described Turkey as “Europe’s BRIC” (referring to the Brazil-Russia-India-China group of major emerging economies).³²⁷ In late 2009, *The Economist* named Turkey among the “CIVETS”, the six states which it identified as the next international ‘emerging economies to watch’.³²⁸ Turkey has maintained a solid position as the world’s 17th- or 18th-largest economy since the mid-2000s; in its September 2011 World Economic Outlook, the IMF expected Turkey to retain roughly this ranking into the mid-2010s. This means that, in comparison to the economies of EU Member States, Turkey is larger than Belgium, Poland and Sweden, and is advancing most immediately on the Netherlands.³²⁹ Prime Minister Erdoğan wants Turkey to be in the global economic top 10 by the centenary of the Republic in 2023 (something that might involve overhauling Indonesia, South Korea or Mexico, or possibly Italy or Spain). Dr Toksoz thought that this was unlikely but that Turkey would certainly move up a few places.³³⁰

145. Our witnesses endorsed the Government’s identification of Turkey as a rising economy. Several stressed the extent to which sustained economic growth and stability over the last decade represented a change from Turkey’s previous record of recurrent inflation, debt and currency crises.³³¹ Especially as the banking sector is relatively well-regulated and under-exposed internationally, in early 2012 it appeared that Turkey had been able largely to weather the international financial and economic crisis since 2008, with continued growth being driven to a great extent by domestic demand.³³² Economic activity dipped in 2009, but GDP growth was 9.0% in 2010 and 9.6% in January-September 2011, although slowing through the year.³³³ The data in Table 3 provide a snapshot of Turkey’s economic rise and potential.

326 Ev 52 [FCO]

327 David Cameron, speech in Ankara, 27 July 2010, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk)

328 “BRICS and BICIS”, *The World in 2010* blogpost, www.economist.com/blogs/theworldin2010/2009/11/acronyms_4, 29 November 2009. The other “CIVETS” are Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt and South Africa.

329 GDP, current prices, \$; IMF World Economic Outlook database

330 Q 159

331 For example, Dr Toksoz at Q 159

332 Ev 135 [TheCityUK]

333 Turkish Statistical Institute press release No. 252, 12 December 2011 (constant prices)

Table 3: Turkey: Selected economic, demographic and developmental indicators and forecasts, 2000–2016

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2016
Population, millions	63.6			68.1				72.8				77.0
Youth population (under 24), millions	32.5			32.7 (2005)				32.1				38.1 (2015)
Tertiary education enrolment, % relative to age group		25					46					
Labour participation rate, % (female)	50 (27)	50 (28)	49 (26)	47 (24)	47 (24)	48 (25)	47 (24)					
GDP/capita, current prices, \$	4,026	3,396	5,559	7,775	9,422	10,475	8,710	10,309	10,576	10,988	11,808	14,839
Inflation: average consumer prices, % change	55.0	45.1	8.6	9.6	8.8	10.4	6.3	8.6	6.0	6.9	5.3	5.0
Unemployment, %	6.5	10.3	10.3	10.2	10.2	10.9	14.0	11.9	10.5	10.7	10.2	8.9
General government total expenditure, %/GDP	n/a	42.7	35.1	32.8	33.3	33.8	37.6	35.6	34.8	34.6	33.9	34.1
General government structural balance, %/potential GDP	n/a	-15.7	-6.1	-3.1	-3.5	-4.0	-4.1	-3.5	-2.1	-1.5	-1.1	-1.5
General government gross debt, %/GDP	51.3	73.7	59.2	46.1	39.4	39.5	46.1	42.2	40.3	38.1	36.3	33.2
Gross national savings, %/GDP	17.0	17.3	15.7	16.0	15.2	16.0	12.6	13.6	12.9	14.4	14.4	12.2
Current account deficit, %/GDP	-3.7	-0.3	-3.7	-6.1	-5.9	-5.7	-2.3	-6.6	-10.3	-7.4	-6.5	-7.5
Fixed broadband subscribers/100		0	1	4	7	8	9	10				
Time to start a business, days		38 (2003)	6				6					

Sources: IMF World Economic Outlook Database, September 2011; World Bank World Development Indicators; UN World Population Prospects, 2010 Revision

146. Several witnesses stressed the extent to which the continuing popularity of the AKP government, and Prime Minister Erdoğan in particular, rested on the rises in living standards and public welfare and infrastructure spending which the economic boom had enabled.³³⁴ Witnesses also highlighted the intimate connection between Turkey's economic performance and its international political position, with its economic success acting as a key source of regional weight and attractiveness, and economic considerations in turn helping to drive foreign policy.³³⁵

147. Dr Toksoz told us that the main short-term risk to the Turkish economy was its large current account deficit, which was running at around 10% of GDP at the turn of 2011/12. The deficit is helping to generate a large external financing requirement which has raised concerns in some quarters about Turkey's vulnerability to a renewed crisis, especially given the international financial environment.³³⁶ Dr Toksoz predicted that there would be a slowdown in growth in 2012, and that there might be a "stop-go" pattern to Turkish growth for some time. However, she advised the Government not to be diverted by short-term setbacks and to remain focused on the long-term fact that Turkey "is going to become a major regional economic power".³³⁷

148. We heard about a number of continuing drags on Turkey's economic growth and development. Dr Toksoz said that there would be a potential benefit from labour market and tax reforms, to encourage employment and savings.³³⁸ She also outlined some of the obstacles to female participation in the labour force, which is low and has been declining (to around 25%).³³⁹

149. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified Turkey as a rising regional economic power. We recommend that the Government should not allow any short-term setbacks to Turkey's economic performance to cause it to weaken its efforts to intensify UK-Turkey economic ties over the longer term, which must remain its focus.

UK-Turkey trade and commercial relations

150. A wish to expand bilateral trade and commercial relations forms a major element in the Government's drive to upgrade UK-Turkey ties. The Government's ambitions with respect to Turkey form part of its wider strategy of pursuing intensified UK economic relations with the world's emerging economies, in order to help foster a sustainable economic recovery. The Government is pursuing this objective partly by increasing the priority which the FCO gives to commercial work.³⁴⁰

334 Q 136 [Dr Robins], Ev 85 [Dr Bechev]

335 For example, Ev 82 [Mr Park], 85 [Dr Bechev]

336 "Fundamentals in focus", *Financial Times*, 18 October 2011; World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects*, Vol. 4, January 2012

337 Q 159

338 Q 165

339 Q 164; see Table 3.

340 Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, HC 665, paras 49–60

151. In 2010, Turkey was the UK's 22nd-largest export destination, and its 19th-largest source of imports.³⁴¹ Dr Toksoz described the UK as being in the 'third tier' of exporters to Turkey, behind the energy exporters Russia and Iran, and a second tier of countries such as France.³⁴² For Turkey, the UK was the 12th-largest source of imports in 2011, behind Italy and Spain as well as France and Germany among EU Member States. We have been particularly struck by the performance of Italy in building economic relations with, and a presence in, Turkey: for example, Italy maintains a consistent position as Turkey's fifth-largest source of imports.³⁴³ Overall, the UK has tended to fall in the ranking of Turkey's import sources since 2000, as Turkey's energy demand has boosted the position of Russia and Iran, and emerging economies such as India have made inroads. UKTI described competition in the Turkish market as "fierce".³⁴⁴ However, as a destination for Turkish exports, the UK has consistently ranked second or third in recent years.³⁴⁵ Tables 4 and 5 show recent UK-Turkey trade data.

Table 4: UK trade in goods with Turkey, £ bln, 2007–2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Jan-Sep
UK exports	2.4	2.5	2.2	3.1	2.8
% change		4.2	-12.0	40.9	
UK imports	4.7	4.7	4.3	5.0	4.0
% change		0	-8.5	16.3	
Total trade	7.1	7.1	6.5	8.1	6.8
% change		0	-8.5	24.6	
UK deficit	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.2

Sources: Ev 71 [FCO] and HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics

341 HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics

342 Q 166

343 Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), Foreign Trade Statistics (via www.turkstat.gov.tr)

344 Ev 74; see also Ev 135 [TheCityUK].

345 Turkish Statistical Institute, Foreign Trade Statistics

Table 5: UK trade in goods and services with Turkey, £ bln, 2007–2010

	2007	2008	2009	2010
UK exports	3.1	3.3	3.3	4.4
% change		6.5	0	33
UK imports	5.9	6.5	6.0	7.0
% change		10.2	-7.7	16.7
Total trade	9.0	9.8	9.3	11.3
% change		8.9	-5.4	21.5
UK deficit	2.8	3.2	2.7	2.6

Source: Ev 71 [FCO], based on Office for National Statistics, *UK Balance of Payments (The Pink Book) 2011*

Turkey's recent annual import growth has ranged from negative, in years with slower growth, to 15–20% in stronger years. Annual export growth has typically ranged between 5% and 12%.³⁴⁶

152. In Ankara in July 2010, the Prime Minister set a target of doubling UK-Turkey trade by 2015. The baseline is the 2009 figure for bilateral trade in goods—£6.5 billion.³⁴⁷ We had two concerns about the target:

- Arbitrariness. The Government has set the same target, of a doubling in bilateral trade, with respect to Brazil, Kuwait, India, Qatar and South Africa.³⁴⁸ In our Report on *UK-Brazil Relations* in 2011, we concluded that the target was “clearly arbitrary” and “in effect, simply an indication of intent to use the influence of government to maximise trade opportunities for British companies”.³⁴⁹ David Lidington effectively acknowledged that the target was an approximate one, intended primarily to galvanise cross-Government effort.³⁵⁰
- Potential counter-productiveness. The target is in terms of overall trade volume, but the UK runs a trade deficit with Turkey. This raises the risk that the target could be achieved while increasing the deficit. Mr Lidington said that the headline target was supported by more detailed plans intended “to deliver it in a way that optimises jobs and prosperity for the UK”.³⁵¹

346 IMF World Economic Outlook Database, September 2011

347 Q 194 [Mr Seward]

348 FCO Business Plan 2011–15, May 2011 update, via Cabinet Office website (www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

349 Foreign Affairs Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2010–12, *UK-Brazil Relations*, HC 949, para 89

350 Qq 195, 197

351 Q 199

153. In pursuit of enhanced UK-Turkey commercial ties, the Government has:

- given the post of UKTI Turkey Director (based in Istanbul) a higher grade and a regional role beyond Turkey; it has also added staff to the FCO's Turkey network to work on economic and commercial matters (see paragraph 17).³⁵²
- signed with its Turkish counterpart a Knowledge Partnership which is intended to encourage co-operation between UK and Turkish universities, researchers and industry.³⁵³ For its part, the British Council said that it planned to increase the number of research-based partnerships between the UK and Turkey by 10% over the next two years, and that it would focus its work on links between industry and higher education in the energy, health, and information and communications technology sectors.³⁵⁴
- established with its Turkish counterpart a CEO Forum, which met for the first time during Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to London in March 2011, and for the second during President Gül's State Visit in November 2011.

A UK-Turkey Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) was already established in 2008 and meets annually at ministerial level. TheCityUK, the financial and professional services lobby group, said that the JETCO and CEO Forum "provide an atmosphere and environment where bilateral business prospects and contacts can be extended and built upon".³⁵⁵

154. Under UKTI's five-year strategy for 2011–15, Turkey is one of the agency's 20 priority markets. UKTI is prioritising trade promotion in the high-value fields of information and communications technology, energy (including renewables), infrastructure (including public-private partnerships), and education and skills.³⁵⁶ Dr Toksoz identified agriculture, health and pharmaceuticals as further sectors potentially offering opportunities for UK firms, while the CBI also mentioned the creative industries.³⁵⁷ The CBI has itself designated Turkey as a priority market for increasing UK exports and attracting inward investment to the UK.³⁵⁸ Dr Toksoz advised that Turkey was looking for foreign partners who would invest in the country, rather than just export to it, as Ankara sought to move its economy up the value chain and reduce its dependence on importing purely for assembly and onward export.³⁵⁹

155. In partnership with TheCityUK, UKTI has identified Turkey as one of six priority markets for the UK financial services sector.³⁶⁰ TheCityUK has also made Turkey a priority

352 Ev 52 [FCO], Q 244 [David Lidington]. The change to the UKTI Turkey Director post will take effect when it is next filled, which is expected to be during 2012.

353 Ev 52, 74 [FCO]; "Huge opportunities for UK firms in Turkey", Department for Business, Innovation and Skills press release, 28 September 2011

354 Ev 134

355 Ev 136

356 UKTI, *Britain Open for Business*, May 2011, p 35

357 Q 163 [Dr Toksoz], Ev 137 [CBI]

358 Ev 137

359 Q 168

360 UKTI, *Britain Open for Business*, May 2011, p 54

market of its own, identifying “very strong growth prospects there”.³⁶¹ The Turkish economy has reached a stage in development where markets such as insurance are likely to expand rapidly, while major planned public-private partnership projects in infrastructure and public services offer significant opportunities to UK legal and financial firms.³⁶² The Turkish authorities also have ambitions to develop Istanbul as an international financial centre.³⁶³ At present, our impression was that the presence of UK financial and other services companies in Turkey remained relatively limited.

156. UKTI is also seeking to develop partnerships between UK and Turkish companies for projects in third countries. Given the active and well-established presence of Turkish firms—especially contractors—in parts of the Middle East, North Africa, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, a number of witnesses felt that this strategy offered considerable potential.³⁶⁴ The CBI stated that one in four of the largest companies in the Middle East and North Africa was Turkish.³⁶⁵ UK companies are already working alongside Turkish counterparts in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Turkmenistan, for example.³⁶⁶

157. Our witnesses were all positive about the support that UKTI provided with respect to Turkey, and they welcomed the Government’s efforts to encourage expanded UK-Turkey commercial ties.³⁶⁷ Dr Toksoz warned that the Turkish economy was now “very private sector driven”, and that government-to-government relations might therefore have less impact on commercial ties than in some more state-dominated emerging economies.³⁶⁸ Several witnesses and interlocutors said that building commercial relations in Turkey took time and was sometimes difficult. Among potential problems facing foreign firms in Turkey, the CBI said that dispute resolution was slow, as were some bureaucratic procedures; that corruption and the grey economy remained problems; and that foreign firms sometimes faced discrimination.³⁶⁹ The Scotch Whisky Association said that trade regulations could change quickly and with little consultation.³⁷⁰

158. A number of witnesses and interlocutors said that the greatest obstacle to intensified UK-Turkey commercial ties was probably Turkey’s low visibility within the UK business community.³⁷¹ The UK-Turkey CEO Forum has a workstream on “brand Turkey”, intended to improve perceptions among the UK business community about doing business

361 Ev 135

362 Ev 136

363 Ev 136 [TheCityUK], 137 [CBI]

364 Ev 135 [TheCityUK], 138 [CBI]

365 Ev 138

366 Ev 70 [FCO]

367 Ev 57–58 [Sir David Logan], 104 [Scotch Whisky Association], 136 [TheCityUK]

368 Q 169

369 Ev 138–139

370 Ev 142

371 Ev 136 [TheCityUK]

in Turkey,³⁷² while the FCO's 2011–15 Business Plan commits the department to running, by July 2012, public diplomacy campaigns on “prosperity in the key emerging powers”.³⁷³

159. We conclude that the Government is correct to have identified significant potential to expand UK commercial relations with Turkey, although the competitiveness of the market should not be under-estimated. While we welcome the galvanising effect of the Prime Minister's target of doubling bilateral trade from 2009 to 2015, we recommend that the Government and its partners should bear in mind the need to build much longer-term relationships if the UK is to strengthen significantly its commercial presence in Turkey. The FCO needs to be clear about the balance between the trade and the investment potential of specific sectors in Turkey, and about the lessons that the UK may learn from the relative success in Turkey of other countries such as Italy. We further recommend that in its response to this Report the FCO should update us on the Government's activities aimed at increasing Turkey's visibility to the UK business community.

Defence sector

160. UKTI's Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) is promoting UK defence and security exports in Turkey.³⁷⁴ The CBI agreed that aerospace and defence were among the sectors where there was scope for stronger UK-Turkey collaboration.³⁷⁵ During President Gül's State Visit in November 2011, Gerald Howarth MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Turkish Ministry of National Defence. According to the FCO, the MoU established “a framework for the potential acquisition of common defence equipment, for scientific and technical co-operation [...] and the development of joint projects”. The visit also saw the signature of two company-to company agreements, for co-operation on missile and rocket systems.³⁷⁶

161. As UKTI's Defence and Security Organisation seeks to expand the UK's share of the Turkish defence and security market, we will—as one of the Committees on Arms Export Controls—closely scrutinise UK exports of strategic goods to Turkey, to ensure that they comply with the Consolidated Criteria for licensed arms exports.

EU-Turkey Customs Union

162. The UK's trade with Turkey is governed by the EU-Turkey Customs Union, which was established in 1995. The EU has a Customs Union with only two other states, Andorra and San Marino. Compared to other types of trade arrangements which the EU has with non-Member States, under the EU-Turkey Customs Union:

372 Q 191 [Mr Seward]

373 FCO Business Plan 2011–15, November 2010 and May 2011 update, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk)

374 UKTI, *Britain Open for Business*, May 2011, p 50

375 Ev 137

376 Ev 73 [FCO]

- Turkey is not part of the full EU single market, allowing free movement of capital, services and labour as well as goods, and obliging participants to apply the full EU single market *acquis*. This aspect of the EU-Turkey Customs Union distinguishes Turkey's position from that of non-EU states belonging to the European Economic Area (*i.e.* Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). The EU-Turkey Customs Union provides only for free trade between the two parties in manufactured goods, including processed agricultural products. It does not cover services or public procurement. Trade in other agricultural products is governed by a separate preferential agreement. Under the Customs Union, Turkey is progressively to align its legislative and regulatory regime with some (but not all) of the EU internal market *acquis*—for example, as regards competition and intellectual property law.
- For products covered by the Customs Union, Turkey applies the EU's external tariff policy, as it would do if it were an EU Member. In other words, with respect to goods covered by the Customs Union, if the EU amends its trade regime with a third country, Turkey is obliged also to apply the amended rules. This aspect of the EU-Turkey Customs Union distinguishes it from a free trade agreement, which applies only to trade between the parties, not their external trade relations.

163. From the UK perspective, we heard of two sets of problems with the EU-Turkey Customs Union:

- Scope. The Customs Union does not extend to services. We heard that this contributed to the problems which are faced in Turkey in particular by UK and other international legal professionals and law firms, although it would not be certain that an EU-Turkey arrangement which extended to services would necessarily liberalise the market as much as the EU or UK legal services firms might wish. As matters stand, the regime facing foreign legal professionals and firms in Turkey is a matter of Turkish national regulation, and Turkey applies a regime which TheCityUK said was discriminatory and disproportionate as regards its negative impact on foreign legal professionals and law firms. Foreign law firms in Turkey are unable to provide an integrated full service by offering legal advice on English and international as well as Turkish law.³⁷⁷ TheCityUK recommended that professional services such as the law should be included on the agenda of the UK-Turkey JETCO, to see what progress could be made towards liberalising the sector on a bilateral basis. The EU is officially committed to “extending and deepening” the customs union, something which the CBI supported, in particular with respect to the services sector.³⁷⁸
- Non-implementation. Turkey is not implementing the Customs Union fully: barriers to trade which should have been eliminated under its terms remain in place.³⁷⁹ For example, the CBI told us that Turkey applies a conformity assessment requirement on goods that are in free circulation in the EU but originated outside it, and that Turkey's regimes for intellectual and other property rights, and data

377 Ev 137 [TheCityUK]

378 Conclusions of the European Council, Copenhagen, 12–13 December 2002; Ev 138 [CBI]

379 European Commission, Turkey 2011 Progress Report, SEC(2011) 1201 final, 12 October 2011, p 4; Ev 138 [CBI]

exclusivity and certification in the pharmaceutical sector, also failed to meet the country's Customs Union obligations.³⁸⁰ Members of the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) face particular problems, with their exports subject to import permit requirements and a discriminatory excise tax regime.³⁸¹ The SWA said that its members' experience in Turkey meant that it was "unable to support the [Government's] effort to highlight Turkey's potential" as an export market.³⁸² A number of witnesses said that the decision-making mechanisms in the Customs Union that were intended to resolve problems were not working effectively.³⁸³ Turkey's EU accession process might offer an alternative mechanism for resolving Customs Union disputes: the EU set 'benchmarks' for Turkey for the opening of negotiations on the two relevant chapters of the EU *acquis* that would resolve the SWA's problems if Turkey were to meet the benchmarks—but it is not doing so. Of the two chapters, the EU would not close the taxation chapter in any case, because it is among those hostage to the Cyprus dispute, and the free movement of goods chapter cannot even be opened, for the same reason, so there would be no gain to Turkey in meeting the benchmarks (see paragraphs 189–190 and Table 6).³⁸⁴

164. From Turkey's perspective, we heard that the main problem with the Customs Union was its asymmetry in the EU's favour, as regards both its terms and the decision-making which affects it. We heard that there were particular concerns that Turkey would be obliged to lower its import tariffs in order to implement the new round of international free-trade agreements on which the EU is embarked, without gaining the improved market access in return which will accrue to EU Members.³⁸⁵

165. We conclude that the EU-Turkey Customs Union is not working as effectively as it should to liberalise trade, partly because the lack of movement in Turkey's EU accession process appears to be contributing to Turkey's unwillingness to implement fully its Customs Union obligations. We further conclude that the Customs Union is anyway unsatisfactory because it excludes the services sector, including legal services. Given the UK's comparative advantage in the sector, we recommend that the Government should explore any options open to it on a bilateral basis to encourage Turkey to liberalise access to its market for UK services, particularly lawyers and legal services firms.

380 Ev 138 [CBI]

381 Ev 103–105, 141–142

382 Ev 104

383 Q 171 [Dr Toksoz], Ev 104 [Scotch Whisky Association], 130 [Economic Development Foundation]

384 Ev 104–105, 141–142

385 Ev 86 [Dr Bechev]

PART 2: TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION

6 Membership goal

UK support for Turkey's EU membership

166. Turkey is distinguished from the other emerging powers with which the Government wishes to strengthen the UK's relations by being a candidate for EU membership. Turkey has had an Association Agreement with the EU since 1963, which already referred to the possibility of the country's accession. Turkey applied for membership in 1987, was granted candidate state status in 1999, and opened accession negotiations at the same time as Croatia in 2005.

167. The FCO described Turkey's EU accession as a "key goal" for the Government.³⁸⁶ In his speech in Ankara in July 2010, the Prime Minister described himself as the "strongest possible advocate" for Turkey's accession and said that he would "fight" for Turkey to secure the place "at the top table of European politics" which he said was its due.³⁸⁷ The Government's support for Turkey's EU membership sustains the position taken by its predecessor. It also keeps the UK in the 'pro-Turkey' camp within the EU, which is split on Turkey's membership. Following his election in 2007, French President Sarkozy made clear that he did not regard Turkey as a European country and that in his view it therefore had no place in the EU. Austria is also opposed to Turkey's accession, while German Chancellor Merkel has stated her personal preference for a relationship between the EU and Turkey which is short of membership. David Lidington reminded us that the UK is not alone in backing Turkey's accession, however: UK allies in this respect include Italy, Spain and Sweden.³⁸⁸ In December 2011, the Foreign Secretary co-authored an article declaring Turkey's accession process to be of "vital strategic and economic importance" with his counterparts from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Sweden.³⁸⁹

168. The FCO said that having Turkey as a Member State would:

- boost the EU economy, by bringing in a large market and working-age population (see paragraphs 144–149);
- enhance the EU's international influence, especially in the Middle East and North Africa (see Chapter 4);
- help to secure improved energy supply routes for the EU (see paragraphs 135–143), and

386 Ev 55

387 David Cameron, speech in Ankara, 27 July 2010, via Number 10 website (www.number10.gov.uk)

388 Q 219

389 "The EU and Turkey: steering a safer path through the storms", euobserver.com, 1 December 2011

- “reinforce the EU’s shared values”.³⁹⁰

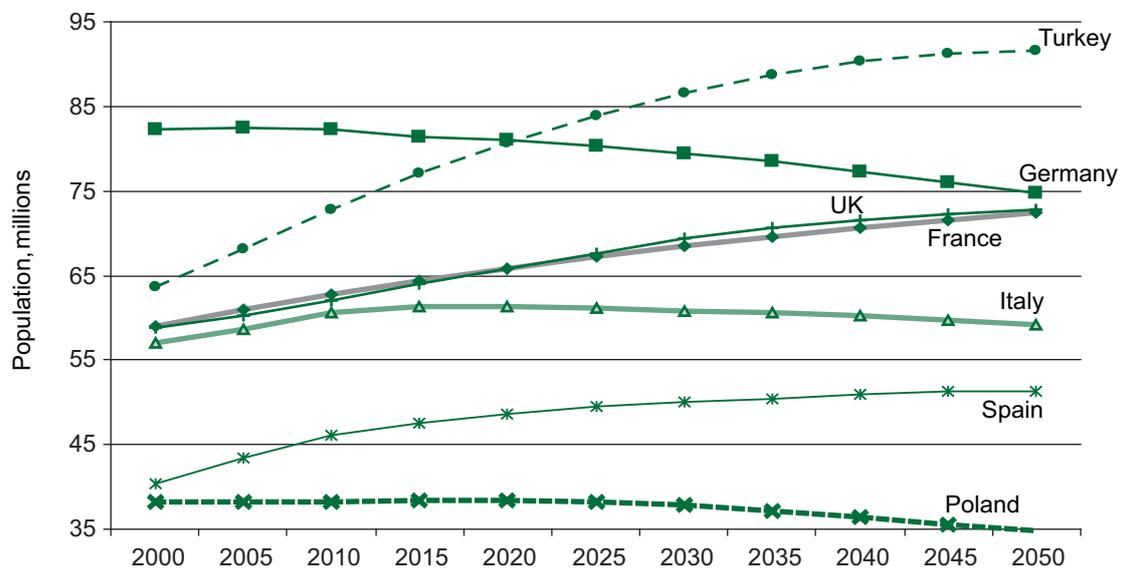
169. The FCO’s list of the benefits of Turkey’s EU membership overlapped significantly with that offered by the Turkish Embassy. The Embassy said:

Turkey’s membership [in] the EU will first and foremost enhance [the] EU’s ability to play a more effective role in our wider region. Turkey is a strong regional power sharing the same goals and principles with the EU and as such will be an asset for [the] EU’s external policies. Likewise as a strong emerging economy with the highest growth rate in Europe, Turkey will also strengthen the EU in the face of important global economic challenges. Finally with its predominantly Muslim population Turkey’s membership [in] the EU will confirm that democracy and its values are indeed universal and EU is a true community of values with a global impact.³⁹¹

170. Some witnesses referred to some of the difficulties involved in, and sources of opposition to, Turkey’s EU accession. Katinka Barysch referred to Turkey being “big, Muslim and slightly more complicated to integrate into the EU” than other candidate states.³⁹² For example:

- Chart 1 shows that Turkey is expected to have overtaken Germany and thus to be the largest EU Member State in terms of population by the time that it would be likely to join the EU. This would have profound implications for the EU’s institutions and policies.

Chart 1: Projected population sizes to 2050, largest EU Member States and Turkey



Source: UN World Population Prospects, 2010 Revision

390 Ev 55

391 Ev 96

392 Q 89

- Ms Barysch suggested that Turkey had relatively traditional attitudes towards national sovereignty and was “quite nationalist”, with “its own ideas about how the world works”. She suggested that this might make it difficult to integrate Turkey into the EU, and, in particular, that its accession might make it harder to forge a common EU foreign and security policy.³⁹³
- Ms Barysch said that it was widely assumed that Turkey’s predominantly Muslim nature was one of the reasons for popular opposition to Turkey’s EU membership, in Western Europe in particular. However, she said that there was a lack of clear survey evidence on this point. Some survey respondents in the EU seemed more concerned about vaguer “cultural differences” than Islam as such. Others appeared to equate Muslims and Arabs.³⁹⁴ Sir David Logan felt that popular opposition in the EU to Turkey’s EU membership was probably “soft” and capable of being turned around.³⁹⁵

171. Despite these potential difficulties, almost all our witnesses agreed that the benefits identified by the FCO would accrue to the EU from Turkey’s accession. They therefore endorsed the Government’s support for the policy. This applied especially with respect to the impact of Turkey’s economic dynamism and international weight.³⁹⁶ On Turkey’s Muslim identity, Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman argued that:

The European Union was not created as a Judeo-Christian institution but rather a union of like-minded countries that seek common economic (and political goals). There is thus no reason why Turkey should not join its neighbouring union for cultural reasons. Turkey’s Muslim population will clearly be [an] enrichment to the Union that reflects the political reality of today’s world. A reinvigoration of the accession process and building of closer ties with the Turkish people would also help the EU countries in the fight against Islamophobia.³⁹⁷

172. David Lidington told us that the UK’s support for Turkish accession had given it some “bruises” inside the EU but had not damaged the UK’s broader European interests.³⁹⁸ The FCO also said that the strength of the UK’s commitment to Turkey’s EU accession “underpinned” the UK-Turkey relationship across the bilateral agenda. Our impression is, indeed, that the UK’s consistent support for Turkey’s EU membership is appreciated in Turkey and constitutes a firm platform for good UK-Turkey relations. We heard anecdotal evidence that France’s opposition to Turkish accession, and its poor political relations with Turkey overall, were counting against French interests in the commercial sphere.³⁹⁹

173. We conclude that the Government is correct to continue to support Turkey’s accession to the EU, subject to Turkey meeting the accession criteria. Turkish accession

393 Q 88

394 Qq 91, 94

395 Q 68

396 Q 88 [Ms Barysch], Ev 59 [Sir David Logan], 91 [European Azerbaijan Society], 101 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman], 131 [Economic Development Foundation]

397 Ev 101

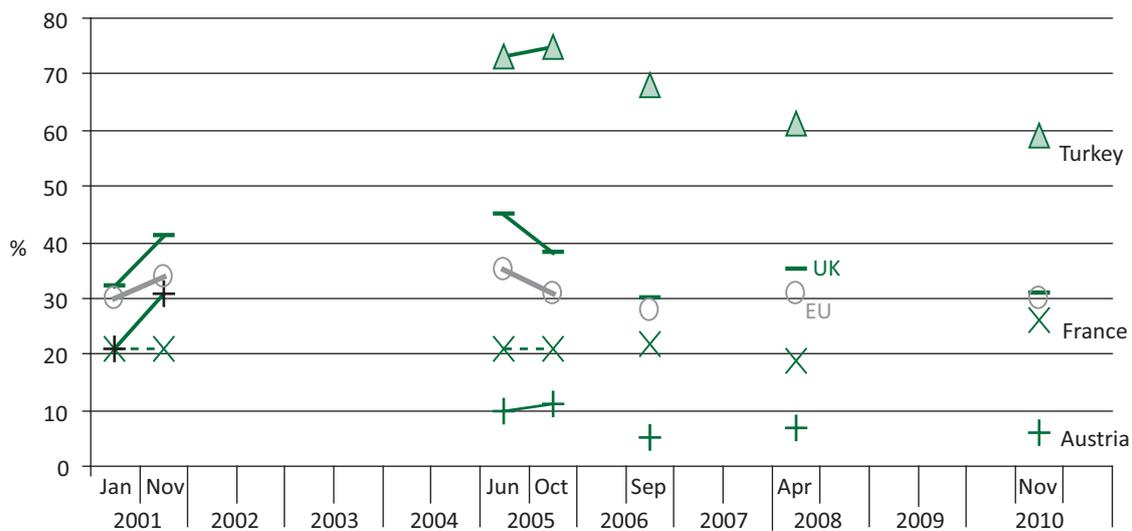
398 Q 219

399 Qq 92 [Ms Barysch], 172 [Dr Toksoz]

would be likely to boost the EU's economic growth and international weight. We further conclude that the Government's continuing support for Turkey's EU membership provides a strong basis on which to develop enhanced UK-Turkey bilateral relations.

174. Successive UK governments' support for Turkey's EU membership is not mirrored by public opinion. In opinion surveys, the share of UK respondents supporting Turkish accession is consistently low, although not lower than the EU average:

Chart 2: Support for Turkey's EU membership in the EU, selected EU Member States and Turkey, 2001–2010



Source: Successive Eurobarometer surveys, European Commission

Under the UK's European Union Act 2011, accession treaties do not trigger a referendum in the UK and are ratified only through Parliament. Among the EU Member States, in early 2012 only France and Austria planned referendums on any Turkish Accession Treaty—and endorsement of Turkish membership appeared unlikely in these two states without a major shift in public attitudes. Referendums remained possible in a number of other Member States, while the holding of neither the French nor Austrian poll was certain. Turkey has also raised the prospect of holding a referendum on its EU accession.

175. Although the UK would not be expected to hold a referendum on any EU Accession Treaty with Turkey, we recommend that the Government should seek to foster popular support for Turkish accession as part of its broader efforts to enhance Turkey's standing with the British people.

Free movement

176. Among our witnesses, only MigrationWatch UK raised concerns for the UK about the prospect of Turkish EU membership. MigrationWatch UK was concerned about Turkish nationals' right to free movement elsewhere in the EU following Turkey's accession. MigrationWatch UK argued that the conditions were in place for a surge in immigration to the UK from Turkey following the latter's EU accession, similar to that which took place following the accession of eight former communist states in Central and Eastern Europe in 2004. It recommended that, in contrast to the then Government's decision not to apply

temporary restrictions after 2004 to the right to free movement from these eight states, the Government should block free movement from Turkey to the UK after Turkey's accession until emigration patterns from Turkey became clearer.⁴⁰⁰ In recent accession negotiations, the EU has negotiated with the candidate country a maximum post-accession period of time for which existing Member States may limit free movement from the new Member State, leaving it to individual Member States to decide whether and for how long to apply restrictions up to the agreed maximum period.

177. The Government has already committed itself in general terms to the imposition of restrictions on the right to free movement from Turkey to the UK following Turkish accession.⁴⁰¹ In its 2011 Report on the justice and home affairs aspects of Turkey's EU accession, in which it considered possible post-accession emigration from Turkey, the Home Affairs Committee welcomed the Government's policy in this respect.⁴⁰² We did not encounter any hostility to the UK in Turkey as a result of the Government's stance, although it may be that accession is too remote for the UK position to be widely known. At elite level, it has been well signalled that at least some Member States are likely to impose post-accession restrictions on free movement from Turkey.⁴⁰³

178. With respect to free movement (among other policy areas), the EU's Negotiating Framework for its accession negotiations with Turkey states that "Long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses, *i.e.* clauses which are permanently available as a basis for safeguard measures, may be considered".⁴⁰⁴ The FCO told us that it considered that this wording could be interpreted both to mean that post-accession restrictions on free movement must be temporary and that they could be permanent—although it noted that the right to free movement was a fundamental principle of EU membership.⁴⁰⁵ Ms Barysch described the prospect of long restrictions on free movement as a "touchy subject" for Turkey,⁴⁰⁶ but Mr Peet thought that Turkey might accept quite lengthy post-accession restrictions.⁴⁰⁷ More generally, we were told that Turkey was reluctant to start to discuss possible post-accession deviations from the EU *acquis* while uncertainty remained over whether it would join the EU at all.

179. We conclude that the Government is correct to be planning to impose restrictions on the right to free movement from Turkey to the UK following any accession to the EU by Turkey (although it is by no means certain that Turkey's accession negotiations will reach this stage before the next UK General Election). We recommend that the FCO should if necessary take steps to mitigate the risk that the Government's stance on this issue might damage the UK's standing among Turkey's population.

400 Ev 80–81

401 Home Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2010–12, *Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*, HC 789, paras 98–99

402 *Ibid.*, para 107

403 EU Negotiating Framework for Turkey, October 2005, via the European Commission Enlargement website, at www.ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key-documents/index_en.htm

404 *Ibid.*

405 Ev 72

406 Q 95

407 Q 49; see also Dr Toksoz, at Q 174.

What kind of EU?

180. Our impression is that the debate about the costs and benefits of Turkey's EU membership and possible accession terms has something of an air of unreality, partly because of uncertainty over whether Turkey will join the EU at all, and partly because of the likely timescale if it does accede. The European Commission's proposals for the EU's next multiannual budget, to run from 2014 to 2020, contain no provision for Turkey's accession during that period, and David Lidington told us that Turkish accession before 2020 was "unlikely".⁴⁰⁸ Turkish government figures have spoken in terms of Turkey being an EU Member by the centenary of the Republic in 2023. The Home Office declined to carry out the assessment of likely post-accession migration from Turkey which the Home Affairs Committee urged in its 2011 Report on the grounds that too much uncertainty attached to the economic and social conditions that might prevail by the time that Turkey joined.⁴⁰⁹

181. A number of our witnesses argued that the EU might look very different to the way it does today by the time that accession negotiations with Turkey might be in a final phase. In particular, several witnesses suggested that, following the December 2011 European Council, a two (or more)-tier EU appeared to be in prospect.⁴¹⁰ As a result of the December European Council, 25 of the 27 Member States have signed an intergovernmental 'fiscal compact' treaty outside the EU which provides for much closer fiscal integration, with the UK and the Czech Republic standing aside. The Foreign Secretary told us in February 2012 that there was "no question" of obliging states newly acceding to the EU to sign up to the treaty, as—not being an EU treaty—it did not constitute part of the body of EU law, case law and practice (the EU *acquis*) which new Member States must take on.⁴¹¹ However, the intergovernmental treaty asserts its signatories' intention to integrate its provisions into the EU Treaties, as soon as possible and within five years at most of it coming into force (which is envisaged for 1 January 2013 at the latest).⁴¹² If the 'fiscal compact' treaty were to be incorporated into the EU Treaties, under the EU's current enlargement practices any newly acceding state would be obliged to take on the relevant provisions, unless it could negotiate a post-accession derogation or transition period.

182. Several of our witnesses suggested that Turkey would be more comfortable in the outer tier of a two-tier EU than in the current model.⁴¹³ For example, Katinka Barysch said that "fiscal integration, a common currency and more common decision-making [were] not things with which a pretty traditional power such as Turkey would feel comfortable".⁴¹⁴

183. We recommend that, if and when it is required again to consider the possible incorporation of the new intergovernmental 'fiscal compact' into the EU Treaties, the

408 Q 229

409 *Government Response to the Tenth Report from the Home Affairs Committee Session 2010–12, Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union*, Cm 8187, October 2011, p 15

410 Qq 82 [Sir David Logan]

411 Letter to Chair on the December 2011 European Council, February 2012, published on the Committee's website (www.parliament.uk/facom)

412 Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union, Preamble and Article 16

413 Qq 82 [Sir David Logan], 87 [Ms Barysch]

414 Q 87

Government should bear in mind the implications of EU Treaty change of this sort for possible future accession countries such as Turkey.

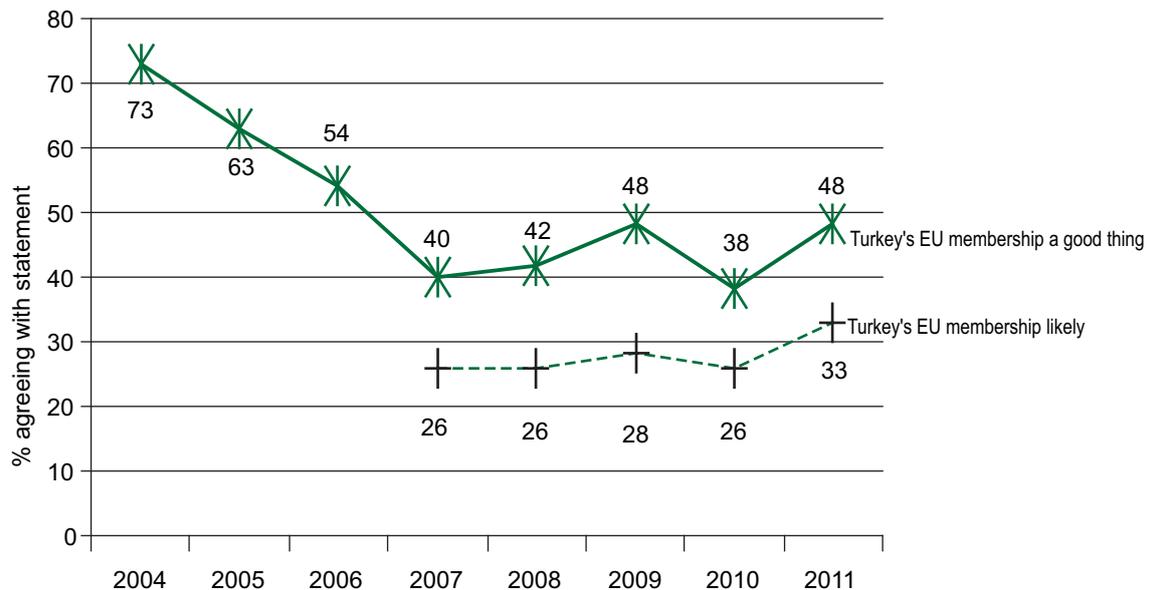
Will Turkey still want to join?

184. Officially, Turkey remains committed to EU membership as a strategic objective.⁴¹⁵ Given the likely timescale involved, the question is whether trends in the EU, Turkey and the wider region will keep Ankara pursuing membership for perhaps up to a decade after publication of this Report—and perhaps over 30 years after Turkey applied for membership and over 50 after the goal of its possible accession was first formulated.

185. Ms Barysch said that, notwithstanding rhetoric in Turkey about the country no longer needing the EU, it had “not quite woken up to the implications” of abandoning an objective which it had entertained for half a century.⁴¹⁶ Some witnesses stressed the extent to which Turkey’s regional weight and attractiveness partly rested on its uniquely close relationship with the EU, while others highlighted the economic benefits of full access to the single market.⁴¹⁷ It is also only through membership that Turkey will gain EU decision-making rights and full access to the EU institutions, with the international status that comes with them.

186. Other witnesses suggested factors that might incline Turkey eventually to abandon its accession goal. For example, according to opinion polls, only a relatively small share of Turkish respondents expect the EU to admit Turkey (see Chart 3). Such people may presumably decline to base career or personal plans on the expectation of membership—a phenomenon which may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Chart 3: Views on Turkey's EU membership in Turkey, 2004–2011



Source: German Marshall Fund of the United States and others, *Transatlantic Trends 2011*

415 Ev 97 [Turkish Embassy]

416 Q 85

417 Ev 86 [Dr Bechev]

The British Council highlighted a survey which it had commissioned among university students in Turkey which showed that only 35% believed that Turkey would become an EU member.⁴¹⁸ During our visit to Turkey, it was put to us that political parties' failure to instrumentalise EU membership during the 2011 election campaign demonstrated a continuing cross-party commitment to the goal. However, some of our witnesses and interlocutors interpreted the lack of discussion, at both elite and mass level, as evidence simply of a growing lack of interest in the EU.⁴¹⁹

187. Some witnesses and interlocutors cast doubt on the scale of the economic gains that might accrue to Turkey from accession in several years' time. Under the terms of the EU-Turkey Customs Union, Turkey already has free trade in goods with the EU, while not being obliged to apply all of the single market *acquis* (see paragraph 162). Meanwhile, if Turkey's economic growth continues, the value to it of prospective EU financial transfers may fall.

188. For the EU, the passage of time may paradoxically make Turkey easier to absorb in some respects, owing to the higher level of economic development which it would be likely to have achieved. Higher incomes in Turkey might reduce the likelihood of emigration to wealthier parts of the EU, thus reducing concerns about the right to free movement. John Peet told us that Turkey was now a country of net immigration, including as a result of Turks returning there from the EU.⁴²⁰ Compared to the EU average (100), Turkey's GDP *per capita* in 2010 was already higher (49) than that of Bulgaria (44) or Romania (46).⁴²¹

418 Ev 134; see also the survey cited by the Economic Development Foundation at Ev 130.

419 For example, Dr Bechev at Ev 86

420 Q 49 [Mr Peet]

421 Eurostat, GDP per capita in PPS

7 Blocked accession process

Blocked negotiations

189. Turkey's accession negotiations are stalled, and none of our witnesses or interlocutors thought that the process was likely to regain momentum in the near future. For the purposes of accession negotiations, the EU *acquis* is divided into chapters—35, in the case of Turkey and Croatia. To increase its leverage over the candidate state throughout the process, the EU sets 'benchmarks' which the state must meet in order for each negotiating chapter to be opened and provisionally closed. The opening and closing of each chapter is subject to unanimity among the Member States, as is the final decision to conclude an Accession Treaty. Croatia started accession negotiations in 2005 at the same time as Turkey, and it signed its Accession Treaty in December 2011. However, in early 2012, Turkey and the EU had opened only 13 of the 35 negotiating chapters, of which they had provisionally closed only one. Turkey had opened a new chapter most recently in mid-2010.

190. Two factors have caused the accession talks to become blocked:

- Cyprus dispute. Following the conflict of 1974, Turkey does not recognise Cyprus, the EU Member State; while only Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), where it continues to maintain troops. After Cyprus joined the EU in 2004, Turkey and the EU agreed an Additional Protocol to the EU-Turkey Association Agreement under which Turkey would extend the Association Agreement (including the Customs Union) to the EU's new Member States, including Cyprus. Most importantly, the Additional Protocol obliged Turkey to allow free movement of goods from Cyprus, and thus to open its ports and airports to Cypriot traffic. However, Turkey has not implemented the Additional Protocol. In December 2006 the EU decided as a consequence that it would not close any further negotiating chapters with Turkey, nor open negotiations on eight chapters directly related to the Customs Union.⁴²² While the EU regards Turkey's implementation of the Additional Protocol as an unconditional legal obligation, Turkey will not move to implementation unless the EU allows direct trade with northern Cyprus, a step which Cyprus is blocking as tantamount to recognition of the TRNC.⁴²³ Cyprus is also unilaterally blocking the opening of negotiations with Turkey on a further six chapters, including the chapter on energy (see paragraph 142).⁴²⁴
- French opposition. In line with President Sarkozy's opposition to Turkey's EU membership, under his leadership France is blocking the opening of negotiations

422 Conclusions of the General Affairs Council, 11 December 2006.

423 On the Cyprus issue, see Qq 64 [Sir David Logan], 91 [Ms Barysch], Ev 101 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman], 129–30 [Economic Development Foundation].

424 Ev 72 [FCO]

on five chapters which it regards as not relevant if Turkey is not to accede to the Union.⁴²⁵

Table 6 shows the state of the accession negotiations which has resulted from these two factors. Without political movement on Cyprus and/or in Paris, only three substantive chapters of the 35 remain available for the EU and Turkey to discuss.

Table 6: EU-Turkey accession negotiations: State of play, end-2011

Chapters	Opened?	Closed?	
1. Free movement of goods			Opening blocked by EU Council
2. Free movement of workers			Opening blocked by Cyprus
3. Freedom to provide services			Opening blocked by EU Council
4. Free movement of capital	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
5. Public procurement			
6. Company law	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
7. Intellectual property law	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
8. Competition policy			
9. Financial services			Opening blocked by EU Council
10. Information society and media	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
11. Agriculture and rural development			Opening blocked by EU Council (& France)
12. Food safety, veterinary & phytosanitary	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
13. Fisheries			Opening blocked by EU Council
14. Transport policy			Opening blocked by EU Council
15. Energy			Opening blocked by Cyprus
16. Taxation	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
17. Economic and monetary policy			Opening blocked by France
18. Statistics	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
19. Social policy and employment			
20. Enterprise and industrial policy	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
21. Trans-European networks	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
22. Regional policy			Opening blocked by France
23. Judiciary and fundamental rights			Opening blocked by Cyprus
24. Justice, freedom and security			Opening blocked by Cyprus
25. Science and research	√	√	
26. Education and culture			Opening blocked by Cyprus
27. Environment	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
28. Consumer and health protection	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
29. Customs union			Opening blocked by EU Council
30. External relations			Opening blocked by EU Council
31. Foreign, security and defence policy			Opening blocked by Cyprus
32. Financial control	√		Closure blocked by EU Council
33. Financial and budgetary provisions			Opening blocked by France
34. Institutions			Opening blocked by France
35. Other issues			
	Totals	13	1

Opening blocked by EU Council	8	Opening blocked by Cyprus	6	= 30 blocked
Closure blocked by EU Council	12	Opening blocked by France	5*	

*including one also blocked by EU Council

Sources: Ev 72 [FCO]; Ministry for EU Affairs, Republic of Turkey (www.abgs.gov.tr)

425 Ev 72 [FCO]. On the Turkey-EU enlargement process, see also, for example, Sinan Ulgen, "Turkish politics and the fading magic of EU enlargement", Centre for European Reform Policy Brief, September 2010; Katinka Barysch, "Turkey and the EU: Can stalemate be avoided?", Centre for European Reform Policy Brief, December 2010. On the EU and the Cyprus settlement process, see "Cyprus: Six Steps toward a settlement", International Crisis Group, Europe Briefing No. 61, 22 February 2011.

Stalemate costs

191. The blocking of negotiating chapters by the EU and/or its Member States once accession negotiations have been opened is unique in the history of EU enlargement. The situation has given rise to a perception in Turkey that it is unwelcome in, and is being treated unfairly by, the EU. This in turn is helping to drive a fall in public support for EU membership in Turkey (see Charts 2 and 3).

192. We heard mixed information about the impact of the stalemate in the accession negotiations on reforms in Turkey. Some witnesses, and not least our official Turkish interlocutors, reported that Turkey was continuing with its alignment with the EU *acquis* in at least some areas.⁴²⁶ We were reminded that substantial EU pre-accession funding continued to flow to Turkey and was linked to the implementation of reforms.⁴²⁷ However, other witnesses reported instances where a loss of EU credibility and leverage appeared to be allowing Turkey to delay reforms. For example:

- David Lidington told us that the pressure for Turkey to make reforms regarding the judiciary and human rights would be “much greater” if there were steady movement forward in its accession process (see paragraphs 58–76).⁴²⁸ Dr Bechev, and Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman, attributed what they saw as illiberal recent steps by the Turkish government to the weakness of EU oversight.⁴²⁹
- John Roberts made clear that the lack of progress on EU accession was making Turkey more reluctant than it might otherwise have been to co-operate with EU preferences on energy policy (see paragraphs 140–143).⁴³⁰
- Turkey appears to be failing to implement some of its obligations under the EU-Turkey Customs Union because implementation would bring no benefit in terms of the accession process (see paragraph 163).

In its October 2011 ‘progress report’ on Turkey, the European Commission proposed a “positive agenda” with Turkey, involving intensified dialogue across a range of areas, outside the formal accession process; and the continued monitoring of Turkey’s progress towards accession negotiation ‘benchmarks’, even if the relevant chapters are ones that cannot be opened or closed. The Commission is to inform the Member States as and when Turkey meets benchmarks that cannot currently lead to any progress in the accession talks.⁴³¹

193. Despite the stalemate in the accession negotiations, none of our witnesses thought that either the EU or Turkey was likely formally to suspend them in the near future. On the EU side, such a step would require unanimity among the Member States. For Turkey, any such

426 Q 81 [Sir David Logan], Ev 97 [Turkish Embassy]

427 Q 239 [Mr Lidington]

428 Q 212

429 Ev 86–87 [Dr Bechev], 99 [Dr Cengiz and Dr Hoffman]

430 Qq 16–17, 19–21

431 European Commission, “Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges”, COM(2011) 666 final, 12 October 2011, pp 19, 25

move would reinforce the views of those who regard the country as turning away from the West, and it would be disquieting for foreign investors.⁴³²

194. Turkey's EU accession—a key Government objective with respect to the country—is stuck, effectively hostage to the Cyprus dispute. By undermining the force of EU leverage, the stalemate in the accession talks is having consequences in Turkey that are detrimental to UK objectives there, as well as to Turkish citizens looking to the EU as an anchor for liberalising domestic reforms. We regard this as especially regrettable at a time when Turkish democracy and work on the proposed new constitution may be in a critical phase. By helping to create uncertainty over the timing, if not the fact, of Turkey's EU accession, the stalemate is also discouraging both the EU and Turkey from starting to address some of the most difficult issues that would be involved in Turkey's EU membership.

Cyprus breakthrough?

195. Turkey's EU accession process is effectively hostage to the reaching of a settlement on Cyprus. The situation is becoming acute because Cyprus will take over the rotating six-monthly Presidency of the EU Council on 1 July 2012 and will thus assume responsibility for convening and presiding over accession negotiations with Turkey, as well as a range of other meetings chaired by the rotating Presidency country. Ankara has threatened that its relations with the EU Council cannot continue as normal while Cyprus holds the Presidency.⁴³³

196. The two entities on Cyprus have been engaged since 2008 in UN-mediated talks aimed at reaching a settlement. After overseeing a round of negotiations in January 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced that he was asking his Special Adviser on Cyprus, former Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, to provide a review of the process, and that he would himself shortly be providing one of his regular reports on Cyprus to the Security Council. Mr Ban said that—subject to Mr Downer's report—he proposed to convene a multilateral conference in late April or early May 2012 with the objective of agreeing a settlement by mid-year. The aim would be that a reunited Cyprus could take over the EU Council Presidency on 1 July.⁴³⁴ However, in his own latest report to the Security Council, dated 12 March, Mr Ban said that:

the negotiations on the 'core core' issues that remain to be agreed are close to deadlock. Despite the leaders' repeated commitments to intensify the negotiations and push for a conclusion as soon as possible, the fact that there has been such limited movement towards convergence on core issues in recent months is a matter of concern. [...] There is no doubt that the political environment in which the negotiations are currently taking place has become increasingly difficult. Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon the leaders to foster a more conducive atmosphere for the talks [...]. The time for an agreement is now. [...] The current window of

432 Q 99

433 "Turkey warns of crisis with EU over Cyprus", Agence France Presse, 13 July 2011

434 "Secretary-General's remarks to press following his meeting with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Leaders", New York, 25 January 2012

opportunity is not limitless and there is little to suggest that the future will bring more propitious circumstances for a settlement. The United Nations remains convinced that if the necessary political will could be mustered on both sides, a durable settlement could be achieved in the interests of all Cypriots.⁴³⁵

Our understanding was that the Security Council was due to consider Mr Ban's report on 29 March 2012, while this Report was in press.

197. A number of our witnesses, including the Turkish Embassy in London, felt that the UK could be doing more to encourage a Cyprus settlement.⁴³⁶ David Lidington told us that the UK had "special responsibilities as guarantor power, but [was] also in a situation where too up-front a position from the UK can risk being counter-productive in certain cases".⁴³⁷ The Government is maintaining its predecessor's offer to cede just under 50% of the UK's Sovereign Base Area territory to Cyprus in the event of a settlement.⁴³⁸

198. A new factor in the situation is the possible existence of significant gas reserves off the southern coast of Cyprus. In 2010, the US Geological Survey estimated that the Levant Basin (encompassing Cypriot, Israeli, Lebanese and Syrian waters) could contain 122,000 billion cubic feet (bcf) (compared to 159,000 bcf in Algeria's proven reserves, for example). Cyprus regards the reserves as lying within its exclusive economic zone (a position also backed by the EU and US) and is proceeding with exploratory drilling of the area. However, Turkey disputes Cyprus's right to proceed with the plans without involving the TRNC, and when the UN-mediated talks to try to reach a Cyprus settlement are supposed to be in a critical phase.⁴³⁹

199. Cyprus has said that any gas revenues would be shared by both Cypriot communities. Turkey has proposed a UN commission to develop plans whereby this could be achieved.⁴⁴⁰ The FCO backed this general idea, as did a number of our witnesses.⁴⁴¹

200. We recommend that the Government should offer every assistance to UN Secretary-General Ban and Special Adviser Downer that they might feel would contribute to the securing of a Cyprus settlement by mid-2012. We further recommend that if this effort fails and there is still no settlement on Cyprus once Cyprus's period as President of the EU Council is completed at the end of 2012, the Government should consider whether any alternative approach to the Cyprus situation, by itself and the international community, might be more likely than previous efforts to yield a settlement. We further recommend that the FCO should support the use of prospective revenues from possible gas reserves off Cyprus to facilitate a settlement on the island.

435 UN Security Council, "Assessment report of the Secretary-General on the status of the negotiations in Cyprus", S/2012/149, 12 March 2012

436 Qq 50 [Mr Peet], 97 [Ms Barysch], Ev 111–112 [Dr Aybet], 131–132 [Economic Development Foundation]

437 Q 232

438 Ev 72 [FCO], Q 227 [Mr Lidington]

439 Qq 25–29 [Mr Roberts], 192 [Mr Lidington]; "Tensions flare over gas finds in Mediterranean", *Financial Times*, 10 October 2011

440 "Turkey seeks mediation on drilling", *New York Times*, 27 September 2011

441 Qq 25–29 [Mr Roberts], 192 [Mr Lidington]

8 EU-Turkey partnership?

201. A number of our witnesses said that, given the stalemate in the accession talks and the likely length of Turkey's accession process, the EU needed to find a new mode of engaging Turkey—as a partner, on key issues of mutual interest such as energy security or the response to the 'Arab Spring'.⁴⁴² A growing number of think-tank specialists have recently made proposals to this effect.⁴⁴³ For its part, the FCO said that it supported “intensifying the EU's existing dialogue with Turkey on foreign policy issues of mutual interest”.⁴⁴⁴ Katinka Barysch told us—as did the High Representative herself⁴⁴⁵—that EU High Representative Ashton had close working relations with Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu, but that there was no institutionalised mechanism for EU-Turkey foreign policy consultations or co-operation.⁴⁴⁶

202. Ms Barysch stressed that engaging with a candidate state as a partner would represent a significant and potentially difficult shift for the EU from its normal relationship with such a country.⁴⁴⁷ However, Dr Aybet urged the EU not to shy away from institutional innovation in the case of its relations with Turkey.⁴⁴⁸

203. The EU's main risk in seeking to develop more of a partnership relationship with Turkey would be being seen to be backing away from the accession track. Turkey has previously been reluctant about partnership-type ideas for this reason.⁴⁴⁹

204. Several of our witnesses said that the strengthened bilateral relationship which the UK Government was seeking to develop with Turkey already represented an accommodation with a stalemated accession process and was the sort of initiative which the EU should also pursue.⁴⁵⁰

205. We recommend that the Government should encourage EU personnel and institutions, including High Representative Ashton, to explore with Turkey ways of developing a partnership outside—but not prejudicial to—its EU accession process, which we continue to regard as having key strategic value.

442 Qq 86, 89 [Ms Barysch], Ev 86 [Dr Bechev]

443 Katinka Barysch, “Can Turkey combine EU accession and regional leadership?”, Centre for European Reform Policy Brief, January 2010; Heather Grabbe and Sinan Ulgen, “The way forward for Turkey and the EU: A strategic dialogue on foreign policy”, Carnegie Endowment, December 2010; Philip Hanson, “On Europe's Fringes: Russia, Turkey and the European Union”, Chatham House Briefing Paper July 2011; Katinka Barysch, “Why the EU and Turkey Need to Coordinate Their Foreign Policies”, Carnegie Endowment, 31 August 2011

444 Ev 55

445 Oral evidence taken before the Foreign Affairs Committee on 21 November 2011, HC (2010–12) 1642-i, Q 49

446 Q 101; see also Katinka Barysch, “Is Turkey our partner now?”, Centre for European Reform, 28 November 2011.

447 Qq 89, 101

448 Q 132

449 Q 89 [Ms Barysch]

450 Ev 65 [Dr Aybet], 113 [Mr Hakura]

Annex

Committee visit to Turkey, 30 October–3 November 2011

Participating Members: Richard Ottaway (Chair), Mike Gapes, Andrew Rosindell, Frank Roy, Rory Stewart, Dave Watts

ANKARA

Monday 31 October

Embassy briefing led by HMA David Reddaway

Meetings with:

- Mr Hasip Kaplan MP, Acting Deputy Chairman, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)
- Mr Egemen Bağış, Minister of EU Affairs

Lunch with third-country Ambassadors and other diplomats, hosted by HMA David Reddaway

Meetings with:

- Mr Metin Kilci, Under-Secretary, Energy Ministry
- Dr Faruk Loğoğlu MP, Deputy Chairman, Republican People's Party (CHP)

Dinner with academics, journalists and officials

Tuesday 1 November

Meetings with:

- Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee
- Mr Tuğrul Türkeş MP, member of the Board of Directors, Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)

Tour of Anitkabir (Atatürk Mausoleum)

Meeting with Margaret Jack, Turkey Director, British Council, and British Council staff

ISTANBUL

Wednesday 2 November

Consulate-General briefing, led by Jessica Hand, Consul-General and Turkey Director, UKTI

Meeting with Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD)

Lunch with business representatives, hosted by UKTI

Meetings with:

- Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV)
- His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch

Dinner with academics, journalists and NGO/civil society representatives

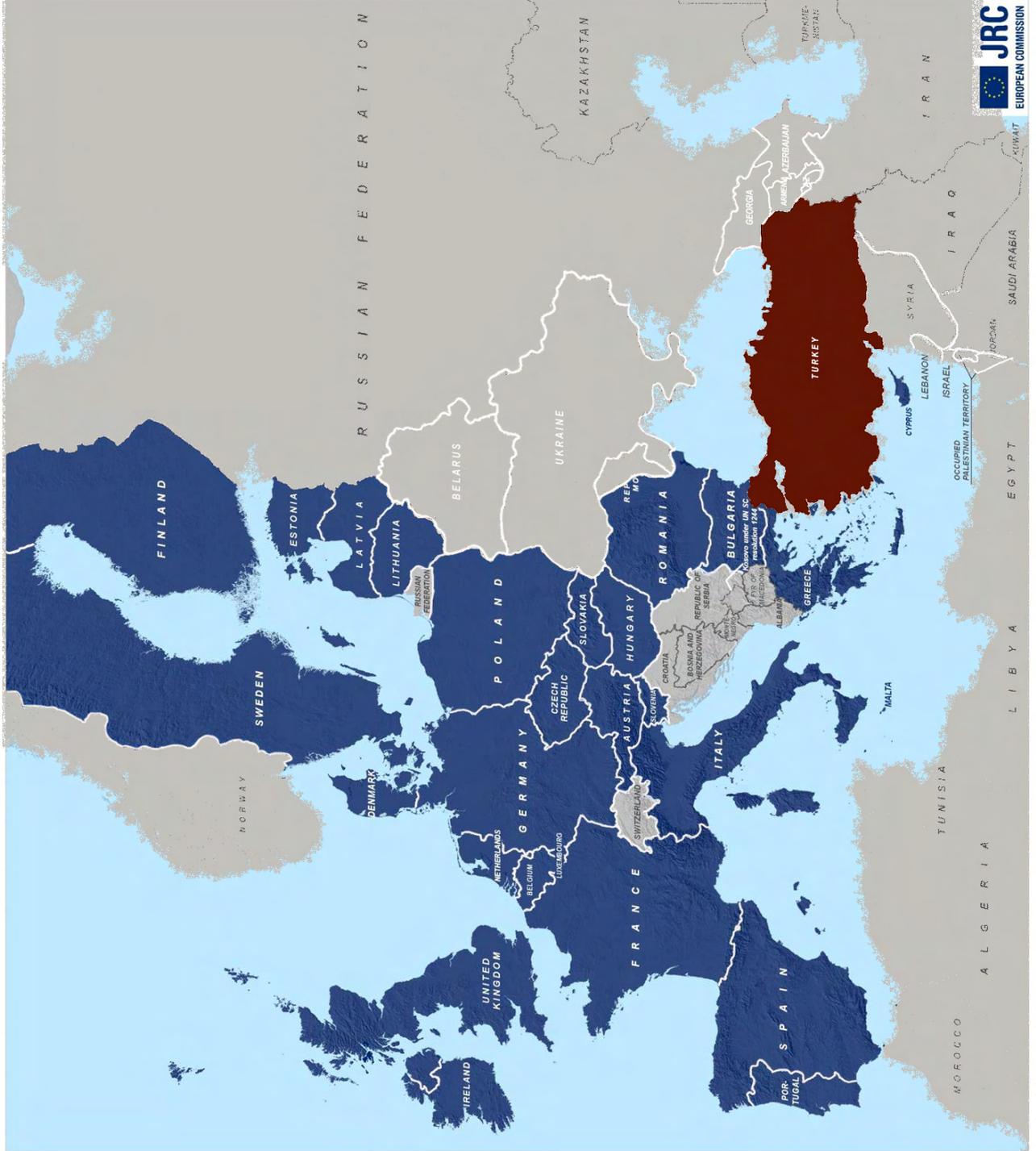
Thursday 3 November

Meetings with:

- Gerald Knaus, Chairman, European Stability Initiative
- Global Relations Forum
- Staff and students at Bahçeşehir University

Concluding lunch at with staff at Consulate-General

Map: Turkey and the EU in the wider region



Formal Minutes

Tuesday 20 March 2012

Members present:

Richard Ottaway, in the Chair

Mr Bob Ainsworth
Mr John Baron
Ann Clwyd
Mike Gapes

Andrew Rosindell
Mr Frank Roy
Sir John Stanley
Rory Stewart

Draft Report (*UK-Turkey Relations and Turkey's Regional Role*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 195 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 196 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 197 to 205 read and agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report, as amended, be the Twelfth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report, together with written evidence reported and ordered to be published on 11 October and 21 November 2011.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 27 March at 10.00 am.]

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Oral evidence

Taken before the Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday 18 October 2011

Members present:

Richard Ottaway (Chair)

Mr Bob Ainsworth
Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr Frank Roy

Sir John Stanley
Rory Stewart
Mr Dave Watts

Examination of Witness

Witness: **John Roberts**, Energy Security Specialist, Platts, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Mr Roberts, thank you very much for coming along. This is the first session of inquiry into Turkey's bilateral relationship with the UK and her role as a regional player. We think that energy issues are particularly important, so we thought we would start with you. Thank you for coming; you are very welcome. Do you want to say anything by way of an opening overview of energy issues?

John Roberts: Yes, if I may. First, I am John Roberts, and I am the energy security specialist for Platts but, of course, anything I say is in a private capacity and does not reflect my company, which is strictly neutral on energy issues.

Q2 Chair: You realise that you are on the record, though?

John Roberts: I realise that I'm on the record, and that is fine.

I don't think one can overstress the importance of what is called the southern corridor to European energy security. It is perfectly reasonable to assume that over the next five to 10 years European import demand will grow, particularly for gas. After that, everything is open because an enormous amount depends on how indigenous resources, notably shale gas, are developed in Europe.

The key point I want to make is that in terms of our specific relations with Turkey, I don't have anything to add in terms of the aspirations embodied in the FCO's paragraphs 35 to 41. They're perfectly decent in terms of both logic and aspiration. Where I disagree is on whether Turkey is actually delivering as much as the European Union, including the UK, would like it to. By that, I mean specifically that Turkey has very clear views of its own concerning the southern corridor. It basically doesn't like any project except the interconnector between Turkey, Greece and Italy. It tolerates Nabucco because it has reached agreements, but it has stated that the Nabucco project to deliver gas for central Europe, if it is to proceed, must not be changed. One of the key points that the Azerbaijanis make with regard to transit across Turkey is that they want to see flexibility. I will return to that.

The Turks have a particular antipathy to the latest concept put forward by BP—the developer of the giant Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan—that perhaps one should simply transit the gas across

Turkey, sell it into south-east Europe using enhanced local infrastructure in the region, and not bother about taking it either to central Europe or to Italy.

The Azerbaijanis have a particularly important attitude to Turkey. They blame Turkey for three years of delay in the Shah Deniz project because they argue that it was the Turks and not them who held up a transit agreement. Indeed that transit agreement was supposed to have been concluded in the summer a year ago, and we are still waiting for it to be concluded.

None the less, it is important to note that energy for Turkey is absolutely crucial. Turkey is expected to have a near doubling of consumption from, I think, 126 million tonnes last year to 222 million tonnes in 2020. It has a massive import bill—roughly \$50 billion a year on energy imports. That accounts for two thirds of its current account deficit. That is very important, given the fact that Turkey is extremely worried that every time the oil price goes up by about \$10 or so, its import bill goes up by about \$4 billion. Then there are the questions concerning the eastern Mediterranean. One ought to work on a reasonable assumption that you should judge Turkey by its actions rather than its words. It does feel—I think wrongly—that there is some kind of conspiracy between Israel and Cyprus to develop gas off the southern Cypriot shores. It does not understand that in fact the timetable for that development is perfectly logical. It falls naturally following the discoveries of the Tamar and Leviathan fields on the Israeli side of the Israel/Cypriot boundary.

In terms of the overall Turkish approach, we have got a difficult situation. We have a Government who, in an unprecedented occurrence in modern times, have secured three election victories in a row. They are convinced of their own rectitude. They are less flexible than they were and, of course, one of the main reasons why they are less flexible is the diminishing prospect and indeed the diminishing interest in Turkey in membership of the European Union. The issues of the EU and energy security, no matter how much it would be desirable to see them decoupled, in practice are very closely related.

Q3 Chair: Thank you very much. We have all got a map here, which you helpfully supplied to us. Does

Turkey have any production of its own, or is it simply a consumer or a transit country?

John Roberts: Turkey used to be a major producer of brown coal—lignite—and it was the pollution caused by using lignite at its power stations that prompted it to turn to Russia for gas imports. It had great hopes of developing large-scale gas resources in the Black Sea, but so far it has had little result, and its biggest prospect—drilling by Petrobras last year—yielded very little. So it is hope deferred and thus it is one of the world's great energy importers in its own right, and this is a major issue because one has to consider Turkish import requirements alongside the desire to use Turkey as a transit country.

Q4 Chair: Does that lead to conflict? It is a big transit country. If we look at this map, we realise what sort of a Khyber pass it is for the oil and gas sector. Is there a conflict between its own requirements and its transit obligations?

John Roberts: The answer to that is, in a bureaucratic sense, at the moment, yes. But whether it gets solved in a political sense in the next few weeks is one of the key issues. Without getting too technical, this is the issue known as the network code. Turkey developed a network code, which basically handles the day-to-day distribution of gas in the system, at a time when it was purely in charge of every molecule of gas inside the system. What it is now proposing and now has agreed in principle, is that Azerbaijan will have the right to export gas at the Greek border into the European Union. The question then arises, who has priority? I will put it in very simple terms. Is it an Azerbaijani exporter seeking to push the gas over to Greece, or is it, for example, a city in southern Turkey that happens that day to be short of gas and needs to have priority use of the trunkline system? All those issues have to be sorted out and they appear to be causing some sort of dispute.

Q5 Chair: Sorted out by whom? By the Turkish Government?

John Roberts: By the Azeris and the Turks jointly. We had thought that they would have sorted it out by now, but they have not.

Q6 Chair: Are there any obligations? If it so wishes, can Turkey turn off the tap of everything being transited through or is it internationally committed to keeping supplies going?

John Roberts: Much depends on what choice the developers of the Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan, and that includes the Azerbaijani Government, make for their export pipeline. If the export pipeline chosen is the Nabucco system, that is governed by a specific set of separate treaties that would create, in effect, a dedicated line across Turkey that would be for nothing but Azerbaijani gas, so the problem ought not to arise under those circumstances.

That is certainly the kind of approach favoured by the European Union; it is also the kind favoured by the Azerbaijanis. But, and it is a very big but, there is a question as to whether Nabucco is commercially feasible on the kind of volumes likely to be available in the current time frame. If they opt for a smaller

system, the smaller system requires the use of existing Turkish infrastructure that would have to be upgraded, and if it requires use of the existing Turkish infrastructure there has to be an accommodation concerning the rules governing who has priority within the system under what circumstances. I do not think they are impossible to solve, but at the moment they are causing some problems.

Q7 Chair: I will come back to Nabucco in a second. Are the EU and the Turks in competition for supplies from the Caspian?

John Roberts: No, because the agreement for the development of Shah Deniz gas is that 10 bcm should go to Europe and 6 bcm should go to Turkey and, if anything, right now Turkey is over-supplied with gas.

Q8 Chair: You mentioned an agreement. Which one is that?

John Roberts: This goes right back to at least four years ago, that there would be a split between the European Union and Turkey. I think the finalisation of that agreement was probably summer last year. It is not a formal agreement as such—

Q9 Chair: It is an understanding.

John Roberts: It is one of the elements that would be incorporated in the formal agreement that is due to be signed—this dread word—imminently.

Q10 Chair: One gets the impression that good will is needed to keep these agreements going.

John Roberts: I think there is certainly a concern in Azerbaijan about Turkish good will. That is why the Azerbaijanis talk regularly of wishing to have a dedicated pipeline across Turkey. The question is whether in fact a dedicated pipeline literally means that physically—a separate pipeline—or whether in fact you can get the same through legal agreements that guarantee the passage of your gas.

It is important to realise that Turkey is not going to be arbitrary in the way in which it handles gas that is going through to Europe. It is well aware that if there were anything other than genuine force majeure stopping the gas supply through to Europe, the impact would be very considerable. The Azerbaijanis certainly are very concerned that they do not want to see Turkey become another Ukraine, as it were, but that is also understood by the Turks.

Q11 Chair: Could you outline the history of Nabucco for colleagues and say where it has got to? What are the political impediments and why is it not moving forward so well?

John Roberts: There are no real political impediments. The real impediment is a commercial one. Nabucco is structured to carry about 31 bcm of gas and—

Q12 Chair: Could you describe what it is?

John Roberts: Okay. Nabucco is a pipeline that would go, as a concept, from the Turkish border with Georgia all the way through to Austria, where there is a hub at Baumgarten, from which gas delivered to Baumgarten could go in several different directions

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and be commercially available. It would also include a spur to take in gas from Iraq, as and when gas from Iraq became available. It was originally conceived with a spur to take in gas from Iran, but the Nabucco proponents have not considered that to be a viable option for at least four or five years. The problem it faces is that it is a very big project, costed officially at about €8 billion and unofficially at about €14 billion. Financing for it is difficult, because to justify such a big pipeline, you need to guarantee that you will get most of the gas up front and have a pretty clear idea where the rest of the gas to fill the line will come from subsequently, and that is one of the issues currently in question.

The Azerbaijanis who have the biggest immediate prospect—the Shah Deniz II gas—could commit 10 bcm. The question is whether their further resources, which have yet to be developed, could make up the balance or, indeed, whether Nabucco could get gas from a source like Turkmenistan as well. All of those issues are a mixture of commercial, technical and political questions, which means that, even though Nabucco is strongly backed by the European Union, it might not necessarily get under way. I am not saying that to do down Nabucco; I am simply saying that, at the moment, we still have a stage in which all options for the transport of Azerbaijani gas remain open.

Q13 Chair: Are there any alternatives to Nabucco?

John Roberts: Yes. The proposals to ship 10 bcm of gas through to Greece with the ITGI system; the proposals to ship 10 bcm of gas with the capacity to increase that considerably to Italy by means of another similar pipeline; the Trans-Adriatic pipeline that would go to Greece, Albania, Italy and the new fourth option proposed by BP, which is just to ship the gas across Turkey and pump it into south-east Europe, which is an area that is likely to be one of the booming gas markets in coming years.

Q14 Chair: Is the policy of both the previous Government and this Government in the United Kingdom to try to liberalise EU energy policy? Is there anything that the UK Government could or should be doing at the moment that you particularly recommend?

John Roberts: The biggest thing they could do would be the continued pursuit of their goal to get Turkey into the European Union and to get Turkey to become more flexible on energy transit across Turkey, and co-operation and development of the southern corridor. I think that in practice the two go hand in hand.

Q15 Chair: Is there any reason why they are not being flexible?

John Roberts: The Turks have a default position, which is to stall. Each time they stall, it means delays in developing the Shah Deniz gas field and that prompts greater antagonism. The Azerbaijanis consider that Turkish stalling has delayed bringing a giant gas field online for some three years and they fear that it could be another year of delay.

Q16 Mr Roy: Staying on the EU linkage, the Foreign Office is claiming that Turkey's accession would

obviously help in relation to better supply routes to the European Union. Compared with the situation today, what difference would it make to European Union energy security if Turkey were a member of the EU?

John Roberts: The first thing is that all European energy rules—the energy acquis—would apply to Turkey. That might come about also if Turkey were to join up to something that it helped formulate—the Energy Community treaty—but that is not likely to happen. Turkey has opted for all or nothing: “We either get European Union membership or we don’t.” The specific thing is that Cypriot Government objections are preventing the opening of discussions on the energy chapter, which is the crucial chapter. If there were a specific role for the UK Government to play, it would be somehow to break that extraordinarily difficult deadlock.

Q17 Mr Roy: If Turkey had to commit to the European Union, are there any gains that the European Union might reap in terms of the Turkish position on energy issues?

John Roberts: Yes, I think there are. First, both the European Union and Turkey would make gains. If Turkey were to be a member of the European Union and have the entire energy acquis, that would imply that it would have considerably liberalised its internal market, and under those circumstances it would be able to fulfil its own ambition, which is to become a genuine hub for the trading of energy. At the moment, it is a physical hub, in the sense of a lot of energy coming in and quite a lot going out, but it is not a trading hub, because it lacks the liberalisation of the market that would make traders wish to conduct their trades in the area.

Q18 Mr Roy: In relation to being a hub for energy—I know it is moving off the subject a bit—would it also be a hub for anything else, which could piggyback on that?

John Roberts: I don’t think so. There is a certain amount of gain that they make from physical construction of new lines. That is obviously a major project, with major employment, for a limited amount of time, but that is about it. The only point I would make that I have not so far, is that Turkey is talking at the moment of transiting anything up to 40 bcm of gas in the near to medium term, but in the long term it is looking to transit around 100 bcm of gas to Europe. That is quite doable in terms of the resources around it. That would pretty much cover any increase in demand that we expect in Europe over the next 10 years. In that sense, Turkey’s role is potentially very important.

Q19 Sir Menzies Campbell: I wonder if I might take you back to the question of liberalisation, so far as it is related to the Turkish aspiration to become a trading centre. The capacity to liberalise lies with the Turkish Government. If the aspiration is ever to be realised, a Turkish Government will have to embark on liberalisation. What is stopping them doing so now?

John Roberts: Officially, they are liberalising. I am trying to think when they passed the relevant acts—

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eight or nine years ago. They are just slow. This is a classic example of the fact that Turkey is prone to move, if it is not pressed, at a snail's pace. After all, we are talking in particular about one company, BOTAS, the state pipeline monopoly. Monopolies do not give up their position easily and BOTAS is no exception.

Q20 Sir Menzies Campbell: It seems contradictory that this lies within the power of the Government but the Government do not proceed at other than a snail's pace. Could you relate that to economic growth in Turkey? Let's put it this way: in this country we would be very happy to have Turkish annual rates of growth. That must surely be something of a catalyst in this approach to liberalisation, is it not?

John Roberts: Why?

Q21 Sir Menzies Campbell: Why not?

John Roberts: If you are the Turkish Government and are presiding over considerable economic growth, why would you want to tinker with what you think is currently working? We could argue perfectly reasonably and rationally—and I would argue myself—that liberalisation of the gas market would provide a further fillip to Turkish growth, but liberalisation happened when Turkey was suffering from economic constraints. Now that it is growing and doing well, you don't want to change things. In that human sense, it is perfectly understandable that Turkey would go slowly on liberalisation. It is saying, "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" The fact that you can get something better, to them might still be considered hypothetical rather than real.

Q22 Mr Watts: You talked about the growth levels in Turkey and the dependency on gas and oil imports. What is Turkey's position? Is it trying to diversify so that it is less reliant on those imports in future? What are the major initiatives, if any?

John Roberts: The Turks have a peculiar attitude towards imports. Until the arrival of the AK Government, successive Governments pursued what one might almost describe as the personal policies of the Energy Minister: one Energy Minister might favour imports from Russia, another might favour imports from Azerbaijan, and another might favour imports from Iran. That was in the 1990s and resulted in a string of contracts that were not necessarily competitive. There was no question of doing a financial calculation and asking, "Are we better off importing gas from A, B or C?"

The AK Government inherited long-term gas agreements, and it is interesting that they have adopted a more flexible attitude. For instance, the AK Government did not renew the first gas agreement with Russia, which ran out a week ago and was for 6 bcm through the Balkans, but that may be part of the Russian policy of running down exports through that route because it crosses Ukraine.

So there is a degree of increased flexibility in Turkish imports, and there is an understanding of the need for diversified imports, which is one reason why Turkey wants more gas from Azerbaijan. At the same time, Turkey is far more comfortable with Russia now than

it has been for many years, although I would argue that Turkey has an amazing ability to antagonise potential partners, as it has done with Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran and just about every other energy supplier.

Q23 Mr Watts: That addresses how Turkey is trying to diversify its gas and oil supplies, but what about other forms of energy? Is Turkey interested in nuclear power and wind power?

John Roberts: The Turkish Government are genuinely interested in all alternative forms of energy. They have an active programme to develop both wind power and geothermal power. They have tried to get a nuclear power station up and running off and on for 40 years. That has invoked considerable controversy because the power station is in Akkuyu, which is in an earthquake zone. They restated their commitment to the project even after Fukushima. They had an agreement with Russia, which it thought would be implemented, for the construction of that power station, but the agreement now appears to be in abeyance. One always has to distinguish between "agreements" in Turkey and actual implementation in the form of contracts. As far as I know, no contracts for the construction of nuclear power plants are physically being implemented.

Q24 Mr Watts: Do the Turkish Government have any targets for that transfer? Do they, say, want to become 10% less reliant on gas and oil imports? Is it that sophisticated, or are they trying to work up scheme by scheme?

John Roberts: If the Committee will allow me, I will come up with an answer to that question when I have done a bit more research and gone back to my notes. Turks come up with constant projections of what their future energy balance will be, and I cannot remember the current projection. I apologise for that.

Q25 Chair: Cyprus thinks there may be quite a lot of gas to the south, in the eastern Mediterranean. How much credence do you give to such reports? What is the significance of the discovery down there?

John Roberts: I will answer very carefully, because I don't want to forecast or prognosticate. I simply want to point out that gas has been found on the Israeli side of the maritime boundary between Cyprus and Israel, which is a delineated line. The company that has been drilling on the Israeli side is now drilling on the Cypriot side. One could make a perfectly logical case for saying that it is reasonable to assume that the company would not be drilling on the Cypriot side if they didn't assume that there is a good prospect, but until a well is drilled you do not know whether there is oil or gas. So, yes, it is very serious, but until we get the results of the drilling, it is probably best not to speculate.

Q26 Chair: If something were there, hypothetically, how would it be brought to market? Would it be piped into Israel and Cyprus, and then into Turkey?

John Roberts: There have been what one would describe as semi-formal talks. It has certainly been raised at ministerial level, in discussions between

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Israeli and Cypriot Ministers, that a liquefied natural gas plant might be constructed in Cyprus to handle whatever gas is produced in the region. I spoke to the Cypriot Minister for Energy, who is responsible for this, in June I think, and he felt that being a regional centre made sense. On the other hand, his concept of politics was interesting, because he said that this might apply to gas produced by Syria, too, if they found gas.

These are such early days that I think one has to be very careful. I make one point: no one has yet built an LNG terminal in another country to handle their own gas. They have built LNG terminals in their own country, but they have not built one in another.

Q27 Chair: Qatar?

John Roberts: Qatar has its LNG terminals in Qatar.

Q28 Chair: It has a plant in Milton Keynes.

John Roberts: No, that's the import system. We are talking here about the major, big projects. Very roughly, the liquefaction or upstream side costs many multiples of a downstream regasification plant, and no one has built the upstream end in another country. I am not saying it is impossible—indeed, in many ways it would make sense to do it in Cyprus—but it would be unusual.

Q29 Chair: I am asking you to put a political hat on now, which is a bit unfair, but do you think that the jurisdictional dispute between Turkey and Cyprus will impede this?

John Roberts: I do not see how it can in that Cyprus, in terms of the EU, the United Nations and the rest of the world, is a sovereign country, and this is quite within its sovereign rights. There are issues in terms of what happens as fallout from such a development, whether in relation to Turkish antagonism, or if it impedes a settlement to the Cyprus problem, or should Turkey in some way fall out with Europe on energy

issues. Those are the consequences, rather than the direct consequences concerning energy development.

Q30 Chair: That is very helpful. I think that is all. Have we asked you all the right questions?

John Roberts: The only thing I would say is that one ought to look carefully at Turkish relations with Iraq, because it has begun to understand that its strength in Northern Iraq is essentially commercially based. Its company is notably Genel Energy, which is now forming the new Tony Hayward project, and which is the biggest single stakeholder of gas resources in Northern Iraq. At some point, some of that gas is likely to cross Turkey and perhaps enter Nabucco, or whatever pipeline systems are operational.

In the last five to seven years, Turkey has been pursuing a much more nuanced approach to Northern Iraq and the Kurds there than one would ever have expected a decade earlier. If Turkey can do that with the Kurds, don't necessarily underestimate it with regard to Cyprus. The point here is to look to the actions and not the words. This matter goes back to 2004, when after years of pressure, the Turkish Cypriots voted yes to a settlement agreement, but then to the great shock of everybody else, the Greeks voted no. That has left a very sour taste in Turkish mouths. It will take a really big effort to solve the Cyprus problem, but I think that one should quite definitely continue to regard the Turks as a partner in that process. They are not an automatic blocker, though they do have concerns. As I say, I think that sometimes their foreign policy can be a little more nuanced than we give them credit for.

Q31 Chair: That is very helpful advice. Thank you very much. Thank you very much indeed for coming along, Mr Roberts. It is very much appreciated and if any more energy issues pop up, which I suspect they will, we will get in touch with you to pick your brains again. Thanks for coming.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **John Peet**, Europe Editor, *The Economist*, gave evidence.

Q32 Chair: I welcome Mr John Peet to the witness box. For someone who has subscribed to *The Economist* for most of my life it is a pleasure to have someone from *The Economist* here. Mr Peet is the Europe editor and has written quite a lot about Turkey, which is why we have asked you to come along, Mr Peet. Is there anything you'd like to say by way of opening remarks or should we just go straight into questions?

John Peet: Thank you, Chairman. I would like to make a couple of opening remarks if it is helpful. As you say, I have been Europe editor of *The Economist* since 2003. I have followed Turkey quite closely during that period and have written a special report on Turkey. I visit the country quite often. I would like to offer three starting points for today. First, I and *The Economist* have consistently supported Turkey's aspirations to join the European Union, on the basis that we think it would be good for Turkey, by boosting

its economy, underpinning democratisation in the country and supporting the process of reform. We also think that taking in a very important country that has been economically successful over the past decade and is vibrant and from the Muslim world would be good for the EU.

Secondly, I have also been an admirer of the AK Government since it came into office in 2002 and, with reservations that I will come to, of the Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoan, since he took office in March 2003. The economic success of Turkey speaks for itself. The AK Government managed to open EU membership negotiations, which previous Governments had failed to do. They have also done more reform, including for the Kurdish issue, than almost any of their predecessors. Initial fears about the Islamist roots of the AK Party seem to me to be overblown, and I would stick to that view. Even looking back from now, in practice it has governed in

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many respects as a fairly normal centre-right party, akin to a European Christian Democratic party. In foreign policy, I think it has achieved some worthwhile things. The famous slogan of the Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutolu, of seeking to have zero problems with the neighbours represented a shift in Turkish policy towards taking a greater interest in the region that was once part of the Ottoman empire. It hasn't always worked, but it was worth doing compared with what went before.

Finally, I have had some worries, which I have expressed in *The Economist*, about the direction in which the Prime Minister is going. That is why, as I expect the Committee knows, I wrote an editorial in support of the Opposition Republican People's Party during the last election. The real danger with the AK Party in government was never Islamism or its assertive foreign policy, but rather the autocratic instincts of Prime Minister Erdoan himself. During his now long period in office, he has managed to overcome or sideline many of the obstacles that stood in his way: the presidency, first of all; the judiciary, which over time has shifted a little more towards the AK camp; and the military, which is, I think, cowed after losing repeated clashes with the Prime Minister. Turkey is a highly centralised country with a single parliamentary chamber, few well-established checks and balances and also several obvious problems of corruption.

Against that background, it seems that freedom of the press, freedom of academia and freedom of speech are all vitally important. In some respects, all three have been partly compromised in recent years. The big danger that I worried about as the election came near was that the AK Party might use the opportunity to change the constitution, which they have set as one of their understandable goals, the constitution having been inherited from 1982 after a military coup. They might have used the opportunity to institute a French-style executive presidency, with the obvious candidate for that job being Mr Erdoan himself. I felt that it was important for Turkey and for its relations with Europe that they should not secure the two-thirds majority that would have enabled them to do that. I am pleased to say that they did not secure that majority, but the issue of constitutional change continues to be on the table.

I think that is all I want to say by way of introduction.

Chair: Thank you. That leads us neatly into Dave Watts's questions.

Q33 Mr Watts: Can you touch on how the Government's decision to try to upgrade UK relations with Turkey is being perceived in Turkey? Could you also give us some general view about how the UK is viewed in Turkey—before that initiative and after?

John Peet: You are talking about the Turkish Government's view on that.

Mr Watts: Yes.

John Peet: Very positively. They identify the UK as one of their strongest supporters in terms of the quest for EU membership. Perhaps along with countries such as Sweden, we are seen as their closest supporter for that. They also think the UK is quite an important economic country, and economic links have not

perhaps been as well developed as they could have been in past years. I think the present British Government have done quite well to identify Turkey as a growing and increasingly important economy, with which UK business should have more to do.

The only area where there are perhaps still some reservations about the UK in Turkey relates to Cyprus, because of the UK's history there. I do not think it is regarded as hostile in the way that, for example, the Greek Government sometimes are, but the UK position in Cyprus is often regarded as compromised by its history there.

Q34 Mr Watts: Can you actually see any physical or practical changes since that initiative was announced by the Government? You are saying that it is positive, but is there an upward spiral in general trade? Has there been a marked difference? I accept your point that Turkey has a positive view about links with the UK, but the Prime Minister obviously wanted to take it a step further than that, and he wanted to have some actual practical gain out of the relationship. Is that happening?

John Peet: It is beginning to. I have to admit that I do not have figures with me, but I know that many businessmen went with—I think—Vince Cable to Turkey. There are certainly increasing signs of interest on the part of British business in Turkey, and trade between the two is clearly increasing. So from a lowish base, it is improving.

Q35 Mr Watts: What is the environment like for businesses trying to get into Turkey? Is that a positive experience or do they experience difficulties? Is there something more that the Government could do? Given the fact that it is at a low level and that everyone wants it to increase—it seems that both Turkey and the UK do—how can that environment be improved and what can be done to facilitate that change?

John Peet: If I were in the position of thinking from the Government's point of view about that, I would let business get on with it. On the whole, the business environment in Turkey is quite good, and Turkey is much more receptive and much more accommodating of foreign investment than it was 10 years ago, so that is on the increase. The one specific area where the UK Government could perhaps think about doing more is making it easier for Turks to get visas to come to this country, which I think your next witness may have more to say on.

Q36 Mr Watts: You mentioned corruption. Is that a problem for UK businesses that are trying to do business in Turkey?

John Peet: Corruption is a problem wherever it exists. I do not think that Turkey is worse than many other countries, including those in its region, but corruption is a problem for it. It is a difficult thing to measure, but my perception is that it may have got worse because of the long period of single-party rule in Turkey. So it is something that the Turks themselves should do more about, yes.

Q37 Sir Menzies Campbell: You have partly answered the question I was going to begin with, Mr

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Peet. Leaving aside other matters, such as social or cultural elements, just how serious an irritant is the visa issue as far as Turkish trade is concerned? Is it a substantial irritant?

John Peet: I happen to have been at a conference with British and Turkish people two weeks ago, which took place at Ditchley Park. Visas was the number one issue that most of the Turkish participants raised. As far as trade is concerned, visas are not too much of a concern, because trade is about goods and services. But certainly, if this Government are trying to increase our economic relationship with Turkey and benefit from its economic success, allowing easier entry to this country by Turkish businessmen, bankers and others would help.

Q38 Sir Menzies Campbell: Is a factor in this caused by Turkey's decision to allow non-visa entry to a number of countries that the British would most certainly want visas from?

John Peet: I would guess that that makes the issue of giving visas more freely to people from Turkey harder.

Q39 Sir Menzies Campbell: I appreciate that you are not a visa expert, but I am trying to get at the political problem.

John Peet: I understand that. The Turkish draw a rather different conclusion. They say, "Look, we have successfully implemented a policy of trying to get rid of visas for our neighbourhood and it has worked very well." Business with other places and Syria—admittedly, before the recent events—has been booming, partly thanks to the ease of crossing the borders. The Turkish sometimes perceive the increasing difficulty of getting visas to come to Britain, and sometimes also to the Schengen area, as an unnecessary and unhelpful obstacle to further integration and trade.

Q40 Sir Menzies Campbell: I have a copy of an article dated 4 June 2011 that appeared in *The Economist*, of which I, too, am a reader. It seems that the tone of that article is a little different from the—if I may characterise it—relatively optimistic approach that you adopted a moment ago. I am looking at a passage that states, "A new tolerance for the Muslim headscarf and an intolerance of alcohol point the way towards a more fiercely Islamist future, partly inspired by the opaque Fethullah Gulen movement, which seems strongly represented in the police." Then, a little later, there is a reference to journalists being in jail, lawsuits pending against writers and broadcasters, and Turkey's having dropped to 138th place in the press freedom ranking of Reporters Without Borders, which is a lobby group with which, I am sure, you are more than familiar. I see a slight contrast between the expression of those reservations and what I have described as the relatively optimistic approach that you sounded at the beginning of your evidence.

John Peet: Thank you for the question, because I wrote the article.

Q41 Sir Menzies Campbell: I rather suspected that.

John Peet: It makes me sound rather schizophrenic. I started from a position that also informed my thinking when I visited Turkey before the election. I then wrote both the article and the editorial that went with it. I am pro Turkey and am quite pro the AK Government, but I have reservations at the same time. I have worries about future direction and media freedom. Perhaps that is why the tone sometimes seems to vary. I do have criticisms of the AK Government. It is reprehensible that 64 journalists are held in jail, which is more than in China. Many generals are in jail as well. I have legitimate grounds for worry about the future direction of the country under this Government. At the same time, I am impressed by what they have achieved over the past 10 years, and I am hopeful for the future, if that is not a contradictory way of answering your question.

Sir Menzies Campbell: No, I quite understand. It sounds like the kind of thing a politician might say. Thank you very much.

John Peet: I am glad I am not one of them.

Q42 Chair: Just following on from that, is there not a contradiction? I can also see what I suspect you wrote about the generals. The generals were the hard-line secularists, yet they have been replaced. There is a bit of a contradiction here. I think you were slightly critical of that development.

John Peet: I was certainly critical of the military's long involvement in politics in Turkey, which has not been helpful to Turkey, although if you go back through the history of the country, there were times when a military coup—I particularly think back to 1980—seemed justified to many people. Overall, however, the military's involvement in politics has been a bad thing. One improvement in the past nine or 10 years has been that the prospect of anything like a military coup seems extremely remote. That is a good thing.

I have been told by people who follow the issues more closely than I that there genuinely was some evidence surrounding possible plots among certain levels of the army during the early part of the AK Government against that Government. My impression has nevertheless been that the pursuit of the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer cases has sometimes taken too long, has sometimes brought too many people into the net, the evidence has not always been terribly clear and, to some extent, the prosecutors appear to have used those cases as a way of intimidating the army, rather than purely as a matter of pursuing justice.

Q43 Mr Ainsworth: Please continue to pick up these contradictions in your views. Taken across the piece, are human rights in Turkey improving or deteriorating?

John Peet: Human rights are improving in Turkey. That has been a fairly consistent pattern for much of the past 10 to 15 years. The areas where I would have some reservations include media freedom, which I have spoken about, if you can count it as part of human rights. The other area is that at times when the Kurdish conflict has hotted up, possibly including the current time, respect for human rights has tended to fall. It rises and falls according to how much they are

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trying to settle the Kurdish problem, as opposed to pursuing the PKK terrorists.

Q44 Mr Ainsworth: You still think that the needle is over on the positive side.

John Peet: I do, yes.

Q45 Mr Ainsworth: Our position under both Governments has been to champion entry into the European Union. Does that compromise us in our ability and preparedness to raise human rights issues? Is the UK Government's position a positive thing, or is it potentially negative? Does it stop us from being principled in the things that we say to the Turkish Government?

John Peet: I see no reason why it should not be a positive position to be in. In a way I think it may be easier to criticise the Turkish Government on issues such as media freedom and some aspects of human rights if it is coming from a country that supports the principle of Turkish membership of the European Union. One of the problems of outside criticism of Turkey, particularly from Europe, is that some people in Turkey—this might even apply to the Prime Minister—tend to brush it off on the basis that the European Union does not seem to want to let Turkey in anyway.

Certain countries in the European Union are well-known opponents of Turkish membership of the European Union. That position makes it harder for those countries and for Europe collectively to exert influence in Turkey in matters such as human rights. Indeed, I think that is one reason why it would be good for Europe to continue to work towards Turkish entry into the European Union—because it strengthens its influence in Turkey.

Q46 Mr Ainsworth: Are we not now in a position where, effectively, Turkish entry to the European Union has been parked? Neither side wants to kill it off for fear of the consequences, but it is not going to make progress. Therefore, any positive role that potential entry to the European Union was having on human rights development in Turkey is non-existent, really, isn't it?

John Peet: I think "non-existent" might be a bit strong, but your analysis is quite logical. To me, the European Union's influence and leverage in Turkey reached its highest point roughly in October 2005 under the British presidency, when negotiations began. As over the years the feeling in Turkey has developed that the negotiations are really not going anywhere, European leverage in Turkey has correspondingly declined. The negotiations continue, however. We have not opened a chapter of the negotiations for over a year, and many chapters are blocked by Cyprus, by France or by the European Union as a whole, but the process continues. Leverage is not non-existent, but if the perception continues in Turkey that it will never be let in, leverage clearly will be weaker.

Q47 Rory Stewart: Can I bring you on, please, to the Kurds? Where do you think the Kurdish issue is going? Do you see it as an inevitably successful

Turkish counter-insurgency campaign that will just take a matter of time, as a result of which there will be some terrorist problems but eventually—maybe in the way the Spanish have dealt with ETA—there will be a victory? Or do you see it drifting in the other direction, and becoming a losing campaign where the Kurds will eventually achieve some form of near-total autonomy?

John Peet: It is hard to be sure where it is going, but I have the firm view that it would not be possible to resolve the Kurdish issue purely by military means. I do not think the analogy with the Basques quite holds, partly because of the Kurdish autonomous region of Northern Iraq. You might draw more of an analogy with Ireland; I do not believe that a military solution alone was ever going to work in Northern Ireland; there had to be a political solution. Sometimes, I believe, the Turkish Government have recognised that. As I said in my opening comments, they have been more positive about the Kurdish issue than most of their predecessors have. When the so-called Kurdish opening was at its highest point in 2009, I would have been quite positive about the prospects for a relaxation, for allowing the Kurdish language to be used in schools and for some of the other things that the Kurds wanted. Most of them do not want complete independence; they just want much more autonomy and freedom to run their affairs. I believe that that could be achieved, but not purely by military means.

Q48 Rory Stewart: Let me just push you one more time on that. With any counter-insurgency campaign we always say that we need a political settlement and that it will not be achieved by military means, but that would apply to almost everything. It is what people say about Ireland, Afghanistan and Tibet, and about Russian relations with Chechnya. Different regimes deal in different degrees of brutality, however, and with different degrees of success, depending on the exact conditions. What is your best guess of what it will look like in 10 years' time?

John Peet: I think we could see a situation in 10 years' time—I assume that Turkey will not be a member of the European Union before then, but it may have come closer to joining—in which the Kurds have much more autonomy than they do now; in which there is more decentralisation of power in Turkey; and in which the PKK is a much less active force than it was. I think that is a perfectly plausible scenario to sketch out for the future.

Q49 Rory Stewart: Moving on to European Union accession, you are obviously pro-EU accession for Turkey. How realistic do you think it now is that Europe would actually accept Turkey, and to what extent do you think European concerns about Turkish immigration are justified? In other words, the main fear, from Germany right through even to Britain, seems to be that we would be swamped with Turkish migrants.

John Peet: I think the prospects for Turkish accession to the European Union look quite bad at the moment for two reasons. The most obvious reason is that there continues to be quite strong resistance from some countries to Turkey joining, and if it is something that

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has to be decided unanimously by the current members of the European Union, as long as any one country does not want it, it cannot happen. The second reason is that Europe is very preoccupied at the moment with other things, most notably the euro crisis, which in a sense has put the whole issue of enlargement further off into the future. So long as people are worried about the survival of the club in its current form, they are perhaps less interested in expanding the club than they were.

I am still more optimistic in the longer term, for two reasons. I think the Turkish economy will continue to do well and will almost certainly outperform most of the European Union economies, so the gap between the two will clearly narrow. As one consequence of that, fears of being overwhelmed by a flood of Turkish immigrants will start to diminish. It is actually a curious fact that in the past three or four years Turkey has become a net immigrant country and not a net emigrant country, including from Germany; more Turks seem to be returning to Turkey than are coming from Turkey to Germany. Turkish demographics are also changing and are becoming a little closer to western norms. Although the population will continue to grow, the rate of growth is much slower than it was. All those things suggest to me that worries about immigration should diminish over time. I also think that, when it came to it, the Turks would accept restrictions on the free movement of labour for quite a long time after they joined the European Union—perhaps not for ever, but for quite a long time.

Q50 Rory Stewart: What additional steps should Britain be taking to accelerate Turkish EU accession, if that is the stated policy of our Government?

John Peet: By far the most important thing Britain and other countries could do would be to advance the prospect of settling the Cyprus issue. As I think I said in answer to an earlier question, Britain's history in Cyprus may make it harder for this Government to play a specific role in that, but the West collectively has a huge interest in settling the Cyprus issue, which clearly causes problems between the European Union and NATO, as well as being an obstacle to Turkish accession. It is a very difficult problem to solve, which no doubt is why it has been unsolved for 45 years, but I would be inclined to put a great deal more effort into it.

Q51 Mr Roy: May I ask you about the optimism that our Government have in relation to the extent to which Turkey's more assertive foreign policy in the region is complementary to UK interests? Is that true or is it false?

John Peet: I think it is a very interesting question. On the whole, Turkey as a functioning, mainly Muslim democracy with a successful economy seems to me to be a useful—I am pausing over the word “model”—example to the countries of its region. Turkish success in the past 10 years or so has been noted across particularly the Arab world—Turkish television is very influential across the Arab world—and it seems to me that seeing Turkey as an example or something to emulate complements the interests of the UK and

Europe in this region. Turkey is a better model than Saudi Arabia or, until recently, Egypt, so that is a plus. A slight negative, but not enough to outweigh that plus, is that Turkey obviously has its own interests in its region, which do not always correspond with the interests of the EU or the UK specifically. For example, we have seen in the deteriorating relationship with Israel and in Turkey's independent policy towards Iran two good examples of that. I would not put them down as therefore meaning that Turkish foreign policy is a very bad, unhelpful thing, but I think there are aspects of it that will not always complement the interests of the UK and the EU.

Q52 Mr Roy: Is there a danger that the further away Turkey goes from EU accession, the spin-off is that it goes further away rather than stays as close as it can? In other words, it gets in a bad mood, for example, and starts withdrawing from where it was going in relation to the EU?

John Peet: I would assume, as with most countries, that Turkey will pursue the foreign policy that it thinks is in its own best interests. But I do think that you have a very good point in saying that one very strong interest of Turkish foreign policy has consistently been a desire to join the EU, and if the Turkish establishment comes to the conclusion that that is never going to be on the table, then that influence on Turkish foreign policy will clearly weaken and they will be more inclined to pursue what they perceive as their interests in their region without much regard to Europe, so I think that is clearly a danger.

To put it a different way, when Turkey considers its approach to countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran or Israel, it may be somewhat constrained by a desire still to keep in with Europe, because it still has the aspiration to join the EU. If it decides that that aspiration is never going to be met, that constraint would obviously diminish.

Q53 Chair: Do you think the decision to cut off Syria or to keep Syria at arm's length is decisive? Do you think that is going to be a big influence in Syria?

John Peet: Syria is not a country I have followed closely, because my professional interests are confined to Europe, but Turkey clearly is a very important country to Syria. It has been very important economically. It seems to me that the Turks have taken a decision that one way or another the Assad regime is on the way out. I think they are working a little bit towards achieving that result. If they prove to be wrong and the Assad regime remains, I think the relationship between the two countries will be quite fraught.

Q54 Sir Menzies Campbell: Can we pick up on the cooling of relations between Turkey and Israel? Is that a part of the reaction towards Syria? Or is that something that is justified for different and separate political ambitions?

John Peet: I think Turkey's relations with Israel reflect as much public opinion at home in Turkey as any other interests in the region. In a way, the anomaly—if there was an anomaly—was Turkey's

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very close relationship with Israel for many years, which did not necessarily reflect public opinion in Turkey. The current Government are closer to public opinion in having a more difficult relationship with Israel than most of their predecessors. That said, I do think that sometimes this has been allowed to become almost too strident and too antagonistic, and I sometimes get the feeling that the Prime Minister rather likes being a hero of the Arab street when it comes to relations with Israel. I am not sure that that is actually in Turkey's long-term interests, not least because the Turks seem to have the view that they can have this relationship with Israel without it affecting their relationship with Europe and particularly with the United States. I do not think they are correct in that. I think their relationship with Israel is a complicating factor that makes their relations with Europe and especially with the United States harder.

Q55 Sir Menzies Campbell: How far is that attitude conditioned in recent times by the interception of the ship carrying humanitarian goods and things of that kind? Is that just a blip or is that something that you think may have had the effect of hardening public opinion and therefore encouraging the Government to recognise it?

John Peet: I think the Mavi Marmara incident was hugely important in Turkish public opinion. It had a very big influence on the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Davutolu, in particular. They have taken the consistent line that they want an apology from the Israeli Government. The Israeli Government appear to have taken a consistent line that they are not going to offer an apology. Until that impasse is resolved, I think the relationship between the two will not be repaired.

Q56 Chair: But if apology were forthcoming, you think it could be patched up.

John Peet: My understanding is that the military relationship between the two countries continues. There have been attempts on both sides to keep a dialogue going. It seems to me, yes, that if the Israelis were to offer a more full-hearted apology for what appeared to have been a mistake by them—but perhaps also by Turkey—they could repair that relationship. I would have thought that was in Israel's interest as well as Turkey's.

Q57 Mr Watts: May I turn that question on its head? Turkey might take the view that, for example, America needs Turkey, with all that is happening in that region. As you said earlier, it is a model that perhaps should be followed by other Muslim countries. How much thought do you think Turkey has given to that? Do you think they are trying to push America into a certain direction on the back of the fact that they now feel far more confident, that they are a bigger and more important player than perhaps in the past?

John Peet: I think they do think that. It is not just in relation to America. You often hear Turkish politicians say, "Europe needs us more than we need Europe." I think that attitude is quite strong in Turkey and it has been reinforced by the years of economic success and increasing diplomatic clout in the region. However, I also think that Turkish leaders are wrong if they think that that economic success and diplomatic clout and all that goes with it mean that they can bend the Americans a bit more in their direction, particularly over something like Israel. I have sometimes heard Turks say, "We still have very good relations with Washington, so it doesn't matter that we have very bad relations with Jerusalem." However, on a subject as sensitive as Israel, relations with Washington are not relations with just the State Department; they are also relations with American public opinion and Congress. In those areas, a difficult relationship with Israel can have adverse consequences for the relationship between Turkey and the US.

Q58 Chair: Mr Peet, thank you very much. Is there any concluding remark you would like to make, or any point you think we have missed?

John Peet: No. I did say right at the beginning that watching the development of the new Turkish constitution was going to be very important. As I said, we got into quite a lot of hot water with this Government by advocating a vote for the opposition party in the election. The analysis that we also had—that we thought it was undesirable to have a French-style presidency occupied by Mr Erdoğan—I think still holds. If that were to happen, that would be bad for Turkey and its relations with Europe.

Chair: That is a good note to end on. Thank you.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Sir David Logan KCMG**, former British Ambassador to Turkey (1997–2001); Chairman, British Institute at Ankara, gave evidence.

Q59 Chair: Our third witness is Sir David Logan, who is a past ambassador to Ankara and still chairman of the British Institute there. Thank you for coming. Is there anything you would like to say as opening remarks? The first questions might lead to general remarks.

Sir David Logan: There are two things. I wish to say something about the British Institute, which the Committee might not know a lot about. We fund, facilitate and implement research in Turkey across a

range of the humanities. We have fellowships. We give scholarships to both British and Turkish scholars. We are the only British institution undertaking primary academic research in Turkey. It is worth thinking of us, perhaps, as a modest example of British soft power in Turkey. We work closely with the British Council and with the embassy there. You may have had time to look at my written comments. The thrust of those was to say that I think that Turkey, by virtue of being an increasingly

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prosperous and confident nation, is an increasingly important prize as a partner for the United Kingdom. EU accession is very much on the back burner at the moment. I believe, however, that it is a long-term benefit for both Turkey and the United Kingdom and so an objective for all of us who are interested in that relationship is to think of ways of sustaining the process while accepting the fact that accession is not a short-term prize.

Q60 Chair: To what extent have things changed from when you were the ambassador? We see these periodic fits of enthusiasm over Turkey. Did we have one during your period in office or do you see life very much now as it was then?

Sir David Logan: Oh, no, I think it has changed enormously, and at the Turkish end in particular, because of the accession of the AK party to power. The 1990s was a period of more or less ineffectual coalition Governments, and they were representatives of this now very old-fashioned looking secularist establishment which dated from Ataturk and had not changed very much since. I was always enormously struck by the difference between when I served in Turkey in the 1960s, when this kind of structure did not look very odd, and when I went back in the 1990s, when we in the West had got used to pluralist, transparent societies in which individual human rights had become extremely important, but nothing had changed in Turkey. Now, post-2001, there have been tremendous changes, as your previous witness said. I think that is very important.

Q61 Chair: Do you think the new forum, which I am told is called the Tatli Dil forum, will be of benefit? Do you think it will have a big impact?

Sir David Logan: This is an attempt to set up with respect to Turkey the kind of institution which exists with other countries.

Q62 Chair: Are you a member, by the way?

Sir David Logan: Yes, I am. I am on the steering committee. What is supposed to make it different from previous such arrangements with Turkey is that it is supposed to span a range of interests. We have senior businessmen, senior politicians, journalists, civil servants and academics. This was the first session of all. It went well. We had a good Turkish team, and a very good British team. The subjects were broad and interesting. It was a start and only a start, but it laid a foundation for something that should develop further. It will become even more important in future to identify concrete objectives which can be agreed on and then pursued by these different groups of interested parties on each side.

Q63 Chair: But it will not replace any mechanism that already exists?

Sir David Logan: No. On the contrary. In my experience, the kind of mechanism that already exists tends to be either businessmen talking to each other, which is great, or politicians and civil servants talking about Turkey in the European Union, but in a rather narrow way. It will bridge a much wider spectrum. That is thoroughly desirable.

Q64 Sir John Stanley: When our Committee was last in Cyprus, which was towards the end of the previous Parliament, a real window of opportunity seemed to be opening to try to resolve the long-standing dispute between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. President Christofias seemed to have a real personal commitment to trying to produce a settlement, and the Turkish leader, again, seemed to be very positive. Do you agree that that window of opportunity seems now to have closed somewhat? As far as the present Turkish Government are concerned, where do you think Cyprus rates on their order of priorities? Has trying to achieve a settlement slipped down the scale, or is it still one of their top priorities? Could you give us your assessment of what degree of influence the present Turkish Government have over the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community?

Sir David Logan: First of all, I absolutely agree with your first piece of analysis that there was a sense of hope at that point and that the window closed with the change of Administrations.

The particular problem, as I am sure you know, on which Turkish accession is stuck as regards Cyprus is the issue of the additional protocol and the failure of the Turks to implement it, which they believe should be part of a dual process. The other component of that process is the opening up of northern Cyprus and the liberalisation of access to northern Cyprus, which has of course not happened. The European Union takes the view that the first is a legal requirement on them and that the second is merely a political commitment. That is the approximate cause of the present impasse. The Turkish Government certainly regard a settlement as important, but they, unsurprisingly, regard their relationship with the European Union as even more important. They see the Government of Cyprus as a major obstacle in the accession process, and in that situation there is really not very much that they can do in Cyprus.

Turkish politicians in general take the view that if the European Union really wanted progress on Turkish accession, the difficulties that the Government of Cyprus make could be overcome and that the major European countries could use influence on the Government of Cyprus to adjust their position. They think that, in the absence of that, however, there is not much that can be done.

Q65 Sir John Stanley: You said that the Turkish Government always attach more importance to their relationship with the EU than to settling the Cyprus issue, but is there not a factor here that may intertwine the two? Is it not a very real possibility—I would say danger—that those members of the European Union who are sceptical of or indeed in outright opposition to Turkish accession may try and play the Cyprus card and say that it would be unthinkable to allow Turkey to obtain entry into the EU until there is a settlement in Cyprus?

Sir David Logan: Absolutely. There is a close connection and you are absolutely right, but I think the Turks then look at the present situation on Cyprus and believe that there is no prospect of progress there and that nothing can be done about that. I understand

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your point, but since there is no prospect of progress there, they are stuck on the EU agenda as well. I have no very good suggestions to make. In my written evidence, I said that in the present situation the best thing to do was to try to identify steps that could be taken unilaterally by different parties, because at the moment the negotiations are completely paralysed by linkage. The atmosphere might be improved, and it may be a better way forward, if modest steps are taken independently by the Government of Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriots, the Greek Government and the Turkish Government, but I am not saying that that is a silver bullet.

Q66 Chair: What is the commercial environment like for a businessman trying to do business in Turkey? Has our support for membership of the EU made any difference?

Sir David Logan: British exports to Turkey rose by 38% last year and by 31% in the first six months of this year over the same period in 2010, so things are going well. As the previous witness said, British business does reasonably well, but could do better. My personal experience—I was a non-executive director of a British company working in Turkey—is that the bits of the British Government that are tasked with aiding and assisting British companies working in Turkey are efficient and effective. From the next appointment, which will be this autumn, the post of Director General of Trade and Investment in Turkey will be upgraded to a more senior position.

The company I worked for encountered many obstacles on the Turkish side. I don't suppose that you want to go too far down that track, which is parochial and detailed, but it would be wrong to say that anyone can go into Turkey and find making an investment there tremendously uncomplicated, at least not in the field in which my company operated.

Q67 Chair: So it is far from easy?

Sir David Logan: Yes. The Turks might well say that my company was a special case, but it certainly was not easy.

Q68 Rory Stewart: The two most worrying things in the analysis are whether it is possible to convince anyone in Europe or the United Kingdom that EU accession for Turkey makes sense. There is a consensus among the diplomatic and political community that Turkish accession is the thing to do, but we are not getting the message across. Unless we can convey the message to European voters, it seems to be a slightly flaky political objective.

Sir David Logan: Part of the problem is with the context. We are operating in a context in which the European Union is entirely preoccupied with its own problems, which are primarily economic. We are operating in a context in which, for all kinds of reasons, including the economic downturn, there is opposition in Europe to immigration and the appearance of foreigners. We are operating in a context in which, simply, enlargement is off the agenda because it requires a spirit of optimism and daring, and we do not have that in Europe. So the context is bad before we even go on to Turkey.

My impression of the Turks is that they labour under the post-9/11 problem of being Muslim. Whatever we may say, post-9/11 and post-7/7 there is anti-Muslim sentiment. We used to say that the goal was to demonstrate that the European Union was not a Christian community, but that may not have the resonance that it once had. My impression is that all that has changed. However, opposition to Turkish accession is quite soft. It is reversible, just as I think that French and German opinion about Turkey is reversible. There is nothing at the moment to make it reverse, and no context in which to do it. Your previous witness made the point that is certainly relevant in the general context, and that not many people know: Turkey is now a net immigrant country. Turks with good qualifications are leaving Germany and going back to Turkey. Many people are now migrating to Turkey because it is economically successful and they can find opportunities there. That is also the sort of thing that will change attitudes over time.

Q69 Rory Stewart: I am also aware of having slightly jumped sequence. Let us return to the European Union. The second thing is how our Foreign Office is set up to deal with Turkey. It says that it has about 100 UK-based FCO officers with Turkish language skills, although it adds the proviso that some of them may not have formal FCO language qualifications, which sounds a little suspicious. It then says that it had 11 UK-based positions in Turkey requiring Turkish speakers, but not all of them were filled with Turkish speakers this time owing to staff elements. Perhaps this is an unfair question, but do you think that we could be doing a bit better in terms of getting Turkish specialist language speakers into our missions?

Sir David Logan: It is an unfair question in the sense that I am out of date on that sort of thing. In my written evidence to your Committee on British diplomacy, I said one thing that you took account of, namely that language training at the Foreign Office was not as good as it was, and that the Diplomatic service Language Centre should be re-established and so on. I also made a point that you did not take up, which was that the Foreign Office needs not only to teach the languages that it requires, but to go on using them. That is more difficult now than 20 years ago when personnel deployment was more authoritarian. None the less, having invested a lot of money in teaching people the Turkish language, you need to be able to use that investment not just once the first time, but again later. I really cannot comment on the embassy in Ankara at the moment, but my overall impression is that there is room for improvement on language training.

Q70 Sir Menzies Campbell: You heard Mr Peet talk about the visa issue. You were also present at the conference at Ditchley to which he referred. What is your take on the visa issue? How significant is it, and what is the scope for relaxation?

Sir David Logan: I banged on about it in my written evidence. At the Tatli Dil meeting, which we have just been discussing, it was very striking, as Mr Peet said,

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that one prominent and very distinguished Turkish representative said, “We hear all this wonderful stuff from Brits who say how much they want Turkey in the European Union, but we can’t even get through the door when it comes to visas and we are humiliated there.” Examples of what has happened were given. This is all hearsay, but the important point is that while it may not be possible to change the visa regime itself, it should be possible to find ways to operate it more efficiently and in a manner which does not appear to visa applicants to be unnecessarily arbitrary, intrusive and obstructive.

Q71 Sir Menzies Campbell: Does the humiliation argument carry a great deal of weight or is it a more practical approach?

Sir David Logan: Well, it is both. The humiliation argument is quite important because people say that when they get on board an aircraft in Istanbul bound for London even when they have a visa and so on, there are sometimes four security checks for Turks going towards the aeroplane. They may then be questioned again when they get to London. The problem about the humiliation argument—I know this from personal experience—is that it simply puts people off. Why bother to go to Britain when the process is complex, intrusive and humiliating?

I suggested in my written evidence that it might be possible to put together institutions—for example, there is a Turko-British Business Council and a Turkish British Chamber of Commerce and Industry, whose members must have experience of this—to produce examples of what has happened. The Chairman asked about trade, and I suspect that bilateral trade between us suffers from what is happening. I also think that academic exchanges probably suffer due to what is happening. These are very direct interests. It is not just a matter of having some nice tourists.

Q72 Sir Menzies Campbell: Does the visa issue condition Turkish public opinion towards Britain or is it confined to those, who will only be a very small portion of the population, who want to travel to Britain?

Sir David Logan: I will answer that in a different way, but I will try to get back to you. As you know, the Turks themselves have embarked on this extraordinary policy of lifting visa restrictions for all their neighbours—they started with the Greeks. That has produced tremendous growth in exchanges of all sorts: trade, politicians and just ordinary people. You find visitors in both directions from all over the place. It is really remarkable how that has changed perceptions of Turkey in the Middle East and how Turkish perceptions of some of their neighbours have changed. That is not happening with us. To what extent a potential Turkish tourist to the UK says, “Well, it’s easy to go there and it’s not easy to go to the UK,” I do not know. I think it is quite off-putting.

Q73 Sir Menzies Campbell: I do not want to dwell too long on this, but is there any appreciation of the security position as far as the UK is concerned and of

the fact that we have been subject to overt acts of terrorism and threats?

Sir David Logan: I think the answer at the popular level is probably no, but I am sure there is at an official Turkish level. There is good co-operation between the Turkish and British authorities on such subjects. I am sure they know perfectly well that that is an overriding concern and that anything that might be possible to do by way of simplification or better management must be in the very firm context of that concern.

Q74 Sir Menzies Campbell: Thank you very much for that. I think you’re probably aware of the Chatham House/YouGov survey on the attitudes of British citizens towards Turkey, which, putting it generally, are not particularly positive. To some extent you answered this question by what you said to Rory Stewart a moment ago, but do you think that those attitudes are susceptible to being changed? To put a historical slant on this, in the Cold War, who was guarding the southern flank but Turkey? That led to great appreciation in the United States, but perhaps not so much appreciation here in the UK.

Sir David Logan: I think that is absolutely true. I don’t know to whom the survey was addressed, but I think that if you asked the British public at large what they thought about Turkey, their assessment would be based first on football and secondly on holidays. What else—? That trend will continue.

Q75 Sir Menzies Campbell: I think those are the benchmarks for all our international relations.

Sir David Logan: If you took a serious survey of a cross-section of the British public, that may apply to many countries, but I am sure it’s true of Turkey. The kind of people who go for other reasons are quite limited—businessmen, journalists and so on—so, as I said in respect of Mr Stewart’s question, the results of such surveys are not positive and one should not minimise the importance of that, but I think negative opinion is soft and could be turned round in the right circumstances.

Q76 Sir Menzies Campbell: One last question about attitudes, since you mentioned holidays: how important is the tourist trade to the Turkish economy and, in particular, how important is it in so far as it might be based on encouraging British citizens to spend time there?

Sir David Logan: Oh, very important. I do not have figures, but I think 2 million British citizens a year go there. Many more go from Russia, which makes up the biggest proportion of tourists, and a large community of retired German expatriates lives there. So, yes, it is very important.

Q77 Mr Watts: Can I follow the same theme as my two colleagues? You said that British people’s perception is, perhaps, that this is a Muslim state that is not like us. That is one explanation; the other is about whether Turkey is committed to a democratic and pluralist society. Considering the number of journalists who are locked away, the way that the legal system is being controlled by the state, and the

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increasing centralisation of power, British people might have some suspicions about not just the religious element but the cultural element. How committed is the Turkish regime to dealing with those matters? If it wants to be a member of the European Union, how committed is it to addressing those to bring its cultural and political life in line with the rest of Europe?

Sir David Logan: That is a very important question, which also covers other questions that I am sure the Committee has. Questions about Kurds' human rights, and so on, are turned, to some extent, on these issues. First, countries operate in the framework that they have got; the framework that the Turks have got is not good. Although their 1980 constitution has been amended, it is—perhaps it is excessive to call it totalitarian—a constitution under which you have to demonstrate that you are doing the right rather than the wrong thing; it assumes that you are probably doing the wrong thing.

The same is true in many of the laws. There is an anti-terror law, and other laws that are not good. Constitutional reform—creating a new constitution in which the rights of the individual rather than the rights of the state are prime—is absolutely essential. We hope that things will happen in the medium term. There is a Commission that is supposed to make proposals at the end of this month. The next stage will be long and slow, but, at any rate, it is there. That is what underpins all this.

I am sure you have looked at the latest Commission progress report, which came out last week. It says that progress is being made in a range of matters, including in legislation on journalistic freedom. You mentioned that there is criticism, which is quite right. Again, it says that the Turkish problem is that there is no legislation that anchors Turkey's handling of press freedom in the ECHR framework, which is absolutely right. There has been imprisonment of journalists—Mr Peet gave you numbers that we would all find disturbingly high. Many Turks recognise that.

The Commission report is reasonably balanced on this subject and it itemises concrete progress in a number of areas, including, for example, in civilian oversight of the military, reform of oversight of the constitutional court and so on, which is positive. All that really must be embedded in proper legislation—in a new constitution. Given the opportunity to do so, the real risk, which has been demonstrated on various occasions, is that certain judges, prosecutors or whatever will come up with the wrong answer; they need the right framework in which to operate.

Q78 Mr Watts: British foreign policy seems to be to improve trade. It is probably one of the leading countries in promoting membership for Turkey in the EU. What does our present position do to our ability to influence things such as human rights? Are we concentrating on the wrong things, both for our own interest and for Turkey's? Can we influence them by being a bit more critical and by putting down some markers on where we think they are going wrong and where they need to go?

Sir David Logan: I would not make a connection between trade promotion and the promotion of human

rights. I cannot see how one would do it anyway. It seems to me to defeat the interests of British businessmen.

Q79 Mr Watts: I think it was more the other way round. Perhaps we are not as critical as we should be, because we are interested in promoting trade.

Sir David Logan: I see what you mean. Sorry, I misunderstood you. If you look at British Government pronouncements on things like this—I left 10 years ago, so I am not directly involved now and I cannot say what happens currently—it is not my impression that they gloss it over. On the contrary, what they have tried to do is to find practical ways of making improvements. For example, when I was there, we ran courses for the Turkish police to give examples of how our police went about the process of collecting evidence and so on and the requirement to base prosecutions on factual evidence, rather than confessions. That is the way that you have to deal with things like this. You have to demonstrate the importance of the legal basis on which to handle issues such as prosecution of journalists and the evidence and standards to which you are required to adhere if you are going to be an EU member. Rather than say it is bad, you have to suggest how to make it better.

Q80 Rory Stewart: I think that this follows up on Dave's questions. How troubled should we be by Turkey's operations in the Kurdish areas of Turkey? Are you saying that there is not a great deal we can do about it, because it is an important trading partner, so it is better to be nice to them and slightly turn a blind eye in the way that we might turn a blind eye to what China or India are doing? Is it essentially saying that this country is too wealthy and powerful for Britain to do much about it? Is it saying that even though we may have many reservations about their conduct in the Kurdish areas, it is not a priority for us?

Sir David Logan: On the contrary. Because we know the Turks so well, we can get much closer to them in dealing with the Kurdish issue than that implies. The situation in the south-east is one where it is clear to an outsider what both sides need or ought to do. It is equally clear to Turks. What the Kurds need, for example, in the use of their own language in courts, in learning Kurdish and in Kurdish media is absolutely clear. For their part, the Kurds have a responsibility to say much more precisely than they have ever done what they think they need in terms of acceptance, in recognition of their rights and what would satisfy them. They need to make it clear that they are willing to take part in the political process.

The PKK is a difficult interlocutor. Not more than about half of the Kurds in the south-east support the PKK—sorry, the political arm, if you like—because its political doctrine was Marxist, and actually, a lot of Kurds vote for the AKP because they believe that it represents the prosperous future of Turkey. On languages, it is very complex, because the two major Kurdish communities in Turkey cannot understand each other. They speak really different sorts of Kurdish.

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What the Government need to do is equally clear. They need to change the political party law, which discriminates against Kurdish parties being represented in Parliament, and they need to come back to the constitution again, because it is biased against people who are not of Turkish ethnicity, and so on.

What is needed is very complex, but it is all out there. Any Turkish politician who wished to see the way forward—and there are plenty of them—would be able to identify all that straight away. The problem is that they operate in political circumstances in which, for all kinds of reasons, they may decide not to pursue this agenda. Typically, as elections approach, a Turkish Government will have more interest in ensuring that they do not lose votes to the nationalist right, rather than the Kurdish vote, if you like. You have to get through that process before you can get back to the table.

The PKK has to avoid such things as the 2009 opening, when the Turkish Government declared an amnesty and all these fighters came across the border. The Turks hoped, or assumed—rather like the British when al-Megrahi returned to Libya—that this would not be a triumphalist event but that they would go back to their villages in civvies. What happened was that they came back in uniform and had this tremendous welcoming ceremony as great heroes of the violent opposition to the Turkish Government.

I have no idea what the British say to the Turkish Government about dealing with the PKK. If you look, however, at the history of the Kurdish problem over the last few years, it consists of attempts by this AKP Government to do better. This Government is the first one to have spoken directly to Öcalan and it is the first that has taken on the nationalist Turkish right-wing press on Kurdishness and told them to moderate. They have done quite a lot of stuff, but they operate in a very difficult political situation and are vulnerable to pressures that throw things off the rails. That is as true for the Turkish side as it is for the Kurdish.

So, what am I saying? I suppose it may sound to you as though I am suggesting that the British do not have a role in this. Well, the role they have to play, as I said to Mr Watts, is in all these concrete things that go together to make up a solution, and it is multifarious. There is an awful lot on each side that can be done, but it requires the political will to do it on both sides.

Q81 Rory Stewart: Moving back to the EU, is there any point at all in thinking about a plan B? We continue to assume that this is just being put on hold and a time will come when we all return to it, and we need to keep the process warm and the European countries engaged. I suppose, however, that there is an alternative scenario in which while we keep it warm, Turkey itself gets fed up and bored with the whole process, and is not really interested in proceeding. Could you sketch out what that alternative, non EU-accession scenario for Turkey over the next 20 years might look like?

Sir David Logan: The first point is that although it is occasionally peddled, the idea of some kind of special relationship between Turkey and the EU as an alternative to full membership is not only impossible

to define—they have everything short of membership, such as the customs union, and so on—but is also regarded by them as deeply offensive. So, that is not possible.

Secondly, before I get on to your point, I think there is a lot that can be done meanwhile. Accession is on the back burner, as we have said. However, the Turkish Government, for example, at the moment have a programme that requires all their Ministries to come up with action plans that they have to implement by 2013, which will bring them in line with the *acquis*. So it is happening anyway on their side.

Q82 Rory Stewart: The world is changing very quickly. Turkey is changing very quickly economically and demographically, and the European Union is facing troubles of its own. Delay this by a decade and the world could look very different, and the possibilities would change. After a decade, you could imagine a world in which it would be almost unimaginable that Turkey would want to join what is left of the European Union.

Sir David Logan: I was going to approach that from a slightly different direction. One of the outcomes of what is happening in the European Union at present, surely—the impetus towards greater economic integration of the eurozone—is that you will find a European Union in 10 years' time that has a core and at least one outer circle, of which the UK will be a part. I suspect that that might be a kind of European Union that it might be easier for Turkey to join. Turkey will clearly not be part of the core, but it might easily fit into the outer circle in a way that looks difficult now.

Q83 Rory Stewart: So, just to push you a final time, it seems to me that the Turkish move to join the European Union represents a moment of optimism about the European Union. The real enthusiasm—the time when everyone got very excited about it—was exactly the moment where we had accession from central and eastern European countries. We could see the great benefits of Bulgaria, Romania and Poland, and then from the Balkans, and then Turkey was coming in. As that wave recedes, joining the European Union becomes a very different affair. It is no longer something where you can see a very clear economic benefit for Turkey, a very clear security benefit for the European Union or that grand vision to be held up. It is now becoming a club that looks a bit roppier. Are you sure that is not going to change the calculus?

Sir David Logan: The next alternative is as you say. The balance of advantage, I guess, shifts more in favour of the European Union. It seems to me that, if anything, the European Union will need Turkey more in 15 years' time than vice versa. Who knows what changes there will be in EU attitudes to Turkish accession and the kind of blockages that exist to that at the moment? If none of that works, clearly it is not impossible to conceive of a situation in which Turkey is not a member of the European Union and is an important country in her region with which we have to maintain, in my view, close relations for the kind of reasons that we all understand. It seems to me that Turkey's role in her part of the world is important to

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us because, broadly speaking, her policies there are in line with ours. That will be important.

Your question is, I guess, how that will be sustained in a situation in which Turkey has no relationship with the European Union. I can only say that she is not the only country in that kind of situation. You have to think of Turkey, then, as a country whose interests will be broadly the same as Europeans'. She will be a developed economy and her exports will go primarily to Europe and the United States, not to the Middle East. You probably know that Ford has set up a plant in Turkey to make all its taxis for New York. It is not making taxis for Cairo. As Turkey prospers, as a generalisation, her interests will be more closely the kind of interests that she shares with us in Europe than those that she shares with impoverished neighbours.

I realise that that is very broad stuff, but the objective remains clear. Even if the European Union goes out of the window, Turkey will be an important partner for the kind of reasons that we agree on. The objective is to sustain that without the attraction of the Union. That is a challenge, but Turkey's underlying posture seems to me, because of how she is developing, one in which her interests will be broadly speaking the same as ours.

Q84 Sir John Stanley: The Erdoan Government appear to have made a shift—not a very big shift, but a discernible shift—in an Islamic direction. Do you believe that the future of Turkey as a secular state, as conceived and founded by Ataturk, is absolutely assured, or could you conceive of circumstances in which Turkey drifts towards becoming an Islamic state?

Sir David Logan: I do not accept that it is an Islamic Government. First, those old secularist parties that regarded themselves as the guardians of Ataturk's secularism were dinosaurs. I can see that secularist is a nice label to hang on to, but it is not defining a benign and positive characteristic when there are other

parties—in this case, the AKP—that are modernisers and reformers.

Ataturk's reforms did not touch the majority of the population; they touched 30%. The rest were left out. They are the people who have supported a series of non-“secularist” parties and now support the AKP. They are people who have become increasingly prosperous and articulate and now are a significant force in Turkey. They are the majority. They are, because Turks are, fundamentally conservative and fundamentally devout in outlook. The AKP is—how shall I say it?—a clientelist Government, who depend on their support and also go out and pander to it, if you like. So you see things happening in Turkey now, which are quite surprising and not necessarily desirable. You find parts of cities where no drink is sold—that kind of thing. That is because the local municipality believes that that is unattractive to its supporters. But that is a very long way from saying that the Government are Islamist. Certainly a return to the sharia is out of the question.

If you have a moment, I will read what Erdoan said when he was in Egypt a few weeks ago. “In Turkey, constitutional secularism is defined as the state remaining equidistant to all religions. In a secular regime people are free to be religious or not...Do not fear secularism because it does not mean being an enemy of religion. I hope the new regime in Egypt will be secular.” He runs a secular Government that has a constituency that is, as I said, conservative and devout. He is clientelist, but that is what other Governments have been before. He is certainly not interested in a return to the sharia.

Chair: I am sure that is an issue for debate that we will be looking at at some length over the coming weeks and months. Sir David, thank you very much indeed. That is a wonderful contribution—we very much appreciate it—as was your written evidence, which we have very much taken on board. Many thanks for coming.

Tuesday 25 October 2011

Members present:

Richard Ottaway (Chair)

Mr Bob Ainsworth
Mr John Baron
Sir Menzies Campbell
Ann Clwyd
Mike Gapes

Andrew Rosindell
Mr Frank Roy
Rory Stewart
Mr Dave Watts

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Katinka Barysch**, Deputy Director, Centre for European Reform, gave evidence.

Q85 Chair: Many thanks for coming along. This is just a 30-minute session. We very much wanted to meet you to pick your brains. Sadly, we could not fit you into the main session, so we have squeezed you in before we start looking at North Africa later this morning and everything that is going on there.

Do you think that Turkey actually wants to become a member of the EU?

Katinka Barysch: Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that it is a very long-standing aim of Turkey and, although there is a lot of rhetoric in the country now saying, “We don’t need the Europeans any more; we are a regional power. We have friends elsewhere,” to my mind, Turkey has not quite woken up to the implications of what it actually means to give up that long-standing objective of aligning itself with Europe. Having said that, the accession process is obviously stuck, and Turkish politicians and a large share of the public feel very upset and wounded about the fact that they think they have been given promises on which the European Union is not delivering. There is a mixed feeling in the country at the moment. Officially, it still wants to join. Many people in the country believe that they need that external anchor, but they see that the process is not going anywhere, and many people believe that they do not necessarily need the EU any more. There is also the pride issue, which might just make them turn away from the EU.

Q86 Chair: Do we get any value out of its present involvement with EU institutions?

Katinka Barysch: What do you mean?

Chair: It is involved with a number of institutions with which we have a lot of contact. Are we getting good value from Turkey at the moment?

Katinka Barysch: Its involvement with EU institutions is tricky, in the sense that, officially, Turkey is a country negotiating for accession, and that is exactly how the EU treats it most of the time. It is a very scripted process of meeting benchmarks, opening chapters and negotiating bits of the acquis. Turkey did that for a little while, but now that process is stuck, mainly because of vetoes on the part of the EU and its member states, so we cannot open any more chapters, and we have not been able to close any. We do not have an alternative track for dealing with Turkey. We have squeezed Turkey into the accession track, and the accession track is stuck. We should be having all sorts of dialogues with it on foreign policies, security, emergency co-operation, energy and

the Arab spring, but we do not have that, because we have squeezed Turkey into the accession track. At the moment, nobody is getting value out of the co-operation; it is a source of frustration.

Q87 Ann Clwyd: What kind of EU would it be with Turkey as a member? How would Turkish membership change the EU?

Katinka Barysch: The kind of European Union that would feel comfortable with Turkey as a member is a European Union that is obviously open and outward-looking, and understands its strategic role in the world and especially the region, because Turkey is now a regional power. It is also a European Union that is confident in its economic success, so it does not fear low-cost competition from a very large, dynamic, and basically emerging market economy. It might have to be an EU that is at least two-tier, with a group of countries that go further into integration—something you will probably see in the near future—with fiscal integration, a common currency and more common decision making, which are not things with which a pretty traditional power such as Turkey would feel comfortable. If you had an outer tier, with countries that are more loosely associated with the EU, I think that Turkey might, at least initially, feel more comfortable.

Q88 Ann Clwyd: What do you think would be the main risks to the EU if Turkey were to join and, conversely, if it were not to join?

Katinka Barysch: For the EU, obviously Turkey is, as we say, more modern than post-modern. It believes in sovereignty; it does not really necessarily believe in intervening in other countries’ affairs; it is proud and quite nationalist; and it has its own ideas about how the world works. In the European Union, where we are trying to do things together, and especially forge a common foreign and security policy, Turkey has often diverged from our views. On the one hand Turkey, would be an asset for the European Union because it is big, strong, fast-growing, has a big army and lies in a strategic region. On the other hand, it might just lead to paralysis in our attempts to forge a common foreign policy, because if we diverge, we do not have a common foreign policy.

On the economy, I think the risks are on the upside, because Turkey has a young and fast-growing population, and that is exactly what the EU will need

over the next 50 years, so there we can expect only benefits.

Q89 Ann Clwyd: Are there any feasible institutional options that would be available to Turkey if it were not to become a full member?

Katinka Barysch: That is the big question that we will have to start addressing now, because even without writing off the accession process altogether and calling a formal halt to it, we need to have some sort of relationship with that very important country in our neighbourhood, as I mentioned. Since the accession track just does not do at the moment, we have to forge that alternative relationship. Turkey is still very reluctant to go down that track, because it fears that we will fob it off into a privileged partnership, so it is in two minds.

Turkey has a fundamental split in its attitude towards the EU; on the one hand, it keeps reminding us that it is an accession country like every other, and that we should not necessarily make it harder just because it is big, Muslim and slightly more complicated to integrate into the EU. It insists that we should treat it like every former accession country. On the other hand, when we treat it like every former accession country, it immediately gets upset and says, "Don't you know who we are? You can't treat us like Estonia or Slovenia. We are a big, important country. Treat us like partners at eye level." The EU and the Brussels institutions do not necessarily have the flexibility to go down that two-track route, which is why we are stuck at the moment, but we have to start thinking about alternative arrangements, dialogues and procedures that we can use to start working with Turkey more as a partner than an accession country, with less preaching at it about what to do, and taking its views on board and looking for areas of common interest.

Q90 Ann Clwyd: Would you say that Turkey is increasingly looking to the East and away from the West? That is the feeling I got when I was there last year. It was very obvious.

Katinka Barysch: It certainly is, and that is good and inevitable, because the situation until maybe 15 years ago, when Turkey was entirely isolated, was weird. What a strange state of affairs; you have a rising country with multiple neighbourhoods—the Caucasus, the Black Sea region, Central Asia and the Middle East—yet it does not have a relationship with anybody but Israel. That was the strange situation. In a way, what you are seeing now is a normalisation of affairs, whereby this natural regional power assumes its natural place in its region. Turkey has been a bit high on its own rhetoric with regard to its successes in its new foreign policy, forging links with other countries. It certainly sees a lot of opportunity in its neighbourhood. It has capitalised on these opportunities, in particular with regard to trade—sending construction companies to the Middle East and so forth—but I think the Arab spring has also shown it that the idea that it had previously that it could implement a "zero problem with the neighbours" policy—that is the official name of their foreign policy—is simply unrealistic.

Now Turkey is re-evaluating, and although it will still highlight to every European or American who visits the country, "We don't need you any more; we have friends everywhere," you can already see a gradual rethinking. For example, it has sought an accommodation with the Americans on stationing bits of the missile defence system in Turkey, which has annoyed the Iranians. It is now calling for sanctions on Syria, and it is remembering who its real allies and old friends are. In the end, Turkey will need both. It will have to have those dynamic links with its new neighbours—or its eastern, southern and northern neighbours—but to my mind it will keep its strong link to the west.

Q91 Mr Baron: We believe we understand the main stumbling blocks for proper accession. Germany and France in particular seem to oppose it; Britain seems to be in favour. How will we get over this? What are the main routes round these stumbling blocks? What role does religion play in all of this?

Katinka Barysch: In terms of the accession process, the main stumbling block is Cyprus, for two reasons. First, the EU has blocked eight chapters in the accession process because Turkey refuses to open its ports and airports to ships and planes registered in Cyprus. Under the Ankara protocol, this is a legal obligation. The Turks say they will only do that when the EU implements its own promise to allow Northern Cyprus to trade with the rest of the EU—a promise that EU leaders gave to Turkey in 2004. They have a point there. They want a trade-off, but because that compromise could not be found so far, a large part of the *acquis* is simply blocked for negotiations on the part of the European Union. That is a European Council decision. Cyprus is a stumbling block also in the sense that Cyprus blocks bilaterally a number of chapters, because they have bilateral issues. Energy is one of these chapters; education is another. They do not allow progress on issues such as foreign policy. So Cyprus is by far the biggest stumbling block. Then you have the French President, who says that Turkey will never be a member, so it does not need to bother with those parts of the *acquis* that matter only for full membership, such as the euro, institutional provisions and budgetary provisions. The French Government are also unilaterally blocking five chapters. The Germans are less of a problem. Angela Merkel obviously states repeatedly that she would prefer Turkey not to become a full member, but she sticks to the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, and there has never been any indication that the German Government would block bits of the accession process.

So how do we get round this? We need a French election, so that we have a French President who does not block chapters. From what I have heard, François Hollande would unblock the bits that Sarkozy has been holding up. But that still leaves us with Cyprus as the big stumbling block. As far as I am aware, there is very little hope of getting a sustainable deal on Cyprus any time soon. The best that we could hope for is that Cyprus unblocks some of the chapters that it is blocking unilaterally. Whether that would be enough to restore momentum to the accession process, I am not sure.

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On the role of religion, it is widely assumed that one of the reasons why a lot of people, in Western Europe especially, are against Turkish membership is because this country is predominantly Muslim. We have not got any good survey evidence of that. I remember reading one survey of Austria, which is easily the most anti-Turkey country in the EU, that actually made a distinction between “cultural concerns”, meaning “These people are simply different”, and religious concerns—“We Christian, they Muslim.” It showed that a large share of Austrians were against Turkey joining because of cultural concerns—they thought that the Turks were just too different—but the share of people who were against because of religious concerns was remarkably small, so I cannot answer that question. I wish there was more detailed survey evidence of what people are actually concerned about when they say that they are against Turkish membership.

Q92 Mr Watts: What benefit do you think the UK derives from its active support of Turkey’s membership?

Katinka Barysch: The Turks clearly divide the European Union into countries that are friendly to their membership bid and countries that are not, and the UK—alongside Sweden and Italy, for example—is clearly in the camp of those countries that the Turks know are their friends in Europe. As for immediate benefits, that depends a little bit on what the UK Government make of this. Obviously, this is a dynamic economy, so hopefully British companies will be fully engaged there. You can see, for example, that French companies are not getting anywhere when they get involved in bids for public contracts, such as for the nuclear power plants; the Turks just will not contemplate it. British companies would not have that sort of problem. Beyond that, it really depends on what the issue at hand is.

Q93 Mr Watts: Turning it round the other way, the British people have a low level of public support for Turkey’s membership of the EU. How much do you think that influences our Government policy?

Katinka Barysch: How much does that influence British policy?

Mr Watts: Yes. Are there any restrictions? Do you think that the low level of public support in Britain for enlargement including Turkey is something that the Government have to take into account?

Katinka Barysch: Not necessarily, unlike in many continental European countries, where Turkey really is mainly viewed as an accession country, which means that the main things that people worry about are: how many Turkish immigrants will we have? How will Turkish MEPs behave in the European Parliament? How do we fit Turkey into the institutions? My sense is that Britain views Turkey more in strategic terms, more—a bit like the Americans—as an international player to be engaged. I understand that that is more the policy on which the British Government are focusing at the moment; rather than pushing strongly for Turkish accession, they focus on how they can work with Turkey. I do

not think that public concerns about accession are the main obstacle to stronger engagement with Turkey.

Q94 Mr Watts: Do you think the low level of public support in the UK is economic, or does it have some other root? There are certainly parts of Britain where a large number of Turkish people have come to work and so on, at a time of high unemployment. Is it economic factors that drive that low level of support for Turkey’s membership?

Katinka Barysch: I wish there was more detailed survey evidence, because the studies that we at the centre have done on why people do not want Turkey in the EU showed very undefined, amorphous prejudices vis-à-vis Turkey. People do not want Turkey, but they are not entirely sure why. We found that yes, there is the fear of low-wage immigration. A lot of people in the European Union do not make a clear distinction between Turks and Arabs. They just think, “Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country; we have a problem with Arab fundamentalism.” They lump it into one pot. Again, I wish there was clearer survey evidence, but what I found when I looked at the issue is that people are just not entirely sure why they do not want Turkey; they just do not want it.

Q95 Mr Roy: In relation to immigration, how important is the prospect of free movement to the Turkish people? During the accession transition period, there is a derogation from free movement; is there a possibility of extending that derogation? How would that balance with the Turkish people?

Katinka Barysch: The free movement issue is one that the Turkish people at the moment are very upset about because they are the only candidate country that has not been given visa-free access to the European Union. They have not even got much visa facilitation, which means they still bear the full brunt of EU and Schengen visa procedures. They have to travel to Ankara and Istanbul, queue, and provide up to 20 documents and there is a perception that a lot of visa applications get rejected, which is not true if you look at the figures. But Turks are very upset. They take it as a slight from the EU that they are not allowed to travel to the EU but people from Serbia, for example, are, and that even Russia and Ukraine have been put on a visa facilitation track and Turkey still has not got there. So it is a very important issue for them. It has been suggested to them before that if they join as full members they would have to accept at least a very long transition period before they get the free moment. Obviously there are two different things: visa-free access is not the same as the right to come and work in all the EU countries. So even if they get the visa-free access they have been told that they might still have to wait many, many years before their people can come and settle freely in the EU. That is a very touchy subject for them. If they become members, given that they have given visa-free access to people ranging from Syria to Libya to Russia, which is a good policy given that they want to have that close economic integration with their neighbours, I could imagine a deal where they keep all their visa-free regimes with their Eastern, Southern and Northern neighbours and

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we, on our part, say, "Well, we want to keep a bit more control over who comes in from your country."

Q96 Mr Roy: Ultimately, could that be a deal-breaker?

Katinka Barysch: There are so many deal-breakers at the moment. That is one that I have not really thought about much recently. Good question.

Q97 Mr Ainsworth: Could we, the UK, do anything more to help Turkey? Obviously we cannot change the French President's mind, certainly not at the moment in any case. But we have a pretty detailed understanding of Cyprus. Is there anything more that we could be doing to try to get a bit of momentum into the process with the UK?

Katinka Barysch: You mentioned a key word here already. It is Cyprus. The French and the Germans, to some extent, are hiding behind the Cypriot veto of the Turkish accession process. From what I gather, the British Government have not put a lot of pressure on the Greek Cypriot Government to move. I do not know why that is, but if I could give one recommendation to the British Government, it would be perhaps to be a bit more outspoken. This is the tail wagging the dog here. What kind of relationship you should have with Turkey is a big and strategic question and we should address all the issues that we have talked about already: whether the country is European enough, whether it is in a neighbourhood that is too unstable, whether we could cope with the labour flows and what kind of relationship we should have with Turkey. But we are not addressing those questions because we are all just hiding behind the fact that Cyprus blocks the accession process. My recommendation would be perhaps that the British Government should be a bit more outspoken about the fact that Cyprus should not hijack the accession process because of its own internal problems.

Q98 Mr Ainsworth: Is there a feeling perhaps in EU institutions or in Turkey itself that we have levers that we are not pulling? My take on the situation is that we have not got that much influence in Nicosia. We are not the most loved foreign Government in the Cypriot capital. Do people think that we are and that we could move that?

Katinka Barysch: Yes. As I mentioned, Turkey is a country that is quite traditional in its foreign policy thinking. So it sees big countries and small countries and the Turks find it very hard to understand how a group of nations the size of the UK, Germany and France, if they really wanted to, could not lean on a small island nation such as Cyprus to say, "Get a move on".

Q99 Mr Ainsworth: Can I switch tack a little? We have parked this process. The Turks have not been happy but have gone along with that. It is going nowhere. For how long will that be sustainable? Is it not effectively discrediting of both Turkey and the EU in the ultimate situation? Can we not bring this to a close and develop some other relationship or dialogue with Turkey?

Katinka Barysch: At the moment, neither side is willing to call a formal halt to the accession process. On the part of the EU, there would have to be unanimity among the member states, which is not there because the majority of member states are in favour of Turkey joining. They are the smaller ones, but countries such as Italy and Spain have no problem with the idea of Turkey joining. The EU will not call it to a halt. It also fears that an angry Turkey might then turn away from the EU, and we are aware that we need the country for energy security or foreign policy in the region, for example.

Turkey will not call a halt to the process. It is difficult for me to assess how far the Turkish leadership still believes in the process. Given that it is often accused by its opponents of not wanting to reform the country and of taking the country in an Islamist direction, the last thing that it wants to do is to call off the EU accession process because its opponents would accuse it of fully taking the country in the wrong direction of giving up the Western links that have helped it to modernise.

We are stuck in the situation. We have not opened a chapter for a year, nor will we probably do so during the next year. The Turks have said that they will boycott the Cypriot presidency, which means that there certainly will not be any progress during the Cypriot presidency. How long can you keep up that pretence? I don't know because it is pretty much unprecedented. We can leave the empty shell of the accession process lying around. It is just as likely that we will start singing the requiem on Turkish accession during the Cypriot presidency, when it becomes evident that the issue is not going anywhere. There is a more optimistic prospect: let us assume that the Greek Cypriots elect a new Government, that the French elect a new Government and then all of a sudden we see movement again in the accession process.

Chair: Three people have caught my eye, and we have five minutes left.

Q100 Mike Gapes: May I take you to foreign policy? You referred in passing to the Turkish position with regard to Iran. We know that its relations with Israel are now very bad and that there is a sense of assertiveness. How much would you assess the new independent, more assertive foreign policy as being likely to help or to hinder the accession process?

Katinka Barysch: It certainly will help the accession process at the moment because, as I said, the European institutions and many Governments still see Turkey mainly as an accession country, which means that it has an application and we treat it as a pupil that either behaves well or doesn't behave well according to our standards. But we certainly don't want to see too much independence on the part of our applicants. Turkey is a bit high on its own rhetoric and self-importance but, having said that, it always sounds much more assertive and aggressive than it is. For example, until recently it made a very studious attempt not to break diplomatic relations with Israel and, if I had to venture a guess, it will try a big damage limitation exercise to keep its relationship with Israel at least on an even keel. We also have to

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take a little away from the rhetoric and look at what it is actually doing.

Q101 Mike Gapes: What does that mean for the institutional arrangements and relationship with Cathy Ashton and the institutional bodies of the European Union? There are regular meetings with the Turks at that level. Is that going much better than the national relationships of the member states?

Katinka Barysch: The idea that the EU should have a foreign policy dialogue with Turkey is new. Usually, we don't have that with accession countries. Once the EU has come up with a common foreign and security policy, the accession country usually aligns itself with it and says, "Yes, I support that." Most of those policies are not very substantive as elections in Albania or an earthquake in Bolivia. They are not something that really have anything to do with foreign policy co-ordination. Turkey does not want to do that; it wants real co-ordination. It wants to be consulted while the EU is still finding its own position. We haven't given Turkey that role. Cathy Ashton and Ahmet Davutolu have a close and constructive relationship—they speak to each other a lot—but there is no follow up, no implementation, no institutional feeding in of the Turkish view into European foreign policy making. The EU is trying to do that now. There are more meetings lower down the hierarchy among senior officials, policy planners and so forth, but we are at the very beginning of that process.

Q102 Mike Gapes: Is that lack of feeding down an institutional problem, which the post-Lisbon process has not yet developed sufficiently, or is it a political problem, in that certain member states would find it extremely difficult to give Turkey a role in the evolution of a foreign policy of the European Union?

Katinka Barysch: It is both, and I would add to that a certain inflexibility on the part of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, which doesn't necessarily help.

Q103 Andrew Rosindell: You said earlier that Turkey would feel more comfortable in a looser European Union; could you elaborate on that a bit? Is that possibly a solution for other countries that may feel the same way?

Sir Menzies Campbell: I can't think what you're referring to.

Katinka Barysch: I am on very shaky ground here because I obviously have no idea how Turkey would behave as a full member of the EU, especially since that seems to be many years away. However, for the past 50 years the EU has been based on the principle that all countries are somehow equal. Some countries have slightly more votes in the Council of Ministers than others, but basically, every country has the same rights. We pool sovereignty and we are all equal. Turkey wants to be in the EU, but has it fully internalised the idea that it will be sitting between Portugal and Estonia at the table and will basically be treated the same way? Does it feel more comfortable communicating with the EU as a whole—with all 27 nations—because it thinks that befits its status as a rising power? I am not entirely sure whether they have

really fully understood what being a member of the EU means.

Q104 Mr Baron: Briefly, because time is short, I want to explore further the foreign policy ramifications of what one senses to be the growing frustration in Turkey at not being allowed to accede. One senses that Erdoan is probably one of the more popular, if not most popular, leaders in the region. It is certainly a very powerful country and strategically well placed. We all know the energy supply issue and so forth. What are the ramifications when it comes to something like North Africa? Can we see Turkey being more assertive? You talked about the difference between rhetoric and action, but is there any chance that the action might catch up with the rhetoric a little more?

Katinka Barysch: They are obviously doing lots of things. Their policy towards that region has, to some extent, been driven by commercial interests and that is still very much the case. When Erdoan went to Libya recently, he took a bunch of business men along. Turkey is now often accused of having an agenda in Northern Africa and the Middle East—perhaps an Islamist agenda—but my impression is that they are just capitalising on the attention and popularity that the Prime Minister enjoys in the region, as they should. There are many things that they can do in the region: they can help Islamist parties in the region, for example, to become proper political parties—build up a grass-roots organisation and fit into a pluralist system. That is something they have a lot of experience with and I cannot see anyone else around the world assuming that role. Perhaps Turkey isn't a model, but people really look to Turkey for inspiration on how a predominantly Muslim country can have pluralist democracy and how you place both religious issues and the military in a democracy.

Mr Baron: Being a secular state, it would be a force for good in the region—no doubt about that.

Katinka Barysch: I think a lot of people in the region see it that way and quite a few people in the region don't see that as a good thing, but at the moment, just as we in Western Europe don't know exactly why we don't want to have Turkey, I am not entirely sure that a lot of people in the Arab world know exactly what they admire in the so-called Turkish model. Some people look to Turkey because they think it is very religious and some people look to Turkey because they think it is very liberal, so ultimately Turkey will have to disappoint some of its supporters because it is neither nor. It is a very interesting constant balancing act.

Q105 Sir Menzies Campbell: Very quickly: do they understand the Copenhagen criteria and in particular that freedom of comment, a free press and the ability of journalists to speak out are very important parts of a political dimension with the European Union?

Katinka Barysch: Well, a lot of Turks fully understand that and are very upset that the EU isn't speaking out even more loudly about the problems journalists, non-governmental organisations and religious minorities have in the country. The

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Government obviously have made huge progress in improving democracy and how Turkey works, but in recent years there have been grave setbacks. That is, and should remain, a stumbling block on the way to EU membership.

Chair: Katinka, thank you very much. Time is up, but I think I can safely say that is as good a 30-minute briefing as we've had from anybody—that's really good. If you don't mind, we will come to you if we have further questions. That's very useful indeed.

Tuesday 15 November 2011

Members present:

Richard Ottaway (Chair)

Mr Bob Ainsworth
Mr John Baron
Ann Clwyd

Sir John Stanley
Rory Stewart
Mr Dave Watts

Examination of Witness

Witnesses: **Dr Gülnur Aybet**, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of Kent at Canterbury, gave evidence.

Q106 Chair: Good morning. May I welcome you to the Committee's third evidence session in its inquiry into UK-Turkey relations and Turkey's regional role? This session will allow the Committee to question in succession two leading academic specialists on Turkey and especially Turkish foreign policy—one with a focus on transatlantic issues and the other with a focus on the Middle East—before questioning a leading country economist on the economic issues relevant to our inquiry.

I am pleased to welcome Dr Gülnur Aybet, senior lecturer in international affairs at the university of Kent, at Canterbury, and visiting professor at Izmir university of economics, in Turkey. Thank you very much for coming along, Dr Aybet—it is much appreciated. Is there anything you want to say in an opening statement, or shall I go straight into questions?

Dr Aybet: Could I just make a brief opening statement? I thought it was important for me to explain why I think there is an increased, growing interest on the part of the UK in having a much more intensive relationship.

I was especially struck by the FCO written evidence, which spoke about the promotion of “joint ventures between Turkish and UK firms in third countries such as Iraq and the Central Asian republics” and the reinforcement of the UK commercial diplomacy team. I think the UK is engaging with Turkey much more intensely for two reasons: investment and stability in the region. If we look at this from a much wider angle, it has a lot to do with a gradual US disengagement from the region. The UK seems to be following a strategy of working together with emerging regional powers like Turkey. Strategically, I think Turkey is an ideal partner in that, not just because of its normative power in the Middle East, being an Islamic country with a secular democracy, but, strategically, because of its growth rates, its geostrategic position, its diplomatic role as a negotiator in its own right and its potential as an energy transit country. This adds to its value for the UK as a regional partner.

What the FCO written evidence did not do was to thrash out the details of how this should be done. It did not really say in detail how some of the impediments might be overcome, such as the blockage of NATO-EU strategic co-operation, Iran's nuclear ambitions, what Turkey will do if Iran should go nuclear, the Cyprus blockage and so forth. When we are looking at the region around Turkey, which is changing like quicksand—by the minute—this is a

piecemeal learning process, and we have to bear that in mind, not just for the UK and Turkey.

To close, I would just like to say that I think one of the valuable assets of the AK Party's foreign policy has been this flexibility to adapt to very rapid changes such as, for example, initially having outreach to the region by cultivating personal relationships with long-standing leaders and, as those leaders got toppled or lost legitimacy, to quickly start backing the opposition. We saw this with Egypt, Libya and now Syria, so I think this kind of flexibility is very important. If asked by the Committee, I will say some more about Iran with regard to that and about why Turkey has so far supported the status quo with that country.

Q107 Chair: Thank you, Dr Aybet. In your written submission to us, you said that Turkey's foreign policy was really going down three roads: the first was the transatlantic security, EU, America line; the second was regional, based on ethnic and religious identity; and the third was regionally proactive, based on *realpolitik*. Which of these do they actually think is most important?

Dr Aybet: It depends on the timing, but for the time being, like I said, because the region is changing so rapidly, I would think the third one, at this particular time.

Q108 Chair: Yes. Having been there, I think I would agree with you. Looking at the bilateral relationship between the UK and Turkey, do you think we have seen any improvements in recent years?

Dr Aybet: Oh, yes. I think the Anglo-Turkish strategic partnership that was announced last year, and then these new initiatives—not just in investment, but also in wanting to work together with Turkey in terms of regional stability—are very important; as also is the UK's long-standing role in supporting Turkey's EU accession.

Q109 Chair: Is the visa regime between the UK and Turkey a problem or is this an irritant?

Dr Aybet: It is both—a problem and an irritant. One of the things that I mentioned in my written evidence was the inconsistency in the approaches of EU countries to Turkey. In fact, I said that the UK was one of the more consistent EU countries to have a relationship with Turkey that was positive. The visa regime is actually an inconsistency in the UK's approach to Turkey, because the UK would like to

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have much more intensive regional co-operation with an EU accession country but then not to make any changes to the existing visa regime, which is a considerable irritant for the Turks.

Q110 Chair: What do we need to do to improve it? Do you think we have to simplify it, both ways?

Dr Aybet: Yes, I think so. I do not really know much about the detail of what needs to be done with regard to the visa regime. I could come back to you, if you wanted me to.

Q111 Ann Clwyd: Good morning, Dr Aybet. Do you think the UK Government are too relaxed about the extent to which Turkey can be a reliable foreign policy partner?

Dr Aybet: I do not think the UK is very relaxed with regard to Turkey in that respect, or to any other country. I think, in terms of foreign policy, countries have a very proactive engagement and they deal with each other on a changing basis. I do not think that the UK is being too relaxed, as you put it, by engaging Turkey much more proactively in the region.

On whether Turkey can be reliable, obviously there are a number of strategic common interests. Turkey would like to live in a much more stable neighbourhood, because she—as opposed to the UK—actually lives there. Turkey would like to be a major transit hub for energy, and the UK is very interested in the southern corridor. So there are a number of strategic issues in which Turkey and the UK have co-interests and there are also a number of normative common points, such as wanting to promote much more stable democracies in the Middle East.

But then we have to see that we also have differences. For example, the UK at the moment is quite concerned about Turkish-Israeli relations. I do not know when we will hit a stumbling block with regard to relations with Iran, as we have considerable differences there as well. We have considerable differences over Cyprus, although much less than before. But the UK has not really been very active in using its influence there to eradicate any blockages or soothe relations.

So there are things that we have in common and things that we disagree on, but that is normal with any relationship with any country.

Q112 Ann Clwyd: Should we be more active on the Cyprus front?

Dr Aybet: It might be useful, given the—I think “leverage” might be the wrong word—but the kind of weight that the UK has in that matter, if there were to be some kind of persuasion for Cyprus to unblock at least one chapter. If that chapter happened to be energy, in which both Turkey and the UK have a common interest, a unilateral gesture might actually be a way of nudging things forward. I am not saying that Turkey will immediately start implementing the protocol and open its ports to Cyprus, but it would be a better place than the one we are in now, where everything is absolutely frozen, and I think that the UK could actually do something in that respect.

Q113 Ann Clwyd: To what extent do you think the UK Government can expect Turkish foreign policy to remain what it is, in the medium term at least?

Dr Aybet: It depends what you mean by the medium term. Things are changing so rapidly. Sometimes you think of the medium term as five to six years or a decade. At the moment, it is safe to say—as I said in answer to the previous question—that Turkey is much more concerned in regional strategic management and, in that respect, with the UK it has a lot in common for the foreseeable future. But one of the biggest problems down the road is if we start getting different threat perceptions on the part of Turkey and its NATO allies, not just the UK. One of the catalysts that could push that sooner than later—we could be talking medium or long term—could be the missile defence system, whether Iran will go nuclear, and what Russia is likely to do.

As I explained in my written evidence, although I think that Turkey is predominantly following the third sphere of *realpolitik* right now, its relations in the other two spheres: the transatlantic relationship and its regional normative ties are also important. There are constant clashes, as you would expect, among these three spheres, and as those clashes intensify we might see a Turkey that has a widening gap of threat perceptions from others vis-à-vis the region.

Q114 Ann Clwyd: You also said in your written evidence that “There is more rhetoric than substance in Turkey’s efforts to cultivate new regional ties, based on Muslim, religious and Turkish ethnic identities”. Could you expand on this?

Dr Aybet: Yes, there are two aspects to the policy. I referred to the macro and micro roles of Turkey. The macro is much more diplomatic, such as strategic engagement with existing Governments in the region or sometimes acting as an independent negotiator from the west, which is very important when Turkey uses its value-added role. The other is Turkey’s normative power, and Turkey also capitalises on that in its foreign relations. Because Turkey has a prime minister who is capable of very colourful rhetoric, that helps sometimes and sometimes it doesn’t help that much in terms of bringing about that value add, or impediment to its regional foreign policy.

With regard to Iran, for example,—and I have written about this before—when we saw this very colourful rhetoric about criticising the P5-plus-1 and so forth, Turkey did all that to be able to engage Iran on its own terms. Leaving that door open is also very good on behalf of the west as well, because sometimes you cannot deal with countries like Iran by isolating them on the basis of non-acquiescence to western or international norms. Sometimes you do need a mediator that can act separately. So I stand by what I said. We saw the same thing with the rhetoric over the Uyghurs in China. You could see that, beyond that rhetoric, there was not any serious foreign policy change with regard to China; so I would say, yes, there is more rhetoric than substance.

Q115 Ann Clwyd: I think Mr Erdoan or President Gül went to Iraq for the first time, which I thought was a quite interesting development, particularly because

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there are arguments between Turkey and Iraq over water. I thought it was quite significant that they actually visited Baghdad. I do not know if I am reading anything into that.

Dr Aybet: I think they have had, always, ongoing relations with Baghdad—quite intense. In fact, Turkey is one of the regional countries that is very much involved with Iraq. Trade with the north is quite significant and they have very much been involved with diplomatic relations with Baghdad as well; so I would not see it as a new thing, necessarily.

Q116 Rory Stewart: To what extent is Turkey going to run into the danger that it will be seen as pursuing a sort of neo-Ottoman policy—particularly in relation to its attitudes on Syria?

Dr Aybet: I think the word “neo-Ottoman” is quite misleading, if I may start with that. It has also sometimes been used by the present Government, but any tie to a neo-Ottoman stance is I think misleading. I really do not see what it has to do with Turkey’s previous Ottoman ties, how Turkey is pursuing a policy towards Syria right now. I would put it very much in the third sphere—of realpolitik. The Government wanted to deal with all the regional powers on the basis of personal relations with leaders. Once the leaders become delegitimised they tend to waver, but eventually the Government start supporting the other side.

Q117 Rory Stewart: I suppose my concern is that it will be perceived by the Syrians and the Arab world as a neo-Ottoman policy, so I am interested in your view of how Turkish action towards Syria—and indeed their action in the Middle East—will, you might perhaps say, be misinterpreted by the Arab world.

Dr Aybet: I see what you mean. I agree with you that, on one hand, of course, the Prime Minister’s popularity on the Arab street seems to dispel the lingering misgivings about Turkey’s Ottoman heritage in the Middle East; but Syria, I agree with you, is probably quite a pivotal turning point. In Syria, the misgivings of that period are probably lingering much longer than in other countries in the Middle East. So if there is a misperception on the part of Syria, this could, I suppose, have a negative effect on the positive populist support that Turkey gets on the Arab street. Although, I am not so sure how that is going to work, given the present chaos in Syria, and how much any Syrian attitude is going to trickle to the region. I am not entirely sure about that.¹

Q118 Rory Stewart: It seems to me—contradict me if I am wrong—that he is going to have a lot of

difficulty not just getting consent in the broader region, but even within Turkey, for the kind of attitudes that Turkey has taken towards Syria. The opposition parties, journalists, intellectuals and others are already very concerned about what they see as Turkey moving out of step with its traditional attitude to intervention.

Dr Aybet: I think we have to be a little careful how we read Opposition criticism, which has been forthcoming not just in this case, but in any other case where Turkey has been pursuing a much more, if you like, unorthodox or differently proactive foreign policy. I would think that internal criticisms are very much a continuation of that, and not a terrible deviation. I think internal criticisms right now are much more focused on domestic issues, rather than foreign policy overtures, with regard to Syria. So I do not think there is too much of a worry there, on the part of the Government, on internal criticism; but what you said initially—how this is going to reflect on Erdoğan’s popularity on the Arab street—is the crucial question. I really do not know which way that is going to go.

Q119 Mr Ainsworth: Can we look at American attitudes for a moment. Turkey’s independent stance—how is that viewed in America? Is America happy with it or is American opinion losing ground in Turkey?

Dr Aybet: Both, and this is why it has been very difficult to read American attitudes towards Turkey. On one hand, officially, it has voiced great concern about Turkey shifting east more than the EU or Britain has; on the other, it has been very supportive of Turkey’s regional openings, proactive policy and more independent stance. Graham Fuller wrote some time ago that Turkey should pursue a policy that is independent of the United States and the region, because having a legitimate rising power like that engaging in its own right would be good for American interests. Both opinions come out of the US in that respect.

Q120 Mr Ainsworth: Are their fears justified about turning east and heading away from the west?

Dr Aybet: To some extent. It is not the same as it was during the cold war and the immediate post-cold war era, not necessarily because Turkey is substituting one for the other; it is just becoming much more assertive in its own right in its own region, and sometimes its interests in that region will not coincide with its long-standing interests in the first sphere, which is the transatlantic relationship. But that is inevitable.

Q121 Mr Ainsworth: Can we look at NATO? Surely, the Turkish position, and its desires to be a regional player, must make life increasingly uncomfortable for Turkey within NATO.

Dr Aybet: Not necessarily, because the biggest discomfort in NATO this time last year, just before the strategic concept was announced, was missile defence. To some extent, that has something to do with Turkey being much more assertive, so you are right in the sense that Turkey’s more assertive regional foreign policy was something that the other NATO countries

¹ In actual fact, Syrian opposition have been keen on Turkish intervention and look up to Turkey’s leadership role in the region. Television footage was seen of Syrian opposition factions waving Turkish flags. Therefore any concern that Turkey might be pursuing a ‘Neo Ottoman’ policy on the region are likely to come from a much weakened Assad regime, which is now isolated from the Arab League. In answer to the question if this is likely to have wider repercussions on Turkey’s popularity on the Arab street, I would say, no. Because since the oral evidence session, Turkey has been working in concert with the Arab League to on putting pressure on the Syrian regime.

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had to get used to. In fact, this was said by Turkey, too—they are getting used to dealing with a much more assertive Turkey. But somehow that decision was reached.

On one level, there is an adjustment on both sides for Turkey and the other NATO allies. But on the other hand, Turkey's position in NATO—its contribution to ongoing operations and its co-operation with the missile defence system—is crucial. Unlike the EU, NATO is not really a normative organisation; it is a much more technocratic, military organisation. So if you have pockets of quite intense, ongoing co-operation on the technocratic front, it gives a strong basis for whichever biggest strategic disagreements you might have—they somehow tend to come around because of the infrastructure of that technocratic, long-standing relationship.

Q122 Mr Ainsworth: How would you read the Turkish attitude towards the NATO operations in Libya? Within its wider, more strategic positioning, how do you think it reacted towards Libya and what does that say about its thoughts towards continued membership of NATO?

Dr Aybet: Libya was a typical example of this adjustment in Turkish foreign policy. Initially, Prime Minister Erdoğan had very good relations with Gaddafi because that was part of the bigger strategic picture of cultivating personal ties with existing leaders. For that reason, he was very much against military intervention, and also because Turkey has had a long-standing foreign policy of being against any intervention in the region. Coming back to your question², it is probably a deviation if we see anything with Syria.

So that was the first way that they dealt with Libya. Once it became apparent that military intervention was going to go ahead regardless, probably led by an ad hoc coalition with an Anglo-French lead, the Turkish Government were very concerned about that. They preferred to bring the whole operation under NATO. In fact, they were one of the countries that really pushed to bring everything under the control of the North Atlantic Council, because they saw it as the lesser of two evils. At least they would have some control that way. At the end of it, they dealt with it cleverly, because they were able to contribute to the operation without becoming militarily involved, as well as having oversight of it all in the North Atlantic Council.

So Turkey's use of NATO as a tool of multilateralism, as opposed to using ad hoc coalitions, will be something that we will see more of. NATO does have a value-add for Turkey in the region in that respect.

Q123 Mr Ainsworth: The position the Turkish politicians took on Libya was quite brave, politically.

Dr Aybet: Yes, and also pragmatic, I would have thought. At the end of the day, when I look at the way that Turkish foreign policy is implemented at the moment, it is terribly practical and flexible in that respect. I do not quite understand what you mean by brave. Do you mean in terms of internal criticism on the domestic front?

Q124 Mr Ainsworth: They wanted to get it within a multilateral sphere, but there were enormous dangers in doing that, in terms of becoming responsible for the operation and party to the operation.

Dr Aybet: Of course there were risks involved, but the risks of standing by and not being involved in an ad hoc coalition that would have, in the end, used NATO assets, would have been far more dangerous. I know that there was a serious calculation of risk assessment done within the Foreign Ministry. This was seen as the lesser of two evils.

Q125 Mr Ainsworth: You talked about Iran and missile defence. That has been a very difficult issue for Turkey, hasn't it? Here is her most powerful eastern neighbour, and yet she agreed to provide facilities for the missile shield. In many ways, because of the position she has taken on NATO as a self-defence organisation, she was probably bound to do so, but that must have been very difficult. What has that done to relations with Iran? How has Turkey sought to manage that situation?

Dr Aybet: That has been the most difficult case of balancing all these different factors. The agreement reached at the NATO summit last year of Turkey hosting the radar had less to do with what gives credence to NATO as a multilateral tool and more to do with the long-term Turkish-US strategic partnership. The Turkish Government were very aware that getting this approval and getting the first phase of this missile defence system was very important for President Obama. The importance of that for US domestic politics was conveyed to the Turkish Government. The Turkish Government realised that they needed to do it in order to get US support on a long-term basis. Eventually they would like to have their own missile defence system, but they cannot do that without US Patriots. On the part of the Government, there is an interest in maintaining the long-term Turkish-US strategic partnership. Coming on board with missile defence had more to do with that than with NATO.

One compromise that was reached was that Turkey was insistent that Iran should not be named as a threat in the strategic concept document, and it was not. On the one hand, where you position the radar indicates where the threat is likely to come from, but, on the other hand, the way that Turkey and the US look at this is a lot closer than, say, Turkey and France. A lot depends on how you look at classical deterrence theory. France, for example, was much more insistent on putting a name to the threat, because it sees it as a political signal, very much like cold war deterrence, whereas the US looks at the whole system as something useable should the threat arise, and Turkey looks at it in the same way. So this idea that it is there for generic threats in the long term—regional and global—is something that both Turkey and the US share.

I think that a puzzling thing for me that I have been reading recently—I am not sure if the Committee wanted to ask me more about what Turkey would do if Iran went nuclear, but if you permit me, I will just jump in and say this.

Chair: Tell us.

² Q 118

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Mr Ainsworth: You are in full flow. You should carry on.

Dr Aybet: I have found what I have heard coming from US and UK policy circles lately quite puzzling. One of the most detrimental effects of Iran going nuclear might be proliferation spiralling out of control in the Middle East—Saudi Arabia. What was interesting to me was that, should Iran go nuclear, the potential proliferators that were mentioned were Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Mr Ainsworth: And Egypt.

Dr Aybet: Yes, and Egypt. I cannot really talk on behalf of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, but I think I know a little about Turkey, so I will talk a little about that. Turkey relies on its normative power and trade links, not military balancing, to assert influence in the region, so any new nuclear imbalance in the region will not cause Turkey to address this through military means. I think the Saudis would be more concerned with a nuclear military imbalance than Turkey.

For Turkey, I think the major concern if you had an increasingly nuclear region—not just Iran, but other proliferators—would be the dangers of nuclear exchange, whether accidental or intentional, and that, to me, also says that Turkey is really not interested in proliferating. Also, Turkey is not interested in any nuclear confrontation, in terms of a deterrence posture, so, again, this is something that it would not want to do.

One thesis supporting the spiralling proliferation argument was the assumption of US disengagement or decoupling; if Iran were to go nuclear, the US would not risk a nuclear war to protect its allies. I was very puzzled to read that, because it sounded a lot like the extended deterrence arguments during the cold war—would the US protect Europe? Would Washington commit suicide for Paris?—de Gaulle's famous phrase. In reality, the only country that is theoretically protected by any US nuclear umbrella in the region is Turkey, because it is a NATO member under Article 5. Interestingly enough, the Turks do not fear a US nuclear decoupling if Iran goes nuclear. They have known that they are pretty much on their own for some time, and my reading is that faith in Article 5 has never really been that strong anyway. That alone completely refutes the argument that Turkey may go nuclear if Iran does. I was very puzzled to read this, which is why I thought it was important to make that point.

Q126 Rory Stewart: What could Turkey do to work with the Arab League, in particular on the Arab peace process in Syria? Does it have the right leverage and influence? Could it be a key player in ensuring that the terms of that proposal are fulfilled?

Dr Aybet: They have leverage over individual countries I think, not over the Arab League as a whole. When Prime Minister Erdoğan addressed the Arab League in Cairo—I think it was towards the end of the summer—he had a lot of popularity in that respect. When Turkey has influence or clout, vis-à-vis the Arab League in the region, it is usually to do with Israel, but this is a totally different situation. To tell you the truth, I think it has a little less to do with Turkey's position vis-à-vis Israel, if it is going to have

any clout over the Arab League in getting any deal over Syria, so I am not sure how much influence it will have.³

Q127 Chair: Turning to Turkey-EU co-operation, and NATO, how much of a problem is the Cyprus issue in the Turkey-EU relationship?

Dr Aybet: It is one of the major impediments to any progress. Cyprus, at the moment, has blocked two chapters—energy and education. It is not the only country to have done that: the EU has blocked eight chapters, and France has blocked five. But Turkey is also refusing to implement the additional protocol by opening its ports to Cyprus. It would really like to see the isolation of Northern Cyprus at the end, and it is quite frustrated about that. It also feels that Cyprus has had no incentive to co-operate, ever since it was allowed to join the EU while rejecting the Annan plan. The lingering of that is a major impediment.

One of the key issues that are blocking other things is NATO-EU co-operation. The way that works is that Cyprus has not applied to join NATO's partnership for peace—it is not official membership, but it is partnership—because it thinks that Turkey will veto it. As a result, when NATO and the EU get together, and because the EU is not represented as a whole, they cannot discuss the bigger strategic issues. Finding a solution to that kind of blockage to the NATO-EU strategic partnership would be very important.

Q128 Chair: As you know, Cyprus was discussed at the UN two weeks ago. Do you think this is capable of resolution in the short term?

Dr Aybet: It is very hard to tell. With the Cyprus issue, there are all these junctures where you think there is finally a window that will open, and then it closes very quickly. That is why I do not think I should say anything that would indicate that I think this or that about what has been happening recently. I think we have to wait and see.

Q129 Chair: Maybe the discovery of oil will drive Cyprus to negotiate.

Dr Aybet: Perhaps.

Q130 Chair: Turkey seems to be working well with NATO in Afghanistan.

Dr Aybet: Yes.

Q131 Chair: In fact, it has given an open-ended commitment to Afghanistan. Is that simply because Turkey sees it as its regional duty, or is there some other reason?

Dr Aybet: There are two reasons, I think. First, as you mentioned, it is in Turkey's interests to see regional stability. Therefore, involvement in Afghanistan and seeing a much more stable and secure Afghanistan is

³ The linkage to Israel in exerting leadership over Syria was evident in one of the Prime Minister's recent speeches when he responded to Assad's claim that he would 'fight to the death', he responded 'Why did you not fight to the death over the Israeli occupied hills?' (referring to the Golan Heights).'

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important for Turkey. So it has a national interest there. Also, Turkey has had this long-standing tradition of contributing to NATO out-of-area operations since the end of the cold war. In that sense, the military, although it has diminished power politically, still has considerable technocratic power with regard to NATO relations.

For Turkey, having this very professional army that contributes to all these operations, is also a matter of pride. I think Turkey likes to be involved in these ongoing operations as a NATO member because that is what it has traditionally done. So there are two things involved in the Afghanistan operations and also, obviously, in the Balkans.

Q132 Chair: Absolutely. Finally, do you think EU-Turkey foreign policy relations can be improved in any way? Could the EU recruit Turkey as a foreign policy partner in any way?

Dr Aybet: I think “recruit” may not be the right word.

Chair: It is the wrong way of putting it, maybe.

Dr Aybet: I know that the EU and Baroness Ashton, in particular, are very positive about Turkey’s informal engagement on regional issues like Iran—she is actually very positive about the Foreign Minister’s role in that, although Turkey is not part of P5 plus 1. So I think there is already some informal process—I would not say structure—whereby Turkey is acting like a foreign policy partner.

If the question is how we should make that a little more structural, my recommendation would be not to present it as an alternative to EU accession. Let the accession process carry on, because otherwise that is going to be very sensitive for Turkey. I know that you have never had a foreign policy partnership with a candidate country separate from the accession process, but there is a first time for everything—why not? If there is going to be a special partnership, and it might be considered somewhere down the road as an alternative to full EU membership, then it should never be called a privileged partnership, because that very much has negative connotations for Turkey.

Q133 Chair: We very much take that point onboard. Maybe a special relationship?

Dr Aybet: A special relationship—I do not know.

Q134 Chair: Dr Aybet, as it happens, we have the Foreign Minister, Mr Davutolu, and Cathy Ashton coming to see us next week, so we will put these points to them. Can I thank you very much for coming along? Have we covered all the points you want to make?

Dr Aybet: Yes, I think we have.

Q135 Chair: Thank you very much indeed. It is very much appreciated.

Dr Aybet: Thank you very much.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Dr Philip Robins**, Reader in Middle East Politics and Faculty Fellow, St Antony’s College, University of Oxford, gave evidence.

Q136 Chair: Dr Robins, thank you very much indeed for coming along. I know you are a busy man. Can I welcome Dr Philip Robins, who is a Reader in Middle East politics and Faculty Fellow at St Antony’s College, University of Oxford? Is there anything you would like to say by way of an opening statement, Dr Robins?

Dr Robins: That is very kind of you, Mr Chairman. Maybe I could just come in with three basic points which I would like to make from the outset about the nature of Turkish foreign policy making.

The first—this may be to some extent to state the obvious, but I think it is still worth emphasising—is that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister, really is the man in Turkish politics in general, and in Turkish foreign policy making in particular. That does not mean to say that others do not contribute or that others do not seek to codify his pronouncements and his output, but essentially he is the chief decision maker.

Secondly, because the Prime Minister is the chief decision maker and so much of his style is a very personal style—a very populist style, you might say—the institutional aspects of foreign policy making are easily lost: the personal often eclipses or trumps the institutional. To some extent, this explains some of the rather jerky directions in which Turkish foreign policy sometimes progresses. The institutional impacts on

foreign policy but fleetingly when the personal is not occupying that area.

The third point is the importance of prosperity, the importance of wealth creation and the importance of business and trade in Turkish foreign policy making. This is important of course, first of all, for the health of the Turkish economy but, secondly, for the health of the career of Mr Erdoğan. It is through the securing of prosperity—partly through foreign policy and foreign relations—that the AKP has been able to place itself in the sort of position whereby it can dominate domestic politics. There may be other things that are important here as well, but the importance of wealth creation or prosperity as a key to the long-term future in government of the AKP and its leader is really very central.

Q137 Chair: How would you characterise the relationship between Mr Davutolu and Prime Minister Erdoğan? How do they work together on foreign policy?

Dr Robins: It is a very close relationship. There is not the proverbial Rizla cigarette paper between the two positions of the two men. After all, they have worked together for a long time. Before Mr Davutolu was Foreign Minister, he was a senior adviser in the Foreign Ministry. He worked very closely with Mr Erdoğan and, indeed, with President Gül. In fact, his

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relationship with President Gül goes back at least until the mid-1990s. I remember going to see President Gül—deputy, as he was then—back in the mid-1990s and being advised to go and talk to Dr Professor Davutolu, as being the ideologist of the party.

It is really quite remarkable how these three men have retained such a close relationship over such an extended period of time, with so many foreign policy issues out there which, under normal circumstances, one would have expected perhaps to put pressure on the relationship or even derailed the relationship. At the end of the day, I think that it survives and prospers because Mr Davutolu defers to the Prime Minister—certainly governmentally as a senior figure. He defers to Mr Erdoğan, and he brings the value-added to the relationship of giving it a presentational sophistication and maturity, which actually makes foreign policy in Turkey perhaps look more coherent than it is.

Q138 Ann Clwyd: Can you talk about the influence of the military now? When I first went to Turkey in 1984, I went on behalf of Amnesty International because the Turkish Peace Association was on trial. It was a very frightening time to be there. What influence does the military have over foreign policy and security policy? I know that it has diminished, but how far has it diminished?

Dr Robins: It certainly has diminished, and it has been diminishing steadily since 2007, but what the military is trying to achieve is almost a partnership with the Government whereby the military reserves its right to input into policy areas that are properly those of the military. Security issues are very important because the military can claim that no other institution in the country is in quite the position as the military itself to be able to make technical and specialist judgments.

At the same time, the military knows that the old relationship of Governments deferring to the military or certainly being subordinate to the military has gone. The days when the military could define pretty much any subject as being a security issue—energy, education and so on—have definitely passed, too. It is a more chastened military; it is a military that has lost a number of its senior generals, particularly over the last few months. The military understands, certainly under the present circumstances, that the maximisation of its influence necessitates a much more guarded and cautious approach to policy making.

Q139 Ann Clwyd: Could you talk a bit about this Ergenekon conspiracy, which seems to be very widespread, but which some people say is not real? What is your assessment of it?

Dr Robins: The Turkish state—and the Turkish political system, for that matter—is often opaque. There are few issues that are more opaque than this particular one. It is certainly true that both sides have their position. One side says that this is payback time from the AKP for hostile actions in the past against it by former military figures, former journalists, former bureaucrats etc. Others say, “No.” There has been a history in Turkey of conspiracies of hidden activity

aimed at subverting the Government of the day; aimed even at bringing the military back to power.

One is tempted to say that the reality is somewhere in the middle. I think it is not unusual to hear anecdotes about loose talk around the dining room table at parties in apartments in Istanbul and Ankara, especially with former, retired, military people present at such events; but at the same time, I think talk is cheap, and there is a lot of bravado, conjecture and speculation about what individuals might be doing, might be planning to do—or would like to do.

So I think it is very difficult to get to the heart of this; but certainly the long, protracted, drawn-out nature of the case has got to a stage where it begins to infringe ideas of natural justice. I think it may have suited the purposes of the Government to intimidate, a little bit, some of its opponents—some of its past opponents: a little bit of payback, perhaps. But I think from now onwards this is much more likely to be detrimental to the reputation of the Government, rather than to enhance its position somehow within the power-political game in Ankara.

Q140 Ann Clwyd: Should the UK now regard the weakening of Turkish military influence as permanent?

Dr Robins: I think that it, in many ways, feels permanent, and I think that is partly due to the domestic dynamics in Turkey that I have outlined, but it is also due to broader international factors. As long as the global norm is to move decisively away from the military in politics, then that is likely to further underpin that trend in Turkey.

Of course, very few things we may consider to be absolutely irreversible. If Egypt ends up with a military president in a couple of years' time; if there are serious domestic problems in countries as a result of economic problems, resulting in a drift towards authoritarianism; then perhaps the idea of the military making a comeback might in some way seem less outlandish. But I think at the moment the working position would be that the weakening of the military's influence is irreversible.

Q141 Mr Watts: Mr Robins, do you agree with the FCO's view that Turkey is a stable force in the region?

Dr Robins: I think Turkey has become more and more plausible as a stable country—as an island of stability in an area that is somewhat unstable, whether that instability was the unstableness of authoritarianism or is the instability, now, of the Arab spring. Particularly over the last eight or nine years, the AKP has given, I suppose, a certain governmental ballast to the system, and that that has helped the cause of a stable Turkey; but I do not think we should be complacent about Turkey and governance in Turkey.

One of the things that I worry about is the relative absence of checks and balances in the Turkish system. Yes, they exist. The institutions are there: Parliament, Government, the presidency and so on. The trouble, if you like, is that they are now all occupied by and dominated by the AKP. That makes balanced and judicious government a little bit more difficult to achieve in the Turkish case.

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As for those around Turkey, one of the great values of Turkey since the end of the cold war is the fact that it has been a force for stability and for the status quo generally. As I have said, after the end of the cold war and the outbreak of a variety of regional conflicts—whether it was in the Balkans with the Bosnian civil war or in the Middle East with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait or in other areas such as Iraq—Turkey has been a force for stability.

Q142 Mr Watts: You touched on the judicial system, which many of us have worries about because it is slow and does not seem that independent. Is that something that you think can be developed over the next few years to become more independent of the Government themselves. Can the process be speeded up so that we are not having people in prison awaiting trial for long periods of time?

Dr Robins: Of course speeding up the judiciary and the pace at which courts work more generally are challenges for us all. There is a perennial problem there.

Q143 Mr Watts: Ten years in some cases is not usual in most democracies.

Dr Robins: That is true, and it is much more typical of the Middle East more generally than it is of the European space to which Turkey aspires. The idea of the judiciary becoming truly and robustly independent is very difficult where you have a single, dominant party with a very clear leader whose modus operandi leans in the direction of populist politics. There is of course a spirited nature to the judiciary in Turkey, but the nature of politics in the country and the expectation of the outcome of the political process are very much that the winner takes the spoils. It would be very difficult for the judiciary to push back on that in an effective way.

Q144 Rory Stewart: A very interesting opportunity is being presented in Syria at the moment by the Arab League and by its peace plan. Can we take that as an example of Turkish foreign policy? Is there anything that Turkey could do to play a constructive role in Syria at the moment?

Dr Robins: The Turks have developed a relationship with the Arab League over the past couple of years, which has been very close and supportive. It is certainly conceivable that the Arab League as an institution and Turkey as an individual Government of a neighbouring state can develop ideas together and understandings about the approach to the Syrian case and about the sequencing of different responses in Syria.

The Turks are, to some degree, a prisoner of their own miscalculated policies towards Syria over the last few years. They invested a tremendous amount in the relationship at the highest level and then they found themselves in a position where they were back-peddalling because of the violent and hostile policies of the Syrian regime towards its own people. But I think that clearly—Turkey is a neighbour of Syria—there are some very important implications for Turkey of what is happening in Syria, in terms of public opinion at home, which is becoming increasingly

exercised at the apparent impunity with which Damascus kills its people, and the issue of refugees as people are driven out of Syria. That is something that, because of recent history, exercises the minds of officials and the Government in Ankara.

Q145 Rory Stewart: What are the culture and the capacity of Turkish foreign policy? It's fine that they have ideas that are important to them, but do they get on and do things? Do they get their hands dirty? Are they going to have a bold, dynamic strategy of holding people's feet to the fire, pushing for a resolution and getting observers on the ground? Are they going to have anything like that in Egypt? How active are their diplomats likely to be? How active are their Government likely to be?

Dr Robins: I think pretty active. We have already seen this, as far as Syria is concerned. Davutolu and Erdoan publicly expressed frustrations at the non co-operative nature of the Syrian regime, and said that it was making promises and then not implementing them. We have seen the Turks being an early trigger, if you like, of criticism of the regime.

But we've also seen the Turks acting, I think, with a certain amount of energy and showing that much of their intuition is right about the region. Here, I think that the early responses to the Arab spring are a very good example. What the Turks did in Tunisia and Egypt in particular, and then later, admittedly after a delay, in Libya, was to instinctively say, "The people must decide. This is the only way in which what's happening with the regime violence against its people can be resolved." I think that there, Turkey was falling back on first principles, which shows just how far Turkey has come in becoming socialised into the values of, maybe not liberal democracy, but certainly democracy that is somewhere between the liberal and illiberal ends of the continuum.

I think that that was immensely important. It was an important regional player making a clear statement—a statement that everyone else on the ground had to deal with. I think that that's a good example of how responsive Turkey can be.

Q146 Rory Stewart: Statements, views and positions are one thing, but an active foreign policy of the sort that the United States would conduct would involve covert operations, intelligence gathering, aggressive diplomatic activity and pressures through individual capitals—all the leverage of power politics, going far beyond aspirations and statements. Is that how Turkey would conduct itself in the Middle East?

Dr Robins: Well, I think one has to distinguish between the Middle East neighbours of Turkey and the rest of the Middle East. The rest of the Middle East is obviously further away, so the practical opportunities for those sorts of activities are fewer. In any case, I think that the Turks are much happier and more relaxed about the vehicle of soft power now than would have been the case in the past. If you go back 20 or more years, certainly a hard power response would have been one that would have come much more instinctively, particularly to the Turkish state. What I think the Turks have been trying to do is to explore the efficacy of soft power, which has been

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considerable, and at the same time, to pursue soft power as a way of parrying some of the criticisms that have been made, albeit for having too much of a power political approach to its views in the past. The neighbouring countries, however, are different. The situation in Iraq is certainly different. It presents a hard security challenge to Turkey, particularly in the north of the country. The Iranian situation is very delicate. Turkey seems to have found itself in a position of regional confrontation as far as Iran is concerned. Syria is the country where the sort of involvement that you have described is most likely to take place. Whether it will take place, whether it will take place coherently and at what stage it will kick in is more difficult to judge. I think that one can imagine Turkey playing that sort of role or selecting some of the instruments that you have described as part of its attempt to constrain the Syrian regime and to ultimately ensure that the loss of life that we are seeing at a steady level is brought to an end.

Q147 Ann Clwyd: Can I ask you about the Kurdish question? You talked about increased military activity on the border with Iraq and Kurdistan. How real is that? In the past, I was with the Turkish military over a three-day period when they were chasing PKK rebels within Iraq; they arrested one man. So I always ask how real the threat is. It has been going on for at least 25 years. The PKK raises its head every so often and then it goes down again. One of the issues is the continuing linguistic and cultural rights of the Kurds in south-east Turkey. Turkey has gone some way to doing something about it, but it has not gone as far as it should have gone, in my view. I want your assessment of the threat, because sometimes I think it is hyped up.

Dr Robins: You are certainly right that the sort of casualty estimates that have been made by the Turkish military following or supposedly following insurgents across the border has been exaggerated in the past. I suppose, in a way, that is what armies do. When they have been given a task they tend to say that they have done it and that they have done it well beyond what could be expected.

I think that your question is much more about the PKK threat today. It is not a negligible or unimportant threat. We have, after all, seen on three or four occasions, over the end of the summer and the autumn, attacks by PKK insurgents on the Turkish military, which has resulted in significant loss of life—in the 20s to 30s—as a result of such operations. Such operations and events are of course distressing in their own right, not least because they make any sort of rapprochement between the Kurdish part of the country and the main Turkish parts of the country much less likely, but on this occasion the developments have been much more concerning, because this was supposed to be the time when the new Government would begin to draft a new constitution. That new constitution, as well as being a much more liberal document than the one we have had so far, which goes back to 1982, would be a new document for a new partnership between Turks and Kurds living together within the overall community of Turkey as citizens with equal rights and with a much

more devolved Government. This is what we were looking for; this appeared to be the promise that the AKP made after the election over the summer. One of the regrettable things has been that these insurgent operations have derailed that process; they have resulted in a military response, rather than a substantively political response, and they have completely changed the national agenda as far as the direction of political reform is concerned.

One fears, of course, that this is an attempt to polarise politics again and to stir up the cauldron of inter-ethnic tensions. On that basis, none of us can afford to be complacent, because there are significant Turkish and Kurdish populations across Europe. We cannot afford to be complacent because, in many ways, the fortune of this constitution, which is supposed to be in the drafting, will determine the direction in which Turkey moves in the future and whether it really does consolidate the values of liberal democracy at home.

Thirdly, this is a crucial issue as far as whether Turkey really does emerge as a moral force in its backyard and its environs. When it first addressed the Arab spring, it appeared to have a tremendous amount of moral authority in its voice because it had a democratic system and because it was moving towards, and then had, national elections. That only works as long as the Kurdish issue is not bedeviling the political system such that it cannot be addressed through democratic and liberal values.

Q148 Ann Clwyd: What co-operation is there between the Iraqi Government, the Kurdish regional government and the Turks on this issue? Is there a stand-off between them or is there actual co-operation?

Dr Robins: I think Turkey's relationship with Iraq is in much better straits now than it has been in recent years, when Turkey pretty much had no real relationship with Baghdad, and its relationship with the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq was rather adversarial. That has changed, although whether it has moved far enough and fast enough is a moot point. But now, the Turkish Government have good relations with the KRG. Recently, Massoud Barzani was in Istanbul for some serious talks with the Turkish authorities. Interestingly, the outcome was that Barzani said that he was unhappy with the PKK insurgency across the border, but that Turkey could not expect the KDP and other Kurdish factions in northern Iraq to, if you like, do its dirty work for it. The clear inference from that is that there needs to be a political settlement, rather than just another iterative attempt to bring a military solution into play.

I think Turkey now has better relations with Baghdad. It has relations with most of the political movements and parties in Iraq, so it now has an Iraq strategy, rather than just a northern Iraq, or an exclusively Kurdish northern Iraq, strategy. Having said that, at the last election in Iraq, Turkey very much supported the Ayad Allawi Iraqiya faction. By being seen to be very much in the corner of Iraqiya, it allowed itself to be painted as a somewhat sectarian player. It was basically seen to be supporting Sunni Arabs within the political process against, in particular, the Maliki state

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faction in Iraq. After having made very good progress since the mid-2000s, there was a hesitation in developing a rounded and holistic relationship with Iraq as a society more generally.

Q149 Mr Watts: Do Turkey and Israel retain a diplomatic or security relationship? How strong is that, given recent events?

Dr Robins: The Turkish-Israeli relationship was waning through the mid to late-2000s, but it was retained particularly in areas like military co-operation, intelligence co-operation, a certain amount of trade and so on. That was the situation until the rupture more recently over the inability or unwillingness of the Israeli Government to offer an apology and compensation over the Mavi Marmara tragedy. Since then, formal diplomatic relations have been downgraded to second-secretary level, which is the level that they were at when relations were in very bad straits back in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

One other casualty, apart from formal diplomatic relations, has been some of the military agreements that were signed in previous years between the two sides. We can certainly say that there has been real damage done to the relationship.

Q150 Mr Watts: What the Committee is trying to assess is how much of that is for public consumption. Obviously, a position is taken by Israel and a position is taken by Turkey. Have some security and diplomatic connections been maintained, but behind closed doors?

Dr Robins: It would be my assumption and intuitive sense that some of them would be retained. But the reason why I wanted to mention the military issue and the cancellation of some of the military contracts is because these are precisely the sorts of things that would have been retained under the table up to this point. The fact that they have also been axed shows what a profound impact those series of events have had on bilateral relations. So I would say it is somewhere between the two. It is pared right back, but there is still some in existence.

Q151 Mr Watts: The UK has good relationships with the US, Israel, Turkey—they are all our allies. How do we keep all the balls in the air? How do we deal with the fact that the relationship between those three bodies is not necessarily as good as it should be and yet we are allied to all three? How do we balance our commitment to those allies without upsetting the balance between us?

Dr Robins: The relationship with Israel and Turkey is one that we and other friends of both nations can work on. After all, we are not like the United States, which has a more global reach, which means that many more factors are important. As far as Turkey and Israel are concerned, I argue that neither has an interest in such a major rupture. You mentioned public consumption. I think the rupture was partly for public consumption, certainly. I think that public opinion in Turkey is definitely really animated about the Palestinian issue, and the Government understand that and they understand that they have to be very careful in the way that they handle public opinion. This is not an

issue over which to be dismissive, at all. But I think it goes further than that, too. I think the AKP itself, and certainly the leadership of the AKP, also feels very angry about the Palestinian issue and the treatment of the Palestinians.

When the Turkish Government was frustrated at the inability or unwillingness of the Israelis to come forward with their deal to end the problems over the Mavi Marmara, the response from the Turkish side was so swift, so focused and so detailed that it reflected their state of mind over such issues and, of course, the Mavi Marmara itself and the killing of Turks on that vessel. That gave an insight into the thinking of the leadership itself. So it is partly about public opinion, but it is also partly about the personal involvement of the leadership on this particular issue.

Q152 Mr Watts: But do you think that if, for example, Britain were to side with the Americans on the Palestinian issue, that would affect our relationship with Turkey? Is there a choice to be made there, or would Turkey accept that we have a relationship not just with it but with America and with Israel, and that the Turks cannot expect us to take a position that is the same as theirs?

Dr Robins: Yes. I would not say that Turkish foreign policy is indexed to the Palestinian issue; I think that is going too far. I am sure the Turks would want us to take a position which was much more pro-Palestinian, say over UN membership, and they were very critical on the UNESCO funding issue as well. So I think the Turks would like to be seen as an effective vote-gatherer on behalf of the Palestinians. That would play very much to the conception of the role that the Turkish Government have for themselves. But I would be very surprised if penalties were introduced for third parties that are friendly countries; I would be quite surprised at that. The real hostility is over the disproportionate nature of the violence on the ground in the occupied territories and in other places—like the Mavi Marmara.

Q153 Mr Watts: How did the Turkey-Brazil-Iranian nuclear initiative come about? Is that something that is ongoing? How did it materialise?

Dr Robins: Something that is not focused on enough is the role and experience that the Turks had when they were a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council—I think it was from 2008 to 2010. First, they had to get elected and, given the extent to which Turkey as a country has been vilified in international institutions over the years, they decided that they would have to throw everything at getting elected to the Security Council, and that is what they did.

There was a huge and very impressive—and certainly a tireless—campaign globally to rally the world's nations behind the Turkish bid to join the Security Council. This was successful, of course, but in many ways it was an experience that took the Turkish leadership in directions and to continents where they virtually had not been before, in terms of lobbying and trying to generate this support. The subsequent membership of the Security Council gave Turkey a taste of playing a bigger role—in its own region, of

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course, but even beyond that at a more global level. So the Turkish Government, as a result of this experience, certainly does not want for ambition, particularly in areas where it feels it can make a contribution, such as mediation, for instance, which is an area where it has been really quite tireless over the last few years.

Q154 Mr Watts: So you think this is an initiative that was a start—that Turkey sees itself playing this role more and more, as it becomes a more powerful player, not just in its region but internationally.

Dr Robins: I think clearly more so in its region—hence the attempt to bring the Syrians and the Israelis together, the attempts to bring the Azerbaijanis and the Armenians together, and so on. The Turks have, maybe, learned a lesson or two about how difficult it is to do this. If it was that easy, these things would have been done a long time ago; but I think there is a sort of dogged persistence on the Turkish side to maintain this as part of their foreign policy portfolio, and as a way of trying to neutralise potentially problem areas—and problem areas that can be bad for stability and trade. As I said earlier, do not underestimate the importance of trade and prosperity as drivers in foreign policy.

I think the Iranian nuclear issue was a very attractive issue to try to address. It enabled the Turks to join forces with their old friends the Brazilians, with whom they had worked very closely on the Security Council. Certainly the Turks believed that they were working with the blessing of the US State Department. I am not sure whether the full story of this whole engagement has really been told, but I think what happened was that there was a certain misunderstanding about how far the Turks and the Brazilians could go.

The Turks and the Brazilians thought they had a deal. The Americans thought that the Iranians were just playing politics in a very clever way, and trying to divide Turkey and the Brazilians from the Americans. It was on that basis that the whole thing broke up in disarray, with the Turkish side very angry and bruised at the whole experience. I think the narrative that Turkey was somehow trying to go it alone or was turning its back on the Americans, or was being pro-Iranian, was far too overcooked.

Q155 Mr Watts: Taking it up to date, on that basis, how does Turkey want to see the Iranian situation develop? Given that it has had its fingers burnt, in international terms, how does it see the Iranian problem being resolved?

Dr Robins: Turkey has got itself into a bit of a fix over Iran.

Chair: We all have, haven't we?

Dr Robins: Amen. Over the last 32 years, most of the time the Turkish strategy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran has been to consciously try to avoid riling Tehran. The emphasis has been on areas of partnership such as trade and economic co-operation

and on not being too quick to rise to Iranian provocations, of which there have been many. They include Iranian dissidents being apprehended in Turkey and shipped back to Iran and the refusal of Iranian visitors to visit Ataturk's mausoleum and so on. Turkey has been purposefully slow to be provoked by such developments.

Over the years in the US and the UK, that has been somewhat difficult to understand on occasion, but in a sense the proof of the pudding has been in the eating over the long term. What we have seen over the long term is that the political problems between the two sides have been managed pretty effectively from a Turkish perspective. In a way, Turkish mediation was a bit more of a proactive aspect of the same sort of thing—you know, there is a problem here, look for a solution and, by doing so, maintain and manage a bilateral relationship with Iran that otherwise could be very much more problematic. The problem though is with the emergence of the Syrian crisis. Given the very close strategic relationship between Iran and Syria and that Turkey is becoming a leading state as far as the condemnation of Syria is concerned, Turkey has put itself on the other side as far as the fault line of regional politics is concerned. Assuming that the Syrian situation gets worse, that will be a big difficulty. It will put a big strain on the relationship which otherwise has been managed but has always had a combustible potential to it.

Q156 Sir John Stanley: Turkey has this pivotal position between Europe and the Middle East. Can you give us your assessment over the 18 months or so that the present Government have been in office as to how well or how not so well they have been playing their hand towards Turkey in relation to Turkey's pivotal position astride Europe and the Middle East?

Dr Robins: I have always been a big believer that managing Turkey and developing a relationship with Turkey is pretty much 80% presentation and 20% substance. Of course the substance is important. Bilateral trade and bilateral economic relations are important. The whole issue of European Union membership—and the fact that things are not moving very quickly, but are still very much on the table as a priority for Ankara—is important, but getting the presentation right is important as well. One can go a long way almost purely on the basis of presentation than perhaps might be evident. Viewed from the Turkish end, the coalition Government seem to have got things right and done pretty well at getting the public diplomacy right. We have seen that through declaratory policy and the emphasis that has been placed on trade that lies somewhere between the substantive and the presentational. We have seen that in terms of the very successful meeting at Ditchley—the Tatli Dil, the round table between opinion formers in Turkey and in the United Kingdom.

Of course, the push on Turkey is also very much situated in a wider context, with the UK trying to develop closer relations with important and rising

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powers more generally. But that also plays well as far as the Turks are concerned, so when the Turks see themselves as being part of a strategy, which also extends to India, China and so on, that is a very comfortable position if you are Turkey, and if you are looking at the UK's position and the UK's policy. The last 18 months have been good for bilateral relations.

Q157 Chair: That was excellent. Thank you very much indeed. Do you think that you have made all the points that you want to make?

Dr Robins: I am content, Chairman.

Q158 Chair: Thank you very much indeed. It is very much appreciated that you came along.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Dr Mina Toksoz**, Head of Country Risk, Standard Bank International (giving evidence in a personal capacity), gave evidence.

Q159 Chair: Our third witness is Dr Toksoz, who will talk to us about the economy and economic issues. Is there anything you would like to say by way of opening remarks?

Dr Toksoz: I can do, if you would like me to. There are four basic points. It is very important to understand and get right the long-term prospects for Turkey. I don't know how many of you have managed to look at the presentation I sent round, but a number of very significant structural changes have taken place in the Turkish economy over the past decade, which puts it in a very different position today in terms of growth prospects than it was before. Ten years ago, you had a massive public debt; 80% of budget revenues were going to pay interest payments on that debt; inflation and interest rates were in double digits, and so on. The massive change that has taken place in the past 10 years in these indicators has opened up growth prospects tremendously.

For one thing, only about 15% of budget revenues now go to pay interest payments, leaving the rest for infrastructure, education, health and so on. Turkish people are better educated now; they have better health services and infrastructure is improving at a very fast pace. All these things suggest a very positive momentum in terms of growth long term. The other factor long term is that the banking sector, which was restructured in the 2000–01 crisis, is well regulated and quite prudent.

Credit processes are well run and—although Turkey has made very fast progress in the past three or four years in terms of credit growth—in terms of credit to GDP ratios or the macro-ratios, there is more scope for credit-driven growth and domestic-driven growth in Turkey at a time when the global economy is going to be fairly slow, and its export markets are going to be fairly slow. One major constraint to all this is that the country has a very low savings rate. The external foreign payment gap is large, which becomes a major constraint to these very positive growth prospects. That is something that is facing the economy in the short term over the next couple of years that they have got to overcome.

As to the third theme, I was asked to say a few words on the EU Customs Union aspect of the economy. The main point I would like to make on that is that issues have been raised about the workings of the Customs Union. Certain things may be resolved, and there may be some progress, but significant further progress with the Customs Union will be difficult without EU membership becoming a lot more possible. As far as

EU membership is concerned, the process itself has become a bit of a barrier. It is almost like the UK needs to get around the process and invite Turkey to as many forums as possible for Turkey to play a part. It is almost like it should ignore the process, relate to Turkey much more bilaterally and encourage other EU members to do so, as well.

The main point I would like to make—you can ask me for more details on this—on how UK policy should relate to Turkey is that you should keep in mind the long-term trajectory and prospects of Turkey. Because of the stop-go nature of its economy, it has a tendency to go into crises and so on. The important thing is not to get derailed politically by the twists and turns that Turkey may do strategically, politically or economically, but to keep in mind a longer term trajectory. The Turkish economy is now \$750 billion; it is the 16th biggest in the world. Turkey wants to get into the top 10, and while I am not sure that it will by 2023, it will certainly move up a few more places. It is going to become a major regional economic power, and the UK has to understand that the process of it becoming a regional power needs to settle. The UK needs to relate to Turkey in that context, to accept that that is where Turkey is and where it is going, and to shape its policies accordingly.

Q160 Chair: Looking at the figures you gave us in the presentation, I must say that most countries would die to have the debt reduction figures that Turkey has achieved. What do you say to those who say that the current growth is not sustainable and that anybody who runs the current account deficit that Turkey is running could make their economy grow? What is your reaction to that?

Dr Toksoz: That's right. My short-term forecast is that the economy will have to slow quite significantly next year to be able to bring down the current account deficit. Turkish policy missed a beat in 2010, when there was quite a strong recovery out of the recession. They did not hold back domestic demand sufficiently because the election was coming up in June 2011, and they wanted strong growth in the lead-up to it. They have been very slow in tightening policy. The policy just went in the wrong direction, and it is now going to have to tighten when the global economy slows next year. So it has gone in a pro-cyclical direction. The point is that Turkey has misshaped the policy in the past couple of years, and it will have to pay for that with slower growth in the next couple of years, but the overall structural drivers of growth are still

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there, so it will come back up. There will be a bit of a stop-go until Turkey learns how to manage this current account deficit.

Q161 Ann Clwyd: As you know, much of the infrastructure in the rural parts of the country is quite underdeveloped. Given the recent earthquakes—I am thinking in particular about the one in Van, which is very much underdeveloped—will Turkey have to do something to try to put that right quickly and invest more in those areas?

Dr Toksoz: Somebody told me an astonishing statistic the other day, that 60% of Turkish housing is unlicensed. That means that they are probably not earthquake-proof, are very energy inefficient and the rest of it. The housing and infrastructure needs of Turkey, particularly in the eastern regions, are massive.

I think that there is a huge effort. There is the massive housing programme—TOKÝ—which is a little untransparent in terms of exactly how it is being funded through the budget, but it is building houses at a very fast pace. There is now an effort to speed up the road and rail network in the country. There is a privatisation programme coming up in relation to the road network, which has been talked about for a couple of years and will probably take off. I would say that certainly, the western infrastructure is now really in very good shape. It can get better, but it's really getting there around certain urban centres, such as Gaziantep and Konya. There is now high-speed rail between Ankara and Konya. There are certain economic poles and infrastructure grows around them. They are also planning to open up a lot more airports. So there is a big infrastructure programme in place. How fast that goes and how reliable it will be in terms of providing safe housing and so on is not certain.

Q162 Ann Clwyd: There has been an increase of thinking in British investment in the south-east recently. How do you see that developing?

Dr Toksoz: Which investment sectors? I haven't followed that.

Q163 Ann Clwyd: Agriculture, basically.

Dr Toksoz: I think the south-east Anatolia project, which has been going since the 1980s and was started under Demirel, is finally coming to fruition. I think that there is huge potential in south-east Anatolia in terms of agriculture. I know that there are very big firms operating there, very much in relation to export-oriented products. I think there is a huge prospect there, in agriculture.

Other sectors that should also be looked at by UK industry are education, health, infrastructure, energy and pharmaceuticals. Health and education are going to develop quite a lot, so those are the sectors that UK business can contribute to.

Q164 Ann Clwyd: The level of female participation in the work force is low compared with comparable economies. How can that be improved? Do you see that as a major disadvantage?

Dr Toksoz: Yes. One of the reasons why Turkey has a low savings ratio is that the employment ratio of the

labour force is very low—it has been under 50%, and hit 51% just recently. Within that, there are major issues with youth and female unemployment. In fact, female participation in the labour force has gone down over the past 10 years. One of the reasons for that is that, although women are fully part of the labour force in the rural areas, once they move to the city, they find it difficult to find attractive jobs that they can get to easily. Often, when they move to a city, they live in the outskirts, but the jobs are often in the centre—there is the going and coming and the conditions. There is also the issue of a cultural shift, which is difficult to make. I think there is a structural issue here, which will take time. I am sure that their daughters will work, but this first generation of women, who came from the countryside to the city, find it difficult to do so. AKP government has a very conservative agenda in relation to the role of women. Although, legally, women's role in the family has been brought up to European standards, the culture is more conservative, and they tend to reinforce that. Many secular women in Turkey are worried about some of these trends and are working to ensure that women can overcome these traditional constraints and have a more fulfilled life.

Q165 Mr Watts: You are giving a positive outline of the economy in Turkey, but you have touched on the issue of the low level of participation in the work force of women. The other issue that we have looked at in a bit of detail is population growth. Turkey will have to generate a lot of economic activity if it is going to find jobs for the number of people who are being born in Turkey at the moment. How much do you think there will be a drag on the Turkish economy as a result of the large population increases and the low participation of women in the workplace?

Dr Toksoz: These things are a drag at the moment, but once they start shifting in a positive direction, which I expect them to do—the Government have finally understood that they need some labour market reforms to encourage greater employment and so on—a virtuous circle begins to work. Productivity increases and savings ratios increase, like the whole thing that happened in Asia in the 1980s. Instead of being a demographic drag, it becomes a demographic gift. That is when really fast growth can happen. I think that, structurally, Turkey is in a really interesting position at the moment. Whether the Government have the intellectual, comprehensive reform orientation that they need to take that opportunity and do the deep reforms that are needed remains to be seen. They are certainly recognising them and talking about them, but I still have some reservations about whether they will be able to pursue them.

For example, one thing the government has been talking about for a long time is a comprehensive tax reform. Ten years ago they started the process of private pensions in Turkey, but the tax incentives are minimal. They could not do it at that time, because the budget was in such a tight spot, but they now have the capacity to provide proper tax incentives for the emerging middle class to begin to save and put money

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into pensions, which will also help develop the capital markets and so on. These things have got to be cracked. They were talking about this for a long time and Babacan has recently reiterated the need to do a comprehensive tax reform. I am watching to see whether they will get on with it.

Q166 Mr Ainsworth: The British Government have set a target for improving trade in simple volume by 2015. Does a simplistic target like that make sense, or should there be some more sophisticated approach?

Dr Toksoz: Well, Turkish imports will be worth \$250 billion next year in my forecast. Exports will be worth around \$170 billion or so by next year. They are growing very fast. The UK exports to Turkey, but is in the third tier of countries, as it were. There is the top tier, which is mainly countries from whom energy imports take place, such as Russia, and then there is the second tier, such as France and so on. Britain exports only about £3.5 billion or £4 billion, and that could easily double in the next five years, yes. I think that the potential is there.

Q167 Mr Ainsworth: Are there particular sectors that we ought to target for trade growth?

Dr Toksoz: The Government have already identified the sectors. I saw a report suggesting that they would be looking at ICT, education and transport, particularly rail, because of the rail network. So it is infrastructure—

Q168 Mr Ainsworth: We are going to export rail infrastructure to Turkey?

Dr Toksoz: You could set up some plants in Turkey that could produce. One of the things that the UK needs to be careful about is to see Turkey not just as an exporting destination but as an investment destination because, as I said, there is a big trade deficit. I think that the Government are looking much more at building their relationships with countries that are prepared to invest in Turkey. Also, I think that the Government are moving towards some kind of industrial policy; they are looking to produce more of the import content of some of the driving sectors of the Turkish economy, such as the automotive sector, within the country. The import content of some of Turkey's exports, such as in the automotive sector, is very high. In fact, net automotive exports are very small in Turkey because so much is imported. The UK has got to get the balance right, between seeing Turkey as a place to which Burberry coats are exported, versus Rolls-Royce setting up a plant for engines and so on and so forth. I recently bumped into someone from Rolls-Royce, which is looking significantly at this sort of thing.

Q169 Mr Ainsworth: The British Government have enjoyed a very good relationship with Turkey over the past few years. Are there any commercial benefits for UK companies as a result of that close working relationship? Does that actually give British companies seeking to work with Turkey an advantage or an edge?

Dr Toksoz: It helps. Whether it gives a huge advantage, I do not know, because the Turkish

economy is very private sector driven now; it is not a state-driven economy. It would probably help in state-driven sectors more but, otherwise, really, UK businessmen are on their own and they just have to find the right partners and the right people to go into that market with—that is an absolutely critical aspect of how one goes about working there. There is a lot of acquisition by European firms of small and medium-sized businesses taking place in Turkey, in everything from small publishing firms to pharmaceuticals, private hospitals and education. I would say that it is there, but you have to work at it, and it does not necessarily come easily.

Q170 Mr Watts: How much of an obstacle to bilateral economic and commercial relations is the visa system between Turkey and the UK?

Dr Toksoz: I would say that it is quite an important factor. The UK visa application process for Turks seems inordinately difficult—much more difficult than that of, say, France, which has a much more belligerent attitude towards Turkish membership of the EU and so on. It has been described to me as humiliating. You have to turn up with all your financial details, and so on. My father refuses to come to visit me here, because he refuses to go through the process. I think it is something that definitely must be looked at. The greater the traffic of people between the UK and Turkey, the better. That is the most important thing to bear in mind.

Q171 Mr Watts: What more could be done to improve the operations of the EU-Turkey Customs Union? What improvements could be made with that, do you believe?

Dr Toksoz: That is a really tough one, because no other EU member has joined the Customs Union before becoming an EU member. I think Turkey did it because they thought they were about to become one—maybe not immediately, but certainly in the next five to 10 years—so, if I were advising the Turkish Government I would say, “This is a quid pro quo: they have to offer more before you offer any more.” I think that it is difficult to see significant advances in that. One of the specific things I have heard about is that when trade legislation changes in the EU, Turks only hear about it third hand. Yet it affects them very directly. I think they have observer status on some of the Customs Union bodies, but they need to be given something more than observer status—certainly much more of a stake in how the trade policy of the EU operates generally. They need to know, simply, rather than be told, “Oh, this has been decided. Now you have to allow such-and-such tariff-free goods.” So I think it would help if Turks felt that they were part of the decision-making process.

Q172 Sir John Stanley: The growing conventional wisdom, certainly among people I meet, is that the Turkish aspiration to achieve EU membership is becoming ever more difficult, and appears to be becoming a lost cause, particularly because of the view of France and Germany. What more do you think

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the British Government should be doing to reduce the hostility from France and Germany to Turkish membership?

Dr Toksoz: I do not know that the UK Government can do all that much to change French and German opinion. I think the French have got to realise that they are paying a high price for their policy, because Turkey is about to make a decision on nuclear power and the Government have come out and said, "I'm not going to give it to Sarkozy," so France is out. They have to realise how much they are losing. I think perhaps it would help to explain to them the potential in Turkey, the prospects there, of which I am sure they are aware, but just hammering this, maybe, at much higher level would help.

I am also getting a little sceptical about the EU membership process. I am not a Eurosceptic, and I have always been in favour of Turkish membership of the EU, but I am seeing this membership process becoming a barrier in itself. It is almost like, if Turkey had never applied, bilateral relationships would have gone somewhat further, just because Turkey has grown and has become a bigger strategic and economic power in the region. I do not see much prospect of accession, with the Cyprus veto, and certainly not under this German Government. The SPD in Germany was much more in favour of Turkish membership, so perhaps particular political Governments on the continent have made it more difficult. But public opinion in some countries is wary of Turkey. I am not sure that that can change easily, especially in the context of the massive crisis that is affecting the eurozone.

Given that membership prospects have become ever more distant, the only thing that it is possible for the UK to do is to try to invite Turkey to as many EU bodies as possible. That is already somewhat there with the European foreign and security policy—Turkey should be brought into that and into more bodies relating to the Customs Union. Visa processes should be eased. You have to almost get around the membership process and just get on with things.

Q173 Sir John Stanley: As you know, there is some wariness, if not worse, among people in this country about Turkish membership of the EU. Do you think

that the British Government should be doing more to sell to British people the case for Turkish accession to the EU?

Dr Toksoz: I do not think that would hurt. It is clear that the EU is changing rapidly. If the eurozone moves much more towards political integration and becoming a fiscal union, which some countries are clearly going to have to do, there will be several levels of membership—the core Eurozone with fiscal union, maybe looser Euro members; EU members; and then whatever.

Turks would like to have a date by which it is either going to happen or not. They do not want this open-ended thing to go on, and they are moving towards asking for a definite date. In 10 years or so—say by 2020 or 2023, which is the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic—the Turkey's membership of the EU would become much more possible in this differentiated EU than it seemed 10 years ago, when the EU was a lot less differentiated.

Q174 Sir John Stanley: As we all recognise, the main negative perception about Turkey's membership is the free movement of labour that would result. Do you think that there is any merit in the British Government, possibly with other European Governments—accepting that Turkish accession looks to be increasingly difficult and that there is perhaps an increasing risk that the Turkish Government themselves might give up on it? Should they find a way to bring Turkey into the EU on the basis that there would not be the same degree of free movement from Turkey into the EU countries as is enjoyed by other member states? That would not be a very satisfactory outcome, but it might be a better one than Turkey giving up all together.

Dr Toksoz: My understanding is that the Turkish Government are prepared to negotiate on that, so that should definitely be explored.

Chair: Dr Toksoz, thank you very much. I should have said at the beginning that, although you are Head of Country Risk at Standard Bank International, you are giving evidence in your own private capacity, and we accept that. Thank you very much indeed for coming along this morning. It is very much appreciated.

Tuesday 13 December 2011

Members present:

Richard Ottaway (Chair)

Mr Bob Ainsworth
Sir Menzies Campbell
Ann Clwyd
Mike Gapes

Andrew Rosindell
Mr Frank Roy
Sir John Stanley
Rory Stewart

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Rt Hon David Lidington MP**, Minister of State for Europe, **Ms Pat Phillips**, Head of Enlargement and South East Europe Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and **Steve Saward**, Head of Russia, Turkey, Central Asia and the Caucasus Section, UKTI, gave evidence.

Q175 Chair: May I welcome members of the public to the fourth evidence session of this inquiry into UK-Turkey relations and Turkey's regional role? It is an opportunity for us to put questions to the FCO Minister responsible for Turkey across a wide range of issues relevant to Government policy; he is also, of course, the Minister for Europe. This will probably be the last evidence session before we move to producing our report.

Mr Lidington, may I give you a warm welcome to the Committee? It is very good to see you here. I think that we will start by talking about the bilateral relationship and other associated issues, and then perhaps we will look at the EU accession point in the second half of the meeting.

We had a very successful visit by President Gül a few weeks ago. I think all of us involved were impressed by his grip on the situation. What do you feel came out of that meeting? What are the highlights of it? What did you agree, and what plans have you got for the future arising out of that meeting?

Mr Lidington: Thank you very much, Chairman. Before I try to answer your question, perhaps I could say for the record that I am accompanied by two of my officials from the FCO today—Pat Phillips on my left and Steve Saward on my right.

Q176 Chair: I do beg your pardon, both Ms Phillips and Mr Saward. For the record, I should say that Pat Phillips is the Head of Enlargement and South East Europe Department and Mr Saward—I hope I am pronouncing that properly—is the Head of the Russia, Turkey, Central Asia and Caucasus Section of UKTI. Thank you very much.

Mr Lidington: It was a remarkable state visit. I saw the Turkish Foreign Minister at the OSCE meeting in Vilnius last week, and this was something that he still wanted to talk about. I believe both sides regard it as a success. I think that there are four gains that I would point to.

At a direct tangible level, there was a marked improvement in the quality of our defence relations. There was a military co-operation treaty signed between our Secretary of State for Defence and the deputy chief of the Turkish general staff, and a memorandum of understanding has also been signed about defence procurement co-operation. The military

co-operation treaty will have the advantage of giving UK forces opportunities to train in Turkey, where you have a mix of different terrains available. Particularly if, for example, our troops were being prepared for service in Afghanistan, this is something that would be extremely helpful to us.

Secondly, there was a strengthening of trade and commercial links. I hosted, on behalf of the FCO, a lunch for the Turkey-UK chief executives' forum, and the President had presentations from a number of key British and Turkish businesses. There were a couple of significant contracts signed while the state visit was going on, but being able to link the CEO forum to the state visit will have reinforced the importance that both Governments give to the bilateral commercial relationship and strengthened our push to deliver on the Prime Minister's promise to double our trade with Turkey by 2015.

There were two slightly less tangible points. On foreign policy co-operation, our Prime Minister and the President, our Foreign Secretary and Mr Davutoglu talked about a whole range of issues on which we are seeking to work more closely together—from Afghanistan to the Balkans, to the Middle East peace process, to the emerging democratic revolution in north Africa, to counter-terrorist and counter-proliferation issues.

I think it is just helpful to have the quality of relationships between leaders in the two countries strengthened by the opportunity for long meetings and for spending time in each others' company over a couple of days. One thing that I have learned in 18 months as a Foreign Office Minister is that while national interest, at the end of the day, is of absolutely critical importance, the quality of relationships between people in positions of responsibility in different countries can make a huge difference, for good or ill, to our ability to deliver on behalf of our national interest.

Q177 Chair: Thank you. During the visit, a number of defence contracts were signed. As the UK defence sector seeks to expand its business activities inside of Turkey, is there any risk that the equipment that is sold will be used for the excessive use of force against detainees?

Mr Lidington: Any defence exports would of course be subject to the consolidated criteria that we apply to all such exports, including not only defence

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equipment, but also equipment for police use that could conceivably be misused for those purposes, for example. We would apply those checks to such exports in the same way that we would apply those checks to any other country, so the answer is that, while one can never have a 100% guarantee, we think that we have very rigorous controls, and those controls will remain.

Q178 Chair: Is there any risk that it would be used against the PKK in Turkey or in Iraq?

Mr Lidington: The PKK is a banned terrorist organisation in this country, and it is responsible for some brutal terrorist atrocities both inside and outside Turkey. We completely support the right of Turkey to defend itself against terrorism, but in the conversations that we have with them—not just about counter-terrorist work, but also about human rights—we do talk about the issues of how you combine an effective counter-terrorist policy with respect for human rights and due process of law. Our argument would be—with our Turkish friends and with other countries—that the two complement each other and should not be seen in opposition.

Q179 Rory Stewart: Welcome, and thank you very much for coming. I want to begin on a slightly nerdy subject. According to the FCO report, in your current UK-based work force you have 20 people who have passed the operational exam in Turkish, but in Turkey at the moment only half the jobs designated as speaker slots are filled by staff with Turkish language skills. Only one officer has passed the FCO operational exam in Turkish and one has passed the extensive exam. Why is that? What can we do to address this? How does this tie in with the Foreign Office's diplomatic excellence initiative?

Mr Lidington: I think there is a legacy of some years in which we saw the Foreign Office language school closed down and a lesser importance placed on language skills than I think ought to have been the case. This is something that the Foreign Secretary has declared publicly that he is determined to redress, and we are doing that by setting out to re-establish a language training facility within the FCO, as the Foreign Secretary said in his speech in, I think, July this year about the future of the Department, but also by trying to ensure that, in key posts, we give priority wherever possible to people with language skills.

As Mr Stewart knows, Chairman, the FCO and UKTI have been stepping up their representation in Turkey, as with a number of other emerging economies, and for all the new UK-based slots in the Turkey network there is now a Turkish language requirement. As those new appointments are made, that will increase the overall number of UK-based staff with Turkish language skills. Where we have UK-based staff in the Turkey network where the Turkish language is not a requirement, we are encouraging them to take full advantage of the opportunities to learn Turkish that are available to them.

I know from my conversations with Ministers in various countries that you get extra credibility if you have diplomatic representatives who can speak the language of the country to which they are accredited,

so I am completely on board with what Mr Stewart is urging on us.

Q180 Rory Stewart: Thank you. A thing that Turkey seems to have done that is very constructive is to support us in terms of what happened to the embassies in Libya and, most recently, in Iran. Can you provide any more detail on those connections and on whether there is any other possibility around the world for co-operating with Turkey in that way?

Mr Lidington: To take Mr Stewart's last point first, I hope that we do not get many other occasions in which our embassies are under attack and we need to call on friendly countries for help. Turkey certainly helped a great deal in Libya in providing support when we were winding down our embassy there and in providing humanitarian support for British nationals.

In Iran, more recently, Turkey came out with some very strong statements supporting our position and deploring the attack on the embassy, and Turkey made very strong representations of her own to the Iranian authorities at a critical time. Without going into detail about those conversations, the fact that Turkey is a neighbour and a predominantly Muslim country, and is seen by Iran as such, gave those representations additional weight, which was greater than if they had come from western countries. We are looking for opportunities to develop the bilateral political relationship with Turkey on a number of fronts. I think, as the Foreign Secretary said, that over the past six months or so when we have had Libya and Syria in the headlines, he has actually spoken to Minister Davutoglu more frequently than to Hillary Clinton about how to work together on the way forward.

Q181 Rory Stewart: Finally, is there anything more that we could consider in terms of strengthening that bilateral relationship even further? Is there more that we could do, perhaps in other countries around the world, in encouraging our embassies to pair up with Turkey or anything else that we could do to ensure that this initiative solidifies?

Mr Lidington: I would not want to make it an exclusive relationship with Turkey, because I think that often one needs other countries as well as part of a coalition, as we saw over Libya. I think that there is merit, too, in the EU context, in trying to associate Turkey with European Union initiatives wherever possible, but in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, for example, there are important British interests, particularly commercial ones, but also Afghanistan, and strategic and political interests. Turkey has a very great understanding of those areas and has significant diplomatic representation and frequent ministerial visits—more than we do—so we can work with Turkey.

Turkey has also been helpful in the Balkans. The fact that Turkey organised a declaration with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010 that committed all three countries to supporting the independence, sovereignty and ethnic diversity of Bosnia and

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Herzegovina was, I think, an important and helpful step forward. On Kosovo, Turkey is among those countries lobbying for more international recognition and for the independence of that country.

Pat Phillips: Could I just add one thing on that last point about the Western Balkans? During the state visit, we also signed a sort of partnership for working-level contacts and director-level frequent meetings on the Western Balkans specifically to follow this up.

Q182 Ann Clwyd: Can I take you back to the UK arms exports and the new deals that have been signed? Presumably, that has not yet gone before the Committee on Arms Export Controls. I am on that Committee, but I have only just joined, so I cannot answer the question.

Mr Lidington: I will ask Mr Steve Saward if he wants to add to this, but if we cannot give a detailed response now, we will certainly write to the Committee.

Steve Saward: No, I do not know the answer to that.

Ann Clwyd: Fine. If we could have a response—

Mr Lidington: We will write to you about that.¹

Q183 Ann Clwyd: As you know, there is still considerable unrest in south-east Turkey with the Turkish Kurds and the Turkish Government. I wondered whether that had been taken into account when these deals were being signed. The attacks against the PKK, both in Turkey and in Iraq, have taken place over a number of years—the Turks go over the border into Iraq without any agreement with the Iraqi Government—and I wondered whether that had come into the discussion at all, because I know there is considerable resentment among the Kurds in Iraq about those continuing incursions.

Mr Lidington: I think what we've got in south-east Turkey are two issues that intersect. There is an acknowledged challenge from organised terrorism, with the PKK making use of operational bases over the borders. We also have, of course, this very long-standing sense of resentment by the Kurdish people of south-east Turkey about how they are treated—the reality of an historical legacy whereby Kurdish language, culture and customs were sometimes outlawed, and at best barely tolerated.

The British Government's approach is to say, "Yes, we want to show solidarity with Turkey in co-operation against terrorism, but we also want to encourage the steps that have already been taken to promote reconciliation between the Kurdish population and the rest of Turkey." It is worth noting that Prime Minister Erdogan's AK party has attracted, and still attracts, considerable electoral support in south-east Turkey.

Q184 Ann Clwyd: That is variable.

Mr Lidington: It is variable, but it is good that the KDP is taking part in the discussions on a new Turkish constitution, which I think is an encouraging sign. When we talk about human rights to our Turkish friends, we certainly encourage further liberalisation. There have been some welcome steps taken, but I

think there is more that could still be done, such as on the Kurdish language, on freedom of expression and so on. We do have conversations about respect for human rights, not just for the Kurds, but for all minority groups, and more generally about the rights of citizens. On one of my visits to Turkey last year I had meetings with the local branch of Amnesty International so that I could hear direct from them what their concerns were. I do not know whether Pat or Steve want to add anything to that.

Q185 Ann Clwyd: What about Iraq's attitude to these continuing incursions?

Mr Lidington: We do urge Turkey to work closely with, in particular, the Kurdistan regional Government. Again, there is a better relationship now between Ankara and Irbil than there was just a couple of years ago. That has—I think this is a good phrase—gone through some ups and downs, but we think that, in the longer term, the best way forward for Turkey, and for her to ensure her own security, is to get a good relationship with the Kurdish regional authorities so that they can work together against a terrorist threat that helps nobody.

Q186 Ann Clwyd: Lastly, on monitoring the use of British arms—I ask this question in relation to a lot of countries—how is the monitoring done?

Steve Saward: I do not know the answer to that. I know that all exports of defence equipment are judged on a case-by-case basis by the Government here, and they have to meet strict EU criteria. So there will be a process that is followed, but I am not aware of what that is.

Mr Lidington: I will talk about once it has been approved. As Ms Clwyd knows, there is a process for doing that. It is not normally done by me in the Foreign Office, but I have dealt with one or two cases of this, so I know from that that it is rigorous. When the Minister or the official, depending on the sensitivity of the particular case, has given approval, they will obviously look for evidence as to whether it has been misused. I think Mr Ainsworth will probably have ample experience from his own time as a Minister of dealing with this. But I think the best thing would be for us to get the memorandum involving our colleagues in BIS and the MOD, and make sure that you have a more detailed and thorough account of this.²

Q187 Mr Roy: Minister, Turkey now has problems with Armenia, Israel, Syria, Iran and Cyprus and yet the Foreign Office in a submission to our inquiry described Turkey as a force for stability. Is there not a contradiction there?

Mr Lidington: No, I don't think one can look to Turkey as being responsible for what is happening in Syria at the moment or what is happening in the Middle East peace process, or the very fraught relationship between Iran and most of the international community. On Iran, we encourage Turkey to work with the E3 plus 3 against the Iranian nuclear weapons programme. The fact that Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country means that they have channels to the

¹ See Ev 73

² See Ev 73

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top leadership, including to the Supreme Leader, which western countries do not have. So they are a very valuable channel for two-way exchange of information there.

On Syria, our two foreign Ministers are in frequent contact, exchanging information and intelligence about what is going on there and what might be done. Turkey has been working very actively behind the scenes to try to strengthen the international pressure on the Assad regime in Syria to desist from its attack upon its own people. I think it was no accident that that Mr Davutoglu was invited to be present at the key Arab League meeting that decided to suspend Syria from membership. Turkey, of course, is not an Arab country.

On Israel, we would love to see an improvement in the relationship between Ankara and Tel Aviv. Of course, until Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, Turkey had enjoyed a very good bilateral relationship with Israel and was hosting proximity talks between Israel and Syria with a view to securing a deal over the Golan Heights. So she has a record of playing a very constructive part in the Middle East peace process. There is no doubt that Prime Minister Erdogan felt personally offended—he has said so—by the Israeli action in Gaza and the subsequent collapse of the Israel-Syria talks. There is no doubt too that the flotilla incident has soured relations even further. We hope that the two countries can find a way forward.

Q188 Mr Roy: The point of my question was whether it is a force for stability. Stability probably means a two-way process. Although we agree with what you are saying, it does not really pertain directly to, for example, the view of the Syrians, the Israelis, the Armenians, the Cypriots and the Iranians.

Mr Lidington: I would say that Turkey is a force for stability in two key respects. First, she has been actively working to promote greater stability and peaceful resolution to a number of regional disputes. I have already referred to what has been happening in the Balkans, where her role has been constructive. That is true also of what was to be the Middle East peace process before we got to the breakdown following the Israeli action in Gaza. I think that in terms of both Libya and now Syria, Turkey has played a constructive role in trying to look beyond the autocratic regime and an outbreak of civil war, and to trying to get an enduring settlement that is democratic and stable in character and bringing together disparate opposition forces.

Secondly, because Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country but one that has a functioning democracy where Governments lose office when they lose an election, it offers a pattern to which other countries in that part of the world are able to look for an alternative model of political development to that presented by some of the autocratic Governments we see there.

Q189 Mr Roy: What does Turkey's recent behaviour with respect to the Arab Spring and Iran tell us about the degree of strategic convergence that exists between United Kingdom and Turkish foreign policy?

Mr Lidington: I think it has shown a coming together of interest and objective. We have not agreed at every stage, but there was certainly, in response to the Arab Spring, a recognition from very early on that North African countries needed to change in response to the demands of their own citizens. The Turkish experience is that economic growth—a vigorous enterprising economy—goes hand in hand with greater recognition of political and civil rights, so those two things should not be seen as opponents. On Syria, it is probably fair to say that we lost confidence earlier than Turkey in the willingness of Bashar Al-Assad to change. I think we gave up hope at an earlier stage that he was willing or able to deliver reforms in response to what was going on in the streets. Turkey has recognised that and said so very firmly.

Q190 Mr Roy: Just to go back to the Turkish-Israeli problem, what can the Government do to help solve that problem? What have we tried to do?

Mr Lidington: I will be quite honest; we have limited leverage there. If nine British citizens had been killed by the soldiers of another country, there would have been an issue with our public opinion. On top of whatever the Turkish Government's own approach would be, they have an issue of public opinion in their own country following what happened in the flotilla incident. I think that the best hope for a way forward is still for there to be signs of movement in the Israel-Palestine dispute. If there were to be some move forward in that process—some serious negotiations started, so that everyone could see there was movement towards the creation of a Palestinian state that was functioning on the ground, with a map to full sovereignty and functioning independence—that would help to ease a lot of the other problems.

Q191 Mr Roy: Minister, quite a lot of times when I have been speaking to constituents and I mention the word Turkey I get negative feedback, rightly or wrongly, on that word. In a recent YouGov survey, when the public were asked for a list of European countries that they felt favourable about, only 3% mentioned Turkey last year, and this year only 5%. When invited to identify European countries about which they felt especially unfavourable, 26% named Turkey last year and 19% this year. Bearing in mind that the United Kingdom wants a special relationship—a strategic partnership—what can the Government do to change those figures?

Mr Lidington: I think that we and Turkey have to demonstrate that Turkey is a serious country that is a functioning democracy with a gradually improving record on human rights and personal freedoms—although it still has some distance to travel—and with which this country can have major economic and diplomatic opportunities by strengthening our co-operation. I suspect most people in the United Kingdom, in so far as they think about Turkey at all, have an image of the country that is 20 or 30 years behind the times. It certainly made a big impression on me when I went out to Istanbul for the first time

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as a Minister, just to sense the economic self-confidence there and the pace of development taking place in Turkey. This is a country that can hold its head up alongside a great many other European countries, in terms of its economic development and its growth rates now of between 7% and 11%, depending on which period you measure; and there is a growing political self-confidence, too.

In part, if one looks at how and where European history is taught in schools, we very much have a focus on western Europe. Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire do not figure much in most accounts of European history, as taught in the UK, so Turkey's image suffers in part because of that. There is also—let's be honest about it—a fear in this country of unmanaged immigration, and there is always a tendency to look to any country around the perimeter of Europe and say, "We are worried that lots of people will try to come here if we have close relations with them." That is an issue we might talk about in the EU context later on—that partly accounts for the fear. I do not think any Government of any party can wave a magic wand and change public opinion overnight. We have to work steadily to show that we have things in common and that there are great opportunities for co-operation.

Steve Saward: Just to add a practical example, the UK-Turkey CEO Forum has "brand Turkey" as one of its key workstreams, and that is to increase or improve the perception of doing business in Turkey with the British business community, which the forum concluded could be improved.

Q192 Sir Menzies Campbell: While accepting that Turkey cannot be held responsible for what is happening elsewhere, perhaps there is some responsibility for what is not happening elsewhere, and I particularly have in mind the issue of Cyprus. I know we may come to that in the context of European Union membership, and I do not want to trespass on these countries—I am sorry, on these questions. That was a Freudian slip, wasn't it? In the course of the successful state visit, was there any indication on the part of any Turkish participants that they were ready to try to make an accommodation in relation to Cyprus, not least because of the relevance it would have to any application for membership of the EU? We can come to the details of that, but I am really interested in attitudes at the moment.

Mr Lidington: Yes, certainly during the state visit, but in any conversation you have with Turkish Ministers, they will say that they want a settlement over Cyprus. The difficulty boils down to detail and sequencing. The Turks believe, rightly or wrongly, that the leadership of the Republic of Cyprus is determined to resist what Turkey would consider a fair settlement for Turkish Cypriots. If you talk to leaders of the Republic of Cyprus, they will give you the completely converse picture—of an unreasonable, hard-line Turkish approach.

There is no alternative at the moment to continuing to support the work that Ban Ki-moon and Alexander Downer are doing to try to bring the two communities together. If a peace settlement in Cyprus is to endure, it will have to be something that both communities

buy into and are prepared to endorse in a referendum. There is a real challenge, because that means that both parties, given their recent history, are going to have to be able to say that what they have won is better than the Annan plan. Enabling both parties to say that is very demanding.

As Sir Ming knows, there is an immediate issue of tension, which is over the Cypriot decision to license drilling in Cyprus's exclusive economic zone. That, of course, has aroused Turkish suspicion and anger, because they do not recognise the Republic of Cyprus and its sovereignty over those waters, and because rights over the Aegean sea are complicated. There are very long-standing disputes between Turkey and Greece over the waters around different islands.

We, along with every other member of the European Union and all parties to the UN convention on the law of the sea, have taken the view that Cyprus has the right to develop resources that lie within its exclusive economic zone. We have urged Turkey not to up the ante by using aggressive or threatening language, let alone by taking action to try to interfere with the drilling.

We have impressed on Cyprus the importance of its showing that any hydrocarbon resources that are discovered should be for the benefit of all communities in Cyprus. President Christofias has said that that would be his objective in principle, but we would certainly be happy if the Government in Nicosia were to make that commitment more concrete, whether by setting up a fund that would show that some money was being directed to help Turkish Cypriots or by another mechanism.

Q193 Ann Clwyd: Although I agree that human rights have improved immensely in Turkey, there is, as you said, quite a long way to go. There are reports of increasing surveillance of the general public—not by the press, but by the state. There are also reports of numbers of the press being on trial or awaiting it. In addition, there are reports of Members of Parliament being intimidated and not being able to carry out their mandate. Have you discussed any of those issues, either with Mr Davutoglu or Mr Erdogan?

Mr Lidington: We do raise human rights issues with the Turks at both ministerial and official levels. As the Committee will understand, this is done, in the first place, largely through our embassy in Ankara and the consulate general in Istanbul, but these matters do come up at ministerial meetings. I have discussed this with Egemen Bagis, the Turkish Europe Minister, when we have met. We are trying to open up a dialogue between other ministries with a direct interest.

When the EU progress report on Turkey made specific criticisms of its record on freedom of expression, the Turkish Ministry of Justice sent a delegation of senior officials over to London. They had meetings with various Government and outside organisations about freedom of expression. We helped to facilitate that and to make sure that they had a good programme. The fact that the Turks took that initiative in response to

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the EU report was an encouraging sign, but Mrs Clwyd is right that it is not just the EU; the Council of Europe has passed resolutions about limitations on human rights in Turkey, and the OSCE representative on freedom of the media expressed concern in May of this year about changes in the press law and internet censorship.

We have taken part in EU statements on those issues and have had common agreement across the 27 about it. We continue to encourage Turkey to take this forward, because Turkish leaders—President Gül, Prime Minister Erdogan and other Ministers—say all the time to us, “Look, we are in transition. We want to get into the EU. We believe that the accession process is justified. It is in Turkey’s interests. Even if we were not intending to join, we would still want to do this.” For Turkey, as with any other EU candidate for membership, the accession process involves demanding not only economic reforms, but political, judicial and administrative reforms as well, to bring those countries to what we would see as normal European standards.

It is right to recognise that Turkey is not the country it was when it had military rule, but it is a country that still has further to travel. Signals like the work on the new constitution, where all the parties are sitting together around the table, and like the decision announced earlier this year to return some properties to some of the minority religions within Turkey, are things we should welcome. But we should also continue to talk honestly to our Turkish allies about the poor standard of human rights that we still see.

Q194 Mr Ainsworth: When the Prime Minister went to Ankara last year, he announced that he had set a new target for the doubling of UK-Turkish trade by 2015. What was the process by which that target was arrived at?

Mr Lidington: Steve, do you want to say a bit about this?

Steve Saward: Okay. The process was that the baseline figure that we used was the 2009 figure of bilateral trade in goods, which was £6.5 billion. That is the baseline. We have measured since, and the 2011 figure that we expect will exceed £9 billion of bilateral trade in goods, which is around a 40% increase from the baseline. That is the measurement that we are using and that is the progress that we have made so far.

Q195 Mr Ainsworth: That is the measure, not the process by which you arrived at the target, which was the question that I asked. How come doubling was the target? What was the process through which you arrived at the target?

Steve Saward: Okay, I do not know why the Prime Minister set the doubling target per se, but what I can say is that Turkey is seen as a country that is growing rapidly economically. It grew nearly 9% in 2010, which was about five times the eurozone average. The potential in that country—the Prime Minister described it as Europe’s BRIC—is substantial for UK business. I would say that the target of doubling trade

was an aspirational target for a country with massive potential for UK business.

Mr Lidington: I think the truth is that no Government can be absolutely specific, because, in the end, decisions about trade statistics rely on numerous decisions by individual companies about where contracts will be placed. Mr Ainsworth will know better than I that Prime Ministers have a responsibility not only to look at the detail, but to set targets that they believe are demanding, but achievable and to tell their Ministers and their officials, “Right. You go away and do this.”

The aspiration—the ambition—to double trade with Turkey, looked at in the context of Turkey’s recent rates of economic growth and the general trend of UK-Turkish trade, was judged to be attainable, but was one which would require effort to attain. It was not something where you could just click your fingers and say, “Right, that will happen anyway, so it will just look good in a glossy brochure.” It has demanded things of UKTI, of BIS and of the Foreign Office. It is part of a broader strategy by the Government to strengthen Britain’s commercial relationships with a number of the emerging powers.

Mr Saward said that Turkey is one of the 20 high-growth priority markets identified in the “Britain Open for Business” paper, and I think that it is one of the top four within that—as Lord Green said at the CEO forum during the state visit. The fact that it is on our doorstep in European terms helps, but that ambitious target then required Government Departments to work out which sectors of business we needed to focus on and offer greater support to in order to deliver that objective; how we should promote the UK as a beneficial and attractive destination for Turkish inward investment and how we needed to start up our teams in both London and on the ground in Turkey to support it.

What we have seen with both an increase in staffing resources for UKTI in Turkey and in diplomatic resources in Turkey, with the objective of a particular focus on support for the commercial initiatives, is part of our delivering on that prime ministerial target.

Q196 Mr Ainsworth: You set the same target for Brazil and for four other major countries, so one has the suspicion that this was just plucked out of the air. I have heard nothing from what you have said that doesn’t allay that suspicion.

Mr Lidington: Brazil is not something that I can talk about with any particular knowledge.

Q197 Mr Ainsworth: What is the point of going around the world setting targets for the doubling of trade, all of which are the same and will double trade by 2015? What does it mean? We are running a deficit with Turkey, so what does the doubling of trade mean? Does it mean that we should import a lot more and increase the deficit? We would thereby reach the target, wouldn’t we?

Mr Lidington: The setting of the target drives the machinery of government to organise its resources and staffing, so as to deliver an outcome that is beneficial

to the British national interest in terms of jobs and prosperity in this country. That will come in part from our exports to Turkey.

Q198 Mr Ainsworth: But your target doesn't say anything about exports to Turkey.

Mr Lidington: I want to come back to that. Clearly, exports to Turkey are an important part of it. So, too, is investment by Turkish companies in the United Kingdom. Bringing Turkish capital into this country involves the hiring of British people. Unsustainable employment seems to be very much in our interest.

Q199 Mr Ainsworth: None of those measures is covered in the target. That is exactly the point I am making. The target simply says, "We are going to double trade with Turkey by 2015". What you said, such as Turkish investment in the UK and UK exports for Turkey, are all wonderful and laudable things that we ought to be aiming at. Why were they not in the target?

Mr Lidington: High-level target is the first step. What follows from that is the detailed plan to deliver it in a way that optimises jobs and prosperity for the UK. That is what is built into the plan for growth, to the BIS trade and investment White Paper and to country-by-country plans that then start to drill down into the detail, identify what sectors need to be supported and how diplomatic UKTI resources can be deployed to give British business the support that it needs, and advise Turkey's business that we are good place in which to invest.

Q200 Mr Ainsworth: So the Committee can see those detailed plans?

Mr Lidington: Well, I will look at whether we are able to give you access to more detail. They are held, I suspect, by another Department. I probably cannot give an open promise, but we will look into the possibility.³

Q201 Mr Ainsworth: We support customs union with Turkey, no?

Pat Phillips: We have a customs union with Turkey.

Q202 Mr Ainsworth: We have a customs union with Turkey, but it only covers industrial goods. It does not cover services. As a nation that excels in the supply of services, is that in our interest? Why have we entered into a customs union that only covers industrial goods and not services?

Pat Phillips: It is EU-Turkey.

Mr Lidington: It is an EU-Turkey customs union, so it is limited by that. From our point of view, yes, we would love to see it more ambitious, but then there is a problem here with EU services legislation more generally. We are trying to address that at the EU level—with a measure of success since the last election—but we have further to go. There is resistance in a number of EU countries to further liberalisation of services markets.

Q203 Mr Ainsworth: But we are developing, or seeking to develop, particularly close relations with

Turkey. Have we raised the issue of access for British services in Turkey with the Turks? Did we do that in their recent visit?

Mr Lidington: Customs is an EU competence under the treaties that successive Governments have agreed to. The customs union is something that was negotiated between the EU and Turkey. To change the terms of that is something that has to be dealt with at the European Union level.

Q204 Mr Ainsworth: Did we raise access for Scotch whisky to the Turkish market in their recent visit, because not only is there a problem with the tax regime, but there is also the non-application of the rules that have already been agreed, I understand?

Mr Lidington: From memory, yes, we raised that, because this was not a customs issue. Mr Ainsworth is right: it was either—I am speaking from memory now—about the way in which Turkey applied its existing rules or it was to do with their domestic tax treatment of Scotch whisky as compared with home-produced spirits. That issue was raised, and there were senior representatives from at least one of the UK drinks companies at the CEO forum.

Q205 Mr Ainsworth: And did we achieve anything? Have we got any commitments to remove the discrimination against this British export?

Mr Lidington: That is something useful. Again, I will take advice from BIS and write to the Committee about it.⁴

Q206 Mr Ainsworth: May I just raise the issue of visas? You said earlier, Minister, as part of the reasons behind the bad figures about the public perception of Turkey, that there was a fear of uncontrolled, unmanaged immigration. Yet the visa regime, and the complexities and difficulties of the visa regime, is one of the issues that was raised with us by the Turks and is something that we are trying to settle. Is there not a contradiction between what you are telling the British public, on the one hand, about what you are going to achieve in terms of non-EU immigration and your desire to relax the visa regime and satisfy the needs of British-Turkish relations in this regard?

Mr Lidington: I would not describe it as a contradiction. There is an inherent tension in immigration policy between, on the one hand, the wish—a quite sensible objective—of controlling immigration to this country, particularly immigration for settlement or immigration that would cause disruption to domestic labour markets, and, on the other hand, having sufficient openness to immigration for tourists, for business visitors and for potential investors, so that they are not deterred from coming here and are attracted to our competitors instead of to us. There is no way in which we can wish away that tension, which I think is inherent in devising migration policy. That is obviously something that different Departments, different Ministers discuss

³ See Ev 73

⁴ See Ev 73

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within Whitehall, and we thrash out an agreed way forward that tries to take proper account of both those objectives, each of which are legitimate public interest objectives.

When it comes to Turkey, there are two things that we have had developments in during recent months. It is a small step, but we have agreed a diplomatic waiver for diplomats, so that they can travel freely, without the requirement for visas. Pat may want to provide detail here, but I think we are looking, at the official-level discussions, into a fast-track system for business visitors. We want to see whether it is possible for somebody who wants to make a business-related visit, perhaps at short notice, to do so smoothly. We have to have a policy that shows that we are open for business but at the same time does not compromise what are necessary measures involving biometrics and so on, which we introduced not only to try to limit illegal migration but to serve the very real purpose of making sure that people involved in terrorism, international crime, drug trafficking and so on cannot move freely to the UK.

Q207 Mr Ainsworth: But Turkey is the gateway for a lot of illegal immigration into the European Union and into the United Kingdom itself, isn't it?

Mr Lidington: Yes, that is true, and there is a particular problem over the Greco-Turkish border, which I think the Home Affairs Committee has visited and reported on. Part of the way forward there, looking beyond British immigration policy, is to help Turkey to develop more effective controls of its own over its external frontiers so that its systems are capable of distinguishing better between those who are legitimate travellers and those who are not. That is the approach that the EU is taking towards the north African countries now, where this tension between not wanting unlimited migration but allowing legitimate business and tourist access is replicated. The EU worked on the basis of migration partnerships with a number of north African countries, which allow a certain number of legal migrants to travel to the EU but which also involve co-operative work to strengthen those north African countries' immigration control systems and the quality of their immigration service, and to introduce anti-corruption measures and better information systems.

Chair: We still have a lot of ground to cover today, so I would be grateful if you could keep your questions shortish.

Q208 Mike Gapes: Can I just take you back to your answer to Bob Ainsworth? I thought the coalition Government were against artificial, top-down targets.

Mr Lidington: I think there is a difference between an artificial, top-down target and an ambitious target that is designed to make sure that Government Departments and Ministers raise their own aspirations and are pushed to deliver something that is in the interests of everybody in the country.

Q209 Mike Gapes: But is there not a problem—Bob touched on it—in that the way you have produced this crude target will be very welcome for Turkish exporters to the UK market but it does not seem to be

of benefit necessarily to UK exporters to Turkey, given the other difficulties that we have touched on?

Mr Lidington: But we have to make sure, and we are making sure by the way in which we are setting out to deliver this target, that there is real benefit to the people of the United Kingdom. I would ask Mr Gapes to believe that we are not sitting back in the Foreign Office or in BIS and saying "Oh, let's get a few extra Turkish tomatoes in, because that will help us to meet our target."

Q210 Mike Gapes: We are more interested in manufactured goods than in tomatoes.

Mr Lidington: When I went to the CEOs' forum, there was a line-up there of serious business players from both countries, responsible for employing, in many cases, thousands of people in one or both countries. They were talking about serious co-operation and doing business with each other on information technology, on manufactured goods and on services.

The fact that Turkey is modernising her economy so rapidly that she is investing not only in classic transport infrastructure and development projects but in much higher standards of telephony and computer systems gives huge opportunities for UK business. What a prime ministerial target does is make Departments across Whitehall recognise that this needs to be out of their pending tray, put in the action pile and dealt with.

Q211 Andrew Rosindell: Minister, you may have heard my question to the Prime Minister yesterday during his statement.

Mr Lidington: I did.

Andrew Rosindell: I mentioned Turkey. We are talking about trade and the customs union here. Without going into a debate on what has been going on in the past few days, do you not think that the current situation actually gives us a new opportunity to work with countries such as Turkey that have a customs union but are outside the EU and the eurozone? Is it not time that we had greater engagement with Turkey, and other similar countries that want trade with the EU, to boost towards the increase in trade that the Government hope will happen?

Mr Lidington: I do not see them as alternatives; I see them as complementary. Let us not forget that Turkey's aspiration remains to join the European Union and that, although support for that in Turkey has diminished in the past couple of years, it still remains at a level of about 60% in most Turkish opinion polls. Every Turkish leader I have talked to says that that remains his country's ambition. So the two, it seems to me, go together and complement each other. We cannot ignore the 40% of our trade that is with eurozone countries and the 50%, roughly, with the EU as a whole, but, yes, we also need to work really hard to maximise our opportunities not just with Turkey, but with all the emerging economies around the world. That is something that the Government is

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doing through a process that is co-ordinated through the National Security Council, which has a sub-committee dealing with the emerging economies in which we try to knit together the commercial and political relationships. UKTI and BIS on the ground are trying to spearhead this with defined programmes for each country. Lord Green is closely involved with that.

Chair: Sorry, Andrew, but we have a large number of questions on Europe coming up shortly. Ming Campbell.

Q212 Sir Menzies Campbell: I want to ask some questions about the judicial system. You referred in some of your earlier answers to the principles that lie behind human rights, and, of course, the judicial system is necessarily involved with that. The recent European Union progress report on Turkey said that, “progress has been made in the area of the judiciary... However, further steps are needed on the independence, impartiality and efficiency...including the criminal justice system and the large backlog of pending serious criminal cases.” I am sure you are aware of that report, and I am sure the Foreign Office is seeking to take forward the issues identified. I really want, in my turn, to identify judicial independence and transparency as of significance. I want to ask you what significance is attached to those. In addition, some of the crimes are framed in such wide terms as to allow a very wide scope for prosecution, and sometimes—it is alleged more than sometimes—prosecution for political purposes rather than law enforcement purposes. What is our take on the current state of the judicial system, particularly the judiciary? Once again, was that topic discussed at the successful state visit to which you have already referred?

Mr Lidington: It was not discussed in terms at the meetings I attended, but certainly human rights were raised in more general terms. I cannot speak for every bilateral meeting that took place around the state visit. I may ask Pat Phillips to say a bit more, but I think in general terms we would say that the judiciary is in a better place than it was perhaps 10 years ago, let alone 20 years ago. But the evidence in not just the EU report but the Council of Europe ECHR findings shows that Turkey is, regrettably, not yet in a place where one would have the same confidence in the judicial system as one would in the judicial systems of the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Norway and so on. Of course, the Turks did introduce a new law about a year ago to try to strengthen judicial independence. I think that the criticisms Sir Ming made are accurate. We of course cannot legislate for Turkey. We have to persuade Turkey that it is in her interests to deal with this. It would help to address the problems of reputation that Mr Roy alluded to in his questions earlier. That is something we shall continue to do not only bilaterally, but in the various multilateral forums in which we are engaged. Pat, do you want to add anything?

Pat Phillips: I don't have anything specific to add. This is very much part of the EU accession process, and that is the leverage over it and also the benefit of it.

Mr Lidington: It is one of the frustrating things that the more difficult the EU process is for other reasons, the less pressure there is upon Turkey to accelerate these reforms that would be welcome. If there was clear movement, year by year, in the EU accession process, then, as I have seen with the western Balkan countries, the incentive really to crack on with these chapter 23 and 24 measures, as we would now describe them, would be much greater.

Q213 Sir Menzies Campbell: To use a sporting analogy, the closer they get to the tape, the faster they want to run.

Mr Lidington: That's certainly what we have seen in the case of Croatia, and it was very telling.

Q214 Sir Menzies Campbell: I have just one last point. Again, I do not want to trespass on the more general discussion about the European Union, but of course, the Copenhagen criteria demand progress in the areas that we have discussed.

Mr Lidington: Yes.

Q215 Ann Clwyd: We touched on this earlier, but I would like to expand on it a bit. In your submission to us you did not mention Iraqi Kurdistan or Turkey's cross-border operations. The Chairman had a letter in August from the PUK—the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan—which said that attacks by Turkey and Iran on Kurdish villages in Iraqi Kurdistan had “killed many innocent civilians” and were “seriously threatening the security and stability of Iraq in general and the Kurdistan Region in particular”. Are you comfortable with Turkey's cross-border operations?

Mr Lidington: No, we are not comfortable with them, but there is a genuine problem of terrorism that the Turks are facing. The most recent PKK attack in October killed 24 Turkish soldiers and that then prompted military incursions into the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq.

It is against a background where, in general terms, the relations both with Baghdad and with Irbil over the PKK are reasonably good. We think it is the right way forward that the Turks should say to the Iraqis, “Let's work together, so we can deal with the terrorist threat.” When I have talked to Turkish Ministers about the cross-border raids, what they come back to me and say is, “Look. We are being attacked by terrorists. We know they are based here. We have the funerals of these slain soldiers in villages. I have public uproar. We have to take action against this, and you need to understand the political pressure that I am under.” So we think it is important to show solidarity with Turkey in facing what is a genuine terrorist challenge, but also to encourage them in seeing the way forward as better co-operation with the Governments of both Iraq and Kurdistan.

Q216 Ann Clwyd: I should tell you that some years ago, a constituent of mine was kidnapped by the PKK, so I obviously got involved in the negotiations to release them. As a result, I spent three days with the Turkish military in Iraqi Kurdistan seeing the

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operation there. They captured one PKK soldier. I was taken to the caves in the hills to see where the PKK were supposedly living. I just challenge how big a threat the PKK actually are. How many PKK have been captured in the last year or in previous years, because I do not have any figures on that at all? Is it as big a threat as the Turks make out?

Mr Lidington: That is a judgment ultimately that the Turks themselves have to make. The PKK are guilty not only of attacks on Turkish soil. There are allegations that they are involved not just in attacks on Turkey but in people trafficking and drug trafficking. We ban them in this country as a terrorist outfit. In the long run, I hope the Turks succeed not only in having an effective counter-terrorist policy, but in draining away any support for the PKK within the broader Kurdish community in the south of Turkey. That takes us back to the issue of Kurdish minority rights and how the new constitution is going to be drafted and so on.

Q217 Ann Clwyd: Are we correct to infer from your evidence to the Committee and other information we have heard that you regard the Kurdish issue as essentially an internal one for Turkey?

Mr Lidington: It is more than just a Turkish internal issue. Obviously this affects both Iraq and Iran as well. We don't support, and no British Government have supported, an independent Kurdistan. We think in Turkish terms that there should be respect for the rights of all minorities and respect for human rights, freedom of worship, assembly and the like, in accordance with what is required by the European convention on human rights and the Copenhagen standards.

Q218 Chair: Minister, turning to Europe, and Turkey's ambitions to join the European Union, in the light of developments in the last few days, what is it that they are joining? Are they applying now to the EU and the 26? Will they have an opt-out on the 26? Where do you think the position lies? Indeed, it probably applies to other applicant countries in the pipeline at the moment.

Mr Lidington: I think that's certainly a question to which the quick answer is, it's too soon to say. Since the creation of the euro it has been a feature of every accession negotiation that the candidate country accepts an obligation to join the euro at some stage in the future. For the small countries of the Western Balkans, this is not something they have argued with as far as I am aware. Kosovo has the euro as its currency even though it is outside the EU and not recognised by five European Union member states. They have seen this as a good way to provide a store of value as a currency. To be quite honest, the question whether Turkey should be required to accept the euro has simply not come on to the agenda so far because we have not got far enough with the accession process. The accession process has become bogged down very much over the Cyprus dispute. Most chapters are blocked and that means there is not sufficient discussion about many ingredients of the accession process.

Q219 Chair: The Prime Minister went to Ankara in July—he made it an early move after he became Prime Minister—and said that he was not just going to support Turkey's application to join the EU, he was going to fight for it. Does this come at a cost to our relationship with other members of the EU?

Mr Lidington: It means we have bruises. There are some battles in Council meetings from time to time. I don't think grudges are borne. I don't think there has been any damage to the United Kingdom's broader European interests as a consequence of our support for Turkey's membership. I think our willingness to champion this has made it easier for a number of other countries to come in as well. It would be wrong to assume that this is the UK versus the rest. You find that countries, not only the obvious candidates such as Finland and Sweden, but Spain and Italy, are very strong and committed champions of Turkey's membership of the European Union. The President of France has made his views well known. There is a disagreement between us on that matter.

Q220 Chair: A business man in Istanbul told us that it was futile to go on with it at the moment while France was opposed.

Mr Lidington: Well, that is his view, and the view of Turkish Ministers remains that this is in the interests of Turkey. It is certainly our view that it is in the interests of Europe, as well as the UK.

Q221 Sir Menzies Campbell: Are we comfortable finding ourselves in such direct opposition to Germany and France?

Mr Lidington: I think the German position is a bit more nuanced. Different parts of the German Government take slightly differing views.

Q222 Sir Menzies Campbell: They have a different problem, of course, in the gasterbeiter.

Mr Lidington: Yes, they do, and that is at the root of German concern about Turkish accession. But I don't believe that so far, Germany is ruling out Turkish membership permanently, and in fact Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle co-signed a letter, which William Hague and I think 11 or 12 others—

Pat Phillips: Eleven in total.

Mr Lidington: Eleven Foreign Ministers signed a letter calling for a much closer partnership between the EU and Turkey over foreign policy and security policy issues. I think that Foreign Minister Juppé signed that letter too, so even France signed up to that. We will check that, but I think I am right in saying that the French signed that one. Germany certainly shares with us the view that Turkey and the EU need to work more closely together, even if there are hesitations at the top of the German Government about the objective of full membership.

Q223 Sir Menzies Campbell: Can I ask you about an issue that I don't think we've discussed at all this morning? The enthusiasm for the accession of a number of countries that were previously members of the Warsaw Pact, both on the part of the European Union and, indeed, on the part of these Governments—an enthusiasm which also extended to

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NATO—was in part based on their buttressing their movement from a totalitarian to a democratic form of Government. We know that there is a democracy in Turkey, but you and I have just discussed the deficiencies in human rights and the judicial system and things of that kind. If progress is made on those to the extent that Turkish membership becomes feasible, would there also be a political dimension, in the sense that, having made these changes, they would not be likely to slip back? Remembering, of course, that Turkey is already a member of NATO and guarded the southern flank all the way through the Cold War.

Mr Lidington: Clearly, while one cannot pretend that no such risk exists, there are two things that I would say by way of response. First, although there are functioning democracies in other new member states and in the candidate countries of the EU, there are still areas of life where there is some fragility. There are still problems of corruption in all the Balkan countries, for example, and in some existing EU member states as well, as Commission reports have shown, so work still needs to be done. But secondly—and it relates to that—although the accession process itself is an invaluable discipline in ensuring that the required political and rule-of-law changes are carried through, the requirements of membership and the habit of working together in the EU context mean that you are more likely to cement and entrench those democratic gains than if you say, “Well done. Have a pat on the back, but you are not coming in as part of the club.”

Q224 Andrew Rosindell: When we went to Turkey only a few weeks ago, most people seemed to feel that the entire process of Turkey’s accession to the EU was washed up, and they had no confidence that it was going very far, fast. Indeed, we found disappointment everywhere we went. What are our Government doing to unblock this process to try to get things moving because we believe that Turkey should be part of the European Union? What are we doing to get progress under way?

Mr Lidington: We do two things, basically. First, we try to counsel by Council. We try to ensure that there is language in the agreement that looks forward to Turkish accession and recognises the importance of the relationship with Turkey. We are in regular touch with the enlargement commissioner and his team about finding a way forward. We look for opportunities, for example with the Foreign Ministers’ joint letter about co-operation on foreign and security policy, to find other ways of signalling that this is a relationship of critical strategic significance. Secondly, we recognise that one issue is the obstacle to progress on Turkish accession: the stalemate in Cyprus. Although, as the ex-colonial power, we have to be careful about this—our giving lectures to either side in Cyprus is not likely to be conducive to progress—we do what we can in our conversations with both Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders, with the Government in Ankara and with Alexander Downer and his people to look for a way forward.

Q225 Andrew Rosindell: With our new-found determination in Europe to stand up for what we

believe is right—the bulldog spirit, if you like, Minister—is this an area in which we should be banging the table a bit harder? If we want to see the European Union develop into a group of nations that is trading and co-operating freely with each other rather than the federal state that some desire, is it not vital that we make it clear that Turkey has to be part of the European family to change the EU’s nature to make it acceptable to all of us?

Mr Lidington: My judgment would be on whether banging the table is going to help us to secure our objective. There is sometimes a case for being very—

Q226 Andrew Rosindell: I think the French tend to do this, don’t they? The Cypriots are doing it by refusing any possibility of Turkey coming in.

Mr Lidington: Well, the French tend not to bang the table; they operate effectively behind the scenes rather than by doing that. The truth is that for any enlargement issue, whether a decision to open a specific chapter or a strategic decision about enlargement at accession, you require unanimity. All it needs is for one country, however small, to simply dig in its heels and say, “No.”

In those circumstances, first we must seek to remove the reasons why one or more countries are blocking accession, which is looking for a solution to the stand-off in Cyprus, which is in our national interest anyway. Secondly, we must work with others among the 27 to see if, jointly, we could dissuade what one would hope by then would be a small number of countries from persisting with their opposition to an accession decision. Where I have seen that in action is over the western Balkans process, where I saw with Croatia and Serbia that there is a dynamic to these negotiations. Once you get to a stage where the technical criteria that the Commission has identified have been met, it becomes more difficult for any member state to line up and find good arguments on which to resist agreement to accession being granted. Perhaps, at the end of the day, there is a political deal on a deferment for a period of time or some additional monitoring, which allows collective agreement on accession to take place, but with Turkey I’m afraid that we are a distance from that.

Q227 Andrew Rosindell: Finally, could I ask, Minister, for an assurance from the Government that, as part of this whole process of trying to get Turkey in, we will not compromise our own national interests by sacrificing the British sovereign bases on Cyprus and that they will remain Crown territory and not be given away to cobble together some sort of deal with Cyprus?

Mr Lidington: We have agreed to continue the previous Government’s offer that roughly 50% of the territory of the sovereign base areas would be made available as a kind of endowment to Cyprus in the event of a conclusive settlement being reached. When I have talked to the commander of the British forces there, he has been clear that the territory that we are talking about is not essential for the continued operation of the sovereign bases. We have certainly not gone further than that, and we have no intention of going further than that.

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Q228 Andrew Rosindell: So 50% of British territory would be handed away, under a deal.

Mr Lidington: Well, as Mr Rosindell will know from his visits to the bases, a great deal of that area is farmland. It is not land that is being used for operational military purposes.

Q229 Chair: A quick technical question. Does the proposed EU multi-annual financial framework for 2014 to 2020 include any provision for Turkish accession in that period?

Mr Lidington: No, it doesn't. That means that, in the regrettably unlikely event that Turkish accession took place between now and then, the Commission would have to come forward with a request for some sort of supplementary budget, which would have to be funded within the ceiling set by the multi-annual financial framework.

Chair: That is helpful, thank you.

Q230 Mike Gapes: Getting back to Cyprus and Turkey, given the centrality of the issue and its blocking of the progress on Turkey's accession, why are the Turkish Government so reluctant to implement the additional Ankara protocol, which would clearly be a way forward and open up a whole number of things? Could this issue not be finessed in some way by some parallel progress? Why are they so reluctant? Is it that they are not really prepared to put their long-term national interests above the Cyprus issue?

Mr Lidington: Mr Gapes is inviting me to act as a spokesman for the Turkish Government, which I am reluctant to do.

Q231 Mike Gapes: Well, I am asking for your assessment of that. I am not asking you to speak for them; I am trying to understand it.

Mr Lidington: The argument that the Turkish Government puts forward, specifically on the additional Ankara protocol, is that it was the EU which refused to implement the direct trade regulation and the Turkish Cypriots lost out on account of that, therefore they were not going to implement the provisions of the additional Ankara protocol.

We have tried, the Commission has tried and others have tried to find ways in which this could be addressed, such as whether there was some kind of deal or some kind of time-limited unilateral initiative that one side or other could agree to, which would lead to some rapid confidence-building measures and then full implementation of both direct trade regulation and the additional protocol. So far, it has not been possible to get to such agreement and each side—both Ankara and Nicosia—have some red lines, which are very difficult to make compatible with each other. Pat, do you want to say anything more on that?

Pat Phillips: I have nothing to add. That is absolutely right.

Q232 Mike Gapes: A number of people have said to us, leaving aside the problem of the EU, which I will come on to, the UK is in a special position; we are the former colonial power, we still have sovereign base areas, and we are a guarantor with Turkey and

Greece of the situation, in terms of the relationships, within Cyprus. Why are we not doing more?

Mr Lidington: We are acting in a way that we consider will be best to deliver the right outcome. Because we are the ex-colonial power and because we are one of the guarantee powers under the Cyprus treaty, yes, we have special responsibilities as guarantor power, but we are also in a situation where too up-front a position from the UK can risk being counter-productive in certain cases. At the moment, there is a process. It is a Cypriot-led process with UN facilitation that offers the best way of moving forward. Downer has been engaged in proximity talks between the two leaders and negotiating teams. He is confident that some progress has been made, although some gaps on the key dossiers still remain. Ultimately, this has to be an agreement that is reached by Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders. The UK coming in and saying, "This is the way we want you to fix the deal"—I simply do not think it is going to stick.

Q233 Mike Gapes: Okay. You have referred to these UN-sponsored talks, which as I understand it, are coming to what could be the endgame in January.

Mr Lidington: The Secretary-General has certainly said that he regards the January meetings as a critical moment.

Q234 Mike Gapes: The key then is that if there is to be progress in January, would you expect a settlement before Cyprus takes over the presidency of the European Union Council in July?

Mr Lidington: We would hope so and we have said very clearly to both the Turks and the Turkish Cypriots, and to President Christofias and his team, that we think it is in the interests of Cyprus and all communities in Cyprus that a deal is reached before its presidency.

Q235 Mike Gapes: My question was not whether you hoped, but whether you expected.

Mr Lidington: If I looked at the history and said that this has been going on since 1974 or 1963, depending on whose narrative you follow, I would be depressed, but we have to act positive and optimistic, even if the history so far would lead you to be gloomy.

Q236 Mike Gapes: If there is no agreement, what is the knock-on consequence for the EU and the workings of the European Council from July onwards?

Mr Lidington: Well, the European Council continues to function as normal. Turkey has said that she would not recognise the Cypriot presidency, but we do not know what that means in concrete terms.

Q237 Mike Gapes: They haven't told you?

Mr Lidington: They have chosen not to go into—

Q238 Mike Gapes: We certainly heard quite a few things from people when we were in Turkey.

Mr Lidington: They have chosen not to go into detail about this and I think that is good, because it is better for people not to take up positions in public that it is then difficult to move from. I do not think it is in the

interests of the EU or Turkey that there is some kind of freeze, even if it is just for six months.

Q239 Mike Gapes: But will it be for six months, or will it then be the end of the process?

Mr Lidington: No. Turkey is still receiving funding, for example, under the instrument for pre-accession. Nobody is suggesting that that comes to a halt. Nobody is suggesting that the accession process is formally discontinued. I would hope that we can avoid the sort of stand-off over Cyprus that clearly is a risk at the moment, but that does depend on what progress is made in the meantime.

Q240 Rory Stewart: Just to move back to an earlier answer you gave, 25 members of the Foreign Office have passed the extensive exam in Turkish, but only one of them is deployed to the embassy. Are you proposing to move from having designated Turkish-language slots—but in practice only half those slots are filled by Turkish-language speakers—to a situation in which speaking Turkish becomes a requirement for the slot, and you ensure that some of those remaining 24 people who speak extensive Turkish are forced to serve in Turkey, as opposed to going to other slots?

Pat Phillips: Yes, this is an issue with a lot of languages that are spoken only in one or two countries. We have a lot of people who can speak those languages who have served there in the past and who are likely to return there in the future, but who are not necessarily in that country right now. Clearly, Turkish is spoken only in Turkey and northern Cyprus. I have two Turkish speakers in my team now in London, and one of the Foreign Secretary's private secretaries is a Turkish speaker, so they are in London dealing with Turkish issues. They have served in Turkey in the past and they are likely to return there in the future.

Q241 Rory Stewart: If this was a private company and 24 out of 25 speakers of a language were not in that country, you would do something about it. You would directly push them through personnel practices to get into that country. Am I right that there are no proposals for reform of the Foreign Office to ensure that those people go into that country? All you are doing is giving them the option, but you are allowing them to serve all over the world. Regardless of the fact that they are receiving money every year from the British Government for having passed an extensive examination in Turkish, you are not compelling them to go to Turkey.

Pat Phillips: Just on that minor point, they do not receive the allowance in perpetuity; it falls away after a certain number of years. It is the same with Japanese and Chinese speakers, because those languages also take a long time to learn but they are spoken only in one or two countries. The pattern tends to be that people will make that an anchor to their career, but they are not expected to serve in that specific country for their whole career.

Q242 Rory Stewart: I am not asking for them to be expected to serve there for their whole career; I am

merely asking whether you are prepared to move to requiring them to serve there.

Mr Lidington: I think that is a good point, which I will pass to the Foreign Secretary and the permanent secretary. I think our expectation would be that somebody who chooses to learn Turkish in London would do so with a view to seeking a posting in Turkey at some stage in the relatively close future of his or her career.

Q243 Rory Stewart: I do not want to hammer the point too hard, but at the moment 24 out of the 25 people who have passed extensive examinations in Turkish are not in Turkey, which seems to have some kind of message. Whatever kind of expectation you might have, the structure is not driving them into Turkey. In fact, empty slots that require Turkish-language skills are not being filled in the embassy in Turkey, while 24 out of 25 of our Turkish speakers are not there. That, presumably, is about how we bid for jobs and how the personnel process operates.

Mr Lidington: As I said earlier, we have got a requirement now for the new slots for UK-based staff—which means diplomatic service staff, wherever they are stationed—in Ankara and Istanbul. The new posts being created there will carry a Turkish-language requirement as part of the job description.

Q244 Rory Stewart: Not simply a designation but a requirement—in other words, you would be unable to get one of the speakers' slots unless you spoke Turkish, whereas at the moment half the speakers' slots are not filled by Turkish speakers.

Mr Lidington: We are going to have a new officer covering primarily military counter-proliferation issues in Ankara, a new deputy consul-general covering commercial diplomacy and economic issues, and a C4 officer also doing commercial diplomacy and economic issues in Istanbul. All those three newly created slots are going to carry a Turkish-language requirement. It is going to take more than a few months to deliver what the Foreign Secretary wants in getting more British diplomats overseas to know the language of the country to which they are posted, but that is his very definite, clear political commitment.

Q245 Rory Stewart: Finally, there is a very interesting European Union initiative, which you have referred to, in terms of formalising the involvement of Turkey in a foreign policy partnership. Turkish officials have traditionally resisted creating formalised structures at a senior level for Turkey to engage with EU foreign policy. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of that proposal, and what are the obstacles you would have to overcome to achieve it?

Mr Lidington: I would be a bit cautious about the term "formalising", if by it you mean some new institution, such as the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council. What we want to see is for there to be routine dialogue and co-operation between Turkey and the EU. In part, this is born out of frustration at the deadlock in getting effective NATO-EU co-operation

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on security and defence matters, which again derives from Cyprus. It is only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the Berlin-plus arrangements, where you have the seamless co-ordination that we would like to see. This is one of the things that bedevil efforts to get an effective common European structure to address defence and security issues.

When I talk to Ministers from other EU countries, whatever view they take on Turkey, there is this sense of frustration that we are not able to get ourselves organised in terms of NATO-EU co-operation. Therefore, we are looking for things like trying to involve Turkey just in dialogue with Foreign

Ministers, whether in Gymnich meetings or as an add-on to Foreign Affairs Council meetings. Are there ways in which Turkey can be associated with the European Defence Agency, and so on? Pat, is there anything you want to shove in?

Pat Phillips: I have nothing to add.

Chair: Mr Lidington, thank you very much, indeed. I think we have covered a pretty broad range of topics there, and it has been very helpful in informing us. We appreciate your coming along—and you, Mr Saward and Ms Phillips. Thank you very much, indeed.

Mr Lidington: Thank you very much.

Written evidence

Written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

How should the Government's efforts to strengthen UK-Turkey relations be assessed, especially with respect to the economic and commercial spheres?

1. The Government has identified Turkey as one of the emerging powers with which the UK must strengthen its bilateral relationship. This reflects Turkey's impressive economic performance and influence as an international actor. Turkey is set to be the second fastest growing economy in the world by 2017. It has the highest youth population and fourth largest labour force compared to the current 27 member states of the EU. Turkey's international weight/stature is also growing: as a member of the G20, NATO, the OSCE and Council of Europe, and as a recent member of the UN Security Council. Turkey is also important as a strategic energy transit route, with the potential to bring new Caspian and Iraqi gas supplies to the EU.

2. The Government, like its predecessors, strongly supports Turkey's ambition to join the European Union, and the reform process underway to bring Turkey into line with the EU acquis. The strength of the UK's commitment underpins the development of our relationships across the bilateral agenda with Turkey.

3. Recognising Turkey's growing economic and political importance, the Prime Minister chose Turkey for one of his first international visits in office (July 2010). During this visit, the Prime Ministers of the UK and Turkey signed a new UK-Turkey Strategic Partnership Agreement that sets out our ambition to deepen co-operation across the full range of shared interests, including trade, defence, security, energy and foreign policy. This Strategic Partnership sets the agenda for elevating our bilateral relationship with Turkey and for measuring our success.

4. During that visit the Prime Minister also set a goal of doubling UK/Turkey trade within five years. UKTI's strategy for realising this goal is based on continued promotion of the UK as a rewarding place for foreign investment; and prioritising trade promotion activities in the following sectors: ICT, energy, infrastructure, financial and business services, defence, and education and skills. The strategy also includes action to address market access issues; and to promote joint ventures between Turkish and UK firms in third countries such as Iraq and the Central Asian republics. We will intensify UK-Turkey collaboration in the fields of research, science and innovation through a Knowledge Partnership. We hope to launch this Partnership in September this year when the Secretary of State for Business visits Turkey.

5. The State visit of President Gul to the UK in November this year also offers significant opportunities to intensify our commercial and economic relationship. The President will address UK financial and business leaders at the Guildhall and in various other fora.

6. UK exports to Turkey increased by 38% in 2010. Figures for the first half of 2011 already show an increase of 31% over the same period in 2010. This reflects a growing interest from UK firms in exporting to and investing in Turkey together with commensurate support from the UKTI network in Turkey. Continued dialogue with the Turkish government on market access issues remains central to our continued success and the achievement of the goal of doubling trade.

7. We are reinforcing our commercial diplomacy team in Turkey as part of the FCO's strategic shift of resources, and developing our regional network in Turkey. We are also upgrading the post of Consul General in Istanbul/Director of UKTI for Turkey, and giving the UKTI part of the position, a regional role, to ensure that we make the most of the opportunities on offer.

To what extent is Turkey a helpful partner for the Government's foreign and security policy, in the Middle East and North Africa, the South Caucasus, Central Asia or the Western Balkans? To what extent is Turkey such a partner for the UK in NATO?

8. Turkey has a strong network of relationships and influence in regions where UK interests are significant: North Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan-Pakistan and the Western Balkans. This network of relationships, combined with Turkey's status as NATO ally, and membership of a wide range of international organisations such as the G20, makes Turkey a valuable foreign policy partner for the UK and EU. This is another reason for the UK's active support for Turkey's EU accession prospects and current plans to promote EU-Turkey foreign policy dialogue.

9. In the Middle East and North Africa, the FCO is encouraging the Turkish government to use its network of relationships to strengthen democracy and economic development in the region. As a NATO ally, Turkey has provided vital military support to the NATO mission in Libya (the arms embargo element, and refuelling aircraft), supported the DFID-led international stabilisation team in Benghazi, and provided humanitarian assistance. Turkey also represented the UK's interests in Libya at the beginning of the crisis (up until May) following the departure of our staff. Through its membership of the Libya Contact Group (and hosting of a meeting of the Group in July), Turkey has helped to galvanise international support for a political transition

and plans for post-conflict stabilisation, led by the Libya people. On Syria, the FCO is working closely with Turkey to press the Syrian government on the need to carry out meaningful political reforms and to end its violent repression of peaceful protests. The UK government welcomes the humanitarian support that Turkey has provided to refugees that have crossed the Syrian border into southern Turkey.

10. The FCO is encouraging Turkey to urge Iran to engage seriously on the nuclear issue within the framework of the E3+3 process. The FCO is keen to see Turkey, together with the rest of the international community, continue to exert pressure on Iran, through rigorous implementation of UN sanctions.

11. A strong Turkey-Israel relationship has an important role to play in establishing stability and progress in the Middle East. That relationship has deteriorated because of policy differences over Gaza and the deaths of nine Turkish citizens when Israeli service personnel stopped a Gaza-bound flotilla in 2010. The FCO strongly supports the current/recent talks between the two governments, and encourages both sides to come to a satisfactory conclusion, so that the relationship can be restored.

12. Turkey has a strong network of relationships in other countries/regions in which UK interests are significant, notably Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Western Balkans. As a NATO ally, Turkey contributes essential military support to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. It provides a vital access route (principally through Incirlik airbase) and provides approximately 1800 troops to the ISAF mission. It contributes two provincial reconstruction teams and is heavily engaged in training of the Afghan police and armed forces. Turkey is now the lead facilitator of efforts to foster regional support for security and stability in Afghanistan, and will host a major international conference in Istanbul on 2 November bringing together this work.

13. In the Western Balkans, the FCO welcomes Turkey's role in encouraging reconciliation between the Bosniak and Serbian populations, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The trilateral Istanbul process has provided a helpful impetus to this reconciliation process and we hope that it can also encourage state-level Government formation in BiH. Furthermore, Turkey has undertaken to use its influence in the Islamic world to build support for Kosovan independence. The FCO will continue to seek ways of working with Turkey to build peace in the Western Balkans.

14. The FCO continues to encourage the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia. We hope that the Governments of both Turkey and Armenia can work to take the normalisation process forward for the benefit of both countries and the wider region.

15. The FCO values Turkey's contribution to the work of the international security institutions. Turkey makes important contributions to the EU's CSDP missions in Kosovo and Bosnia and the UN's peacekeeping mission in Lebanon.

16. Turkey is a vital ally for the UK in NATO, making an active and significant contribution to operations and missions which support the UK's and the Alliance's interests, including Afghanistan; NATO's operation to enforce the arms embargo on Libya; Kosovo; and NATO's counter-terrorist and counter-piracy operations. Turkey is the largest non-EU contributor to EU Common Security and Defence Policy missions, including in Bosnia and Kosovo. The UK would like to see greater EU-NATO co-operation and has worked with Turkey, as well as with Secretary-General Rasmussen, Baroness Ashton, and other allies and EU partners, to encourage this.

To what extent do Turkey and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) function as models for other Muslim countries and organisations in a way that is helpful for UK Government policy, particularly in the context of the "Arab Spring"? How should Turkey's role in this respect affect UK Government policy towards it?

17. Turkey's representative democracy in a mainly Muslim country, and its economic success, offer an important example to the newly emerging democracies in the Middle East and North Africa. Turkey has made advances in moving closer to EU norms, liberalising its economy and introducing human rights reforms. The new constitution planned by the recently re-elected AKP Government is an important opportunity to cement Turkey's democratic values and further address human rights issues.

18. A recent survey (part-funded by the FCO) of over 2,000 people across the Middle East by Turkish Think Tank TESEV reported that two-thirds of respondents agreed that Turkey could be a model for the Middle East. The survey highlighted the growing economic and cultural impact of Turkey in the Middle East. Three quarters of respondents had consumed a Turkish product or watched a Turkish TV series.

19. The historical background to Turkey's political and economic development is unique in a way that may not be entirely applicable to the experience of those countries in transition in the Middle East and North Africa. In a statement on 17 June 2011, the Turkish Foreign Ministry declared Turkey a "source of inspiration" rather than a model for the Middle East. We welcome Turkey's efforts to share its experience on specific aspects of the political process, eg inviting youth representatives involved in the recent revolution in Egypt to meet with Turkish political parties and to learn about political organisation in Turkey, and allowing Syrian opposition

figures to meet in Antalya. Based on its recent economic performance and extensive trading links with the MENA region, Turkey may also be well placed to offer support and advice on trade liberalisation and private sector development (eg promoting entrepreneurship amongst SMEs).

20. The UK Government looks forward to working with Turkey in the context of the G8's Deauville Partnership, which aims to support political and economic transitions in Egypt and Tunisia, and incentivise and support other MENA countries to progress towards becoming more open, inclusive and economically stable societies.

Should the UK Government be concerned about trends in the quality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Turkey, including the rights of ethnic and religious minorities (including the Kurds) and freedom of expression?

21. The Government believes that the EU accession process remains the most effective mechanism for positive change in Turkey, and we remain fully committed to and supportive of that process. Turkey's EU candidacy has been an effective catalyst for improvement in Turkey's human rights situation, and there have been significant and positive changes in recent years. Turkey's human rights record is subject to intense scrutiny during accession negotiations. The Turkish Government recognises that progress still needs to be made in areas such as minority rights, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion. The UK continues to discuss these issues with the Turkish authorities at Ministerial level and through our Embassy in Ankara, both bilaterally and as part of the EU accession process. We are involved in a wide range of projects to help Turkey come into line with the EU acquis.

22. Constitutional amendments approved by referendum in September 2010 introduced reforms covering the role of the military, the judiciary, and human rights. The reforms addressed a number of long-standing priorities in Turkey's efforts to fully comply with the EU accession criteria.

23. The plans for a new constitution proposed by the recently re-elected AKP Government are an important opportunity to cement Turkey's democratic values and further address human rights issues, including those of minorities. Following his election victory, Prime Minister Erdogan publicly committed himself to seeking consensus and greater protection for human and civil rights, stating this "will be a constitution of the Kurd, of Turkmen people, of Alevis, of all minorities, which means all 74 million people". The Government welcomes this focus on compromise, dialogue and broad consultation across Turkish society. We will continue to monitor the constitutional process.

24. Since Turkey was accepted as an EU accession state, the democratic rights of Kurds have improved. Turkey has made progress on cultural rights, further relaxing restrictions on use of the Kurdish language. However, significant issues remain to be resolved. Turkey has yet to grant specific rights on ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds in order to help preserve citizens' identity, as required by the Council of Europe. Restrictions also remain on the use of languages other than in political life, education and contacts with public services.

25. The planned new constitution provides an opportunity to address these issues. This is a very sensitive political issue in Turkey, which draws strong reactions from all sides. Terrorist attacks committed by the PKK, for example the 14 July attack in Silvan which cost the lives of 13 Turkish troops, damages the political will to make difficult compromises towards solving the Kurdish problem. Public demonstrations against the attack took place in many cities across Turkey, which heightened tension further. We condemn the terrorist actions of the PKK, a proscribed terrorist organisation, and are very active in seeking to disrupt any illegal activity on their behalf in the UK.

26. There has been limited progress on freedom of expression, most notably in pluralism of the media. Open and free debate takes place in Turkey, but Turkish law does not currently guarantee freedom of expression in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and case law from the European Court of Human Rights. The EU, OSCE and Council of Europe have noted concerns over Turkey's record, including the high number of imprisoned journalists. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media recently expressed concern over changes in the press law and internet censorship. Media contacts privately refer to a climate of "self-censorship" to avoid provoking confrontation with the government. The UK has joined EU statements on these issues.

27. Turkey has committed to an extensive reform programme on religious freedoms, which when implemented should bring it into line with EU norms and standards. The 2010 EU Progress Report highlighted problems in implementing the Law on Foundations (which requires non-Muslim places of worship to be approved by the Government). It also calls on Turkey to ensure full respect for property rights of all non-Muslim religious communities.

28. There have been improvements in the area of women's and children's rights, although there are still concerns surrounding honour killings, domestic violence, sexual assault and forced marriages. Greater publicity about an apparent rise in cases of violence against women has prompted the government to commit to addressing this issue. The UK supports EU efforts to ensure gender rights and legislation are implemented consistently across Turkey.

Is the Government correct to continue to support Turkey's membership of the EU? If so, what should the Government do to reinvigorate Turkey's EU accession process—for example, with respect to other EU Member States and EU policies, or the issue of Cyprus, as well as Turkey itself? Does Turkey still want to join the EU?

29. Turkey's accession to the EU is a key goal for the Government, subject to the rigorous application of the accession criteria. We believe that Turkish accession would be to the wider benefit of the UK and EU, contributing to our prosperity, security, and stability.

30. The Government believes the case for Turkey's EU membership is clearer than ever. Economically, Turkey is one of the world's most vibrant emerging economic powers, right on the EU's doorstep. Turkey is a country of enormous economic potential with a youthful market of more than 70 million people. Its accession would help to secure better energy supply routes for the EU. The potential of combined EU-Turkey efforts in foreign policy is great, particularly across the Middle East, North Africa, Western Balkans and elsewhere. Turkey is already a force for stability, with considerable regional and international influence. As an EU member state, Turkey would provide the Middle East with inspiration, as a prosperous, stable and democratic majority Muslim country. Turkish membership of the EU would strongly reinforce the EU's shared values. For Turkish people, the introduction of EU standards represents better protection of their employment, consumer, economic and human rights. The prospect of EU membership, together with the Turkish government's determination to give its citizens a better quality of life, has transformed the country.

31. The Government believes that the consequences of Turkish accession would be greatly beneficial for the EU and Turkey. A frequently-stated concern is over migration. Turkey is not expected to complete the long and complex EU accession process imminently. Any assessment of the impact of Turkish accession to the EU on migration levels would need to take into account long term trends in economic conditions both in the EU and Turkey. Recent accession negotiations have given EU Member States the option of imposing transitional controls on citizens from new Member States. Although Turkey's negotiations have not yet reached this stage, the Government has made a commitment to apply effective transitional controls, as a matter of course, for all new Member States.

32. As already noted, the UK is Turkey's strongest supporter in the EU. The Government works closely with our counterparts in EU Member States and with the European Commission at all levels to encourage, support, and recognise progress in Turkey's accession process. We also encourage and support Turkey's engagement in pursuit of a Cyprus settlement—the immediate obstacle to progress in the EU accession process. The UK is fully supportive of the UN's efforts to achieve a settlement based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, as defined by the relevant Security Council resolutions. As part of the effort to achieve a Cyprus settlement, we also call on Turkey to implement the Additional Ankara Protocol, by which it would open its ports to Cyprus.

33. In parallel with the accession process, we have also supported intensifying the EU's existing dialogue with Turkey on foreign policy issues of mutual interest, for example on the Middle East. The UK would also like to see more dialogue on energy issues. We also provide practical support in Turkey's efforts to adopt EU standards, such as through the UK-Turkey Environmental Task Force, which exchanges advice on implementation of standards under the Environment Chapter.

34. Turkey's EU accession process is currently proceeding more slowly than we would wish, which is having a negative effect on Turkish public opinion towards the EU. We welcome the Turkish Government's continued commitment to EU accession and to accelerating domestic reforms in line with the EU acquis. Turkish EU Affairs Minister Bagis on 8 July noted that the post-election upgrade of his department into Ministry "clearly demonstrates our determination to carry forward the EU accession process... We have no doubt that our citizens will observe the positive results of "AK Party's mastership term" in the EU accession process, as in every area. Turkey and the EU have the self-confidence, means and capability to finalise this process successfully". The Turkish Government's plans for a new Constitution are welcome, and are a key opportunity to push forward wider EU reforms over the autumn. We hope to see a broad-based consultation process involving all elements of Turkish society. Ongoing support for the Cyprus settlement process will also be crucial.

How important is Turkey to UK and EU energy security? How compatible are UK and EU, and Turkish, energy interests? How should Turkey's energy role affect UK Government policy towards the country?

35. The continuing unrest in the Middle East and North Africa, and events in Japan, have highlighted the importance of energy security, including diversifying sources and routes of energy supply. In this respect, Turkey has the potential to play an important role as a transit route for a Southern Energy Corridor bringing new Caspian gas to the EU, in addition to current EU supplies of Russian gas. A transit route through Turkey could also open the way in future for exports of Iraqi gas to the EU.

36. Turkey is already an important oil transit country. The Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline transiting Turkey, operated by BP, has the capacity to ship one million barrels of Caspian oil per day to the Mediterranean and on to world markets.

37. For the UK, the importance of Turkey lies in its transit facilities for both oil to the world and gas to the EU in the future. Although the UK would be unlikely to receive any gas directly via Turkey, the UK gas

market would benefit from more stable EU gas markets, which would be less vulnerable to supply disruption. Turkey would benefit from gas transit revenues, potential upgrades to existing gas infrastructure, and access to additional gas for domestic consumption.

38. EU and Turkish energy interests are compatible. Both the EU and Turkey are heavily dependent on Russian gas supply and both want to diversify energy resources and routes. The Southern Corridor can help with this and improve mutual energy security interests. Turkey stands to benefit from greater access to the EU energy market and from attracting new sources and investment for itself. The EU would gain access to new and previously inaccessible resources (eg from the Caspian). For the UK, the Southern Corridor brings more stable EU energy markets and new commercial opportunities in the downstream oil/gas sector and in pipeline infrastructure, and would support BP as the operating partner in the Consortium responsible for production and export of new gas from Azerbaijan.

39. Turkey and the UK/EU also have a mutual interest in supporting the development of clean energy resources. Turkey is trying to reduce its dependency on oil and gas imports and has good renewable energy potential. UK/EU investors are well placed to support this transition.

40. Energy is an important aspect of the UK's policy towards Turkey for EU energy security, commercial, EU accession, and wider geopolitical (eg stability in the Caspian and Iraq) reasons. Energy security was included as an element of the UK-Turkey Strategic Partnership signed by both Prime Ministers in July 2010. The UK and Turkey foster links on energy through an annual Energy Dialogue, established in 2006 to share experience and agree areas for cooperation. It last met in London in May 2011.

41. Turkey's EU accession process will further the energy interests of both Turkey and the EU. Turkey should benefit from a closer relationship with the EU through access and closer alignment to energy markets in the EU, and a strengthened position as an energy corridor. The UK supports Turkey's aspirations to open the Energy Chapter as part of this process. We would also like to see more dialogue between the EU and Turkey on energy. Turkey is already a member of the Energy Charter Treaty, and we have encouraged other Member States to see the value of Turkey to EU energy security.

18 August 2011

Annex A

FCO POSITION ON TURKEY-ARMENIA RELATIONS

Turkey-Armenia Relations

1. The UK welcomed the signing of the protocols between Turkey and Armenia in October 2009 and although the normalisation of relations has currently been suspended, we hope that the process can continue. The UK Government continues to urge both the Armenian and Turkish governments to move forward with the normalisation process.

2. We have supported a number of projects designed to promote conflict resolution and break down stereotypes. These have included:

- funding a Turkish film festival in Yerevan;
- sponsoring a touring theatre production about the Turkish/Armenian relationship; and
- bringing together activists from both countries to discuss EU integration.

THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES

3. The terrible suffering that was inflicted on Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th Century cannot be forgotten. The massacres and crimes that were committed were rightly and robustly condemned by the British government of the day.

4. While we remember the victims of the past, our priority today should be to promote reconciliation between the peoples and Governments of Turkey and Armenia. That is the best way to ensure a peaceful and secure future for everyone living in the region.

18 August 2011

Annex B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON HMG'S DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN TURKEY

1. Turkey has been identified as a priority country in the reinvigoration of the FCO's diplomatic network, announced by the Foreign Secretary in May. As a result, posts in Turkey will be reinforced with an additional three UK based members of staff, and eleven locally engaged employees. The total number of staff (including those working for other government departments) in the Turkey network is as follows:

Istanbul: 146

Ankara: 128

Izmir: 7
 Antalya: 4
 Fethiye: 2
 Bodrum: 3
 Marmaris: 3
Total: 293

INFORMATION ON TURKISH LANGUAGE SKILLS WITHIN THE FCO

2. Language skills are a priority within FCO's "Diplomatic Excellence" initiative launched in the autumn of 2010 to improve the core diplomatic skills of our staff. As part of this initiative, we are creating extra speaker slots in the FCO network in line with foreign policy priorities.

3. Based on our latest central HR database records, the number of UK-based staff with Turkish language skills is approximately 100. This reflects bilingual speakers and those who have a range of qualifications and levels of proficiency, including school and academic qualifications gained before officers joined the FCO. It does not comprehensively reflect the Turkish skills of officers who have not taken formal qualifications or not registered their skills on the central HR database.

4. A total of 11 UK-based slots in Turkey are designated as speaker slots. However, not all of these are currently filled by speakers. At the time of writing (August) a number of staff arrivals and departures are under way.

5. Although it is not a requirement for staff working in London to speak the language, there are currently two Turkish speakers in the Turkey team. Some other speakers are in relevant jobs in London, for example one of the Private Secretaries to the Foreign Secretary.

18 August 2011

Written evidence from Sir David Logan

THE AUTHOR

I was a Turkish specialist in the Diplomatic Service, serving in the political section of the British Embassy in Ankara from 1966–1970 and as Ambassador to Turkey from 1997–2001. I am chair of the British Institute at Ankara, which supports and enables research in Turkey and the Black Sea region in the fields of history, archaeology and related social sciences. I was until recently a non-executive director of a British company operating in Turkey and of a Turkish company listed on the London Stock Exchange.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

This paper addresses the six questions on which the Call for Evidence states that the Committee would particularly welcome submissions. It can be summarised as follows:

- (i) My personal positive experience of the work of British posts in Turkey in support of British business.
- (ii) The reasons why, thanks to the development of Turkish foreign policy and to growing prosperity, Turkey is an increasingly important foreign and security policy partner in the region.
- (iii) Why it is unhelpful to regard Turkey as a political model for MENA countries, even though her political stability and economic success are widely admired in the region.
- (iv) The importance of a new constitution and of better political practice in Turkey.
- (v) Although accession to the EU is not a short term objective, the long term importance of Turkish membership is greater than ever. This section suggests steps which HMG could take to sustain and strengthen the relationship both multilaterally and bilaterally in a period of low momentum in the formal accession process.
- (vi) The energy relationship is complex, but closer cooperation with Turkey on energy could help the accession negotiations and, equally, progress towards Turkish political integration into the EU would be an asset in achieving European energy security.

DETAIL

(i) *The British government's efforts to strengthen UK-Turkey's relations, particularly in the economic and commercial spheres*

1. The British Embassy in Ankara and the Directorate of Trade Promotion in Istanbul were active, helpful and supportive throughout the period (2004–10) when I was a director of a British company operating in Turkey. The reasons why its project, which was potentially the largest "greenfield" British investment in Turkey

(ie one which was not the result of a take-over or of the privatisation process there), failed fall outside the questions raised in the call for evidence.

(ii) *Turkey as a partner for the Government's foreign and security policy*

2. Turkey's geographical location, her historical (Ottoman) links and her shared (Muslim) religion are assets not otherwise available to the UK among our NATO allies and EU partners. Potentially, therefore, Turkey is a helpful partner for the UK in a strategically important region.

3. However, before the advent of the AKP government, Turkish governments regarded all Turkey's neighbours as problematical and potentially hostile. Besides, Ataturk's vision of making Turkey a part of (European) civilisation left Turkey as a supplicant on the border of Europe which, however, persistently rejected it. So Turkey's potential as a partner was limited.

4. The AKP government's new vision is of a Turkey at the centre of its own region, whose interests are best served by good relations with its neighbours. This approach has transformed Turkey's relations with the Arab world, Iran, the Western Balkans, and to some extent with Russia and the South Caucasus, not just politically but also economically and socially. Turkey's trade and tourism from her neighbours have increased. On the Arab street, Turkey is regarded as an inspiration politically and culturally. Turkish soap operas are followed avidly throughout the Arab world.

5. These changes have dramatically increased Turkey's importance to the UK, and they have taken place at a time of economic success, which has added heft to Turkey's new regional profile. Examples of Turkish active regional engagement include:

- The Western Balkans, where Turkish political engagement and commercial involvement have contributed to growth and stability.
- Afghanistan, to which Turkey has contributed uniquely effective assistance, particularly in the fields of governance and reconstruction.
- Libya, where the Turks have made an important contribution to the provision of humanitarian assistance and the search for a negotiated end to the Gadhafi regime.

6. Turkey's new regional activism has led to differences with her western partners, for example:

- In 2010 on Iran when her joint initiative with Brazil on nuclear recycling compromised agreement on an enhanced sanctions regime at the Security Council.
- On Israel, a traditional ally with whom the Gaza Freedom Flotilla episode in 2010 led to a rupture of already damaged relations.

7. There has been US comment to the effect that Turkish foreign policy independence shows that the West is "losing" Turkey and that the fault for this lies with the EU, which has failed to accept Turkey as a member. It is true that Turkey will not become an EU member soon. But it does not follow from this that Turkey is turning its back on the West. On the contrary, there is an increasing gap between the democracy (even if imperfect) and prosperity of Turkey and the defective regimes and poverty of many of her neighbours. Such a country is bound increasingly to share fundamental interests with her stable and prosperous Western partners.

8. However, though Turkey will not be "lost", her increased confidence, activism and regional status will mean that she will not automatically adopt the same policies as the EU majority in cases where that does not suit her. In this, she is no different from, for example, Germany or the UK. For British policy makers, the stakes are high. Turkish support for British objectives in areas of interest to Turkey is increasingly desirable; Turkish opposition to these can be a significant handicap.

(iii) *Turkey and the AKP as models for other Muslim countries*

9. Although Turks are overwhelmingly Muslim by creed, and the majority are devout and conservative, many Turks would be offended by the thought that there might be something distinctive in Turkish governance which appeals particularly to Muslim countries. At the same time, the stake of the devout and conservative majority in the country's governance, since 2001 represented by the AKP, has steadily become more influential. The AKP both reflects their attitudes, and exploits these to ensure its political dominance.

10. It is a misconception, however, to regard the AKP government's agenda as the "islamisation" of the country. The Turkish system should not, at least on these grounds, be an unattractive model for other Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, many of the victors in the "Arab spring", attracted by the prosperity and modernity of a country which has recognisable cultural and religious similarities to their own, regard Turkey as an attractive example for their post-dictatorship political systems.

11. However, with some interruptions, Turkey has operated a multi-party democracy for more than 60 years. The major parties currently represented in parliament can trace their antecedents back to 1950. This cannot be instantly replicated in the MENA region where in any case the "Arab spring" encapsulates widely differing processes of change in different countries in the region. At the same time, contemporary Turkish governance reflects unique democratic development, which is still in process: revision of the constitution, together with the place of the Turkish military and the functioning of the judiciary, is a high political priority. It is therefore

not helpful either to Turkey or to the UK to depict Turkish governance as a model in the context of the “Arab spring”.

12. Like the UK, Turkey’s “Arab spring” concern has been political modernisation and an orderly transition to successor governments. However, she has been hampered by her identification with the discredited regimes with which the AKP government had developed relations; and, in the case of Libya, by her aversion to the use of Turkish force in neighbouring Muslim states, thereby avoiding identification with western military interventionism. While this strengthened her effectiveness in Afghanistan, it attracted strong hostility from the Libyan rebels. At the same time, developments in Syria have demonstrated the limits of Turkish influence on behalf of orderly modernisation when faced with an embattled dictator impervious even to the strongest, but non-military, pressure from an important neighbour.

13. However, Turkey is not alone in having to re-calibrate her relations with Arab states as these undergo regime change. In the longer term, the fact that Turkey’s developed relationships with the Arab world are based on economic, commercial and societal factors as well as on politics will sustain the influence of Turkey in the region and ensure that Turkey remains an attractive comparator for aspiring Arab citizens. So Turkey’s importance as a partner for the UK in the region will not change.

14. A bigger challenge for Turkey than the Arab spring may be to resist being drawn into the dangerous competitive trend for major regional powers, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, to assume the role of patrons of Arab Sunni or Shiite states, with the consequential risk of destabilisation and confrontation in the region.

(iv) Trends in the quality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Turkey

15. Turkish democracy is long-established and vibrant, but defective. The defects are due in part to a discredited constitution, and in part to bad governmental practice. The present repressive constitution, introduced after the 1980 coup, legitimises curbs on freedom of speech, abuses of human rights, as well as non-recognition of the rights of the Kurds, or of ethnic and religious minorities. Prime Minister Erdogan is committed to the introduction of a new constitution; a draft is expected by the beginning of October. Previous attempts at constitutional reform have been limited in scope, and have failed to bridge the serious divisions in Turkish politics and society. The new constitution must among other things acknowledge Turkey’s ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity while preserving the unity of the Turkish state.

16. As regards government practice, there are concerns about the AKP government’s intolerance of opposition and criticism, and its focus on narrow political advantage. Opponents point to widespread use of wiretaps by state agencies, the government’s self-interested handling of scandals involving the Armed Forces, the detention of journalists critical of the government, and the granting of government contracts to AKP sympathisers. The recent crisis which led to the resignation of the Turkish Armed Forces’ commanders was certainly a defeat for the military, which traditionally “oversaw” Turkish politics. The question remains, however, whether this represented a positive development in Turkish governance, or instead a further accretion of authority by a government impatient with restraints on its exercise of power.

17. Turkey’s modernisation owes much to the changes the AKP government has made, for example by liberalising the economy, introducing social security and health care reform, and bringing the once remote state closer to the concerns of the people. Besides, many of the criticisms levelled at it are of failings inherited from previous governments, rather than of practices it has itself introduced. It is, however, very important that the government uses the opportunity which the new prosperity provides to improve the quality of democracy. Prime Minister Erdogan has said that the new constitution will be based on democratic and pluralistic principles that will bring Turkey closer to EU standards. This, together with a government which puts these principles into practice is an important interest for the United Kingdom.

(v) UK support Turkey for membership of the EU

18. The reasons why the UK has supported Turkish accession are, in brief:

- The proven positive impact of the Accession process on the institutions, stability and prosperity of candidate and new member states.
- The contribution which Turkey would make to the strength of the Union and in particular her capacity to project security and stability beyond the south eastern perimeter of Europe.

19. On the other hand, for the EU to abandon this process would mean:

- resiling from formal commitments to Turkey as a candidate country, thereby damaging the Union’s reputation not just in Turkey but more widely;
- signalling to the Muslim world that the Union was not willing to have a member the majority of whose people are Muslim, with negative impact on the effectiveness and credibility of EU policy throughout the Muslim world; and
- putting at risk Turkey’s development as an important regional power whose policies and outlook is situated within the framework of European institutions and cooperation.

20. However, the expectation at the time negotiations with Turkey started that accession might take place in about 2014 is clearly unrealistic. Anti-Muslim sentiment has grown in Europe after the terrorist attacks in the

US, Spain, the UK and elsewhere. The EU is heavily pre-occupied with recurring economic crises, and, not surprisingly, unable and unwilling to contemplate a major enlargement project. European opinion, in part at least for these reasons, has become anti-immigrant, defensive and inward-looking.

21. Turkish support for accession has also declined substantially. This is partly in reaction to opposition in key EU states such as France and Germany; partly because of a perception that, by contrast with EU members, Turkey has successfully weathered the economic recession and does not need EU membership to generate prosperity; and partly because of a view that membership requirements comprise an *acquis communautaire* which EU member states themselves have flouted in their attempts to deal with the economic crisis. There is, however, evidence that Turkish disillusion with the EU is soft, rather than deep-rooted: in more promising circumstances this attitude could be turned round and support for accession revived.

22. The thrust of this evidence is that Turkey's increasing political and economic importance makes the political and security advantages to the Union of Turkish membership greater than ever: and that the counterpart risks inherent in Turkish non-membership are similarly great. It follows from this that the UK needs a strategy which on the one hand recognises that Turkish membership is a long term project, but which on the other hand sustains a positive relationship with Turkey on the basis of which movement towards accession can eventually be developed.

23. Against the unpromising background of hostility to Turkish membership among leading EU member states, the UK needs to identify means of managing the relationship with Turkey which are less vulnerable to obstruction by its partners. Possibilities include:

- *Cyprus*—Mutual absence of trust between Ankara and Nicosia is the single biggest obstacle to reunification of the island, and it seems unlikely that the EU will be able to broker a breakthrough, given the unwillingness of other member states to confront Cypriot intransigence. In these circumstances, the UK could usefully support the International Crisis Group's proposal that Turkey and Greek and Turkish Cypriots should take confidence-building steps unilaterally rather than as a complex negotiated package vulnerable to Cypriot opposition. This would build trust, satisfy key demands, open communication without prejudging the outcome of UN talks, and support a comprehensive settlement.
- *The Aegean dispute*—The continuing deadlock is costly for both countries. Greece, in financial crisis, needs to reduce a disproportionate military budget. Turkey's new government needs to ensure its neighbour's stability and assert itself as a responsible regional player. The International Crisis Group has therefore suggested that now would be a good time to try to settle bilateral disagreements between Greece and Turkey over the Aegean.
- *Energy*—See last paragraph of section on energy security below.
- *Visas*—British visa policy is the issue which impacts most negatively on the UK's bilateral relations with Turkey, and which has broader and more serious implications than is sometimes recognised. The process is complex and time-consuming; the requirement to divulge personal financial and other details when applying for a visa is regarded by many Turks as humiliating; applications are rejected for no apparently valid reason.

Many Turks, for example business people and academics who would otherwise come to the UK, decide not to submit themselves to this process. This is regrettable and ironic given Prime Ministers Cameron and Erdogan's recent commitment to double trade between two countries within the next five years, and to forge stronger educational and cultural links.

British policy contrasts with the remarkable impact on Turkey's bilateral relations with her neighbours of the imaginative decision to abolish visas altogether. The effect has been to reinforce Turkey's position as a commercial, cultural and political regional hub.

Abolishing visas for Turkish citizens completely may be unrealistic. However, at present UKBA policy is a major irritant in the bilateral relationship and is inconsistent with our interests with Turkey. There is a strong political, commercial and educational case for liberalisation. We urgently need a fair, transparent and simplified process which would enable bona fide intending visitors to come to the UK and develop links with the UK, rather than turn them elsewhere. The Foreign Affairs Committee could recommend the establishment of an ad hoc committee to review and propose improvements to the present system. Umbrella bodies such as, on the academic side, the British and Turkish Academies, and, for trade and investment, the Turco British Business Council and the Turco British Chamber of Commerce and Industry, could usefully play a role.

(vi) *The importance of Turkey to UK and EU energy security*

24. The Bosphorus and continental Turkey are obvious transportation routes for oil and gas from Russia, the Caspian etc. to the major energy consumers in Europe. Turkey recognises the EU's interest in reducing its dependency on Russian gas and in alternative sources of energy as well as in multiple transportation routes, and has made it an important policy objective to secure recognition as a reliable and secure energy hub essential to the EU's energy security, and to decreasing reliance on Russia.

25. However, this role is potentially compromised by Turkey's own dependency on Russia, and to a lesser extent Iran, to meet her energy needs. Her relationship with both countries is complex. The same is true of Azerbaijan, whose energy resources are important to Turkey and the West, but are also one of the cards it holds in the frozen Armenia/Azerbaijan/Turkey relationship.

26. The difficulties confronting the Europeans over energy security are vividly illustrated by the repeated delays in implementation of the Nabucco project, to which Turkey is a partner. These delays are the consequence of competing political interests and pressures, of uncertain calculations on economic viability, and of the promotion of rival alternative pipeline schemes.

27. Hardly surprisingly, the block imposed by Cyprus on discussion of the Energy chapter of the acquis in the Accession negotiations initially resulted in Turkish refusal to ratify the Inter-governmental Agreement on Nabucco or to sign the Energy Community Treaty. However, by 2009 Turkey had signed up to both of these.

28. Overall, therefore, the relationship between Turkey and the UK and the EU on energy issues is important, but it is also part of a complex broader political and economic framework. Clearly, closer cooperation with Turkey on energy could open the way for progress on other, currently stalled, issues in the accession negotiations. Equally, progress towards Turkish membership of the EU would affect the weight which Turkey could be expected to give to EU interests in determining her own energy policies. A Turkey which played a committed and positive role in achieving Europe's objective of energy security would be an important asset to the Union.

29 August 2011

Written evidence from Dr Gülnur Aybet

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- There is both continuity and change in Turkish foreign policy. This is due to the rapid internal transformation that Turkey has been going through since the coming to power of the AK Party nearly a decade ago.
- Turkish foreign policy operates in three contradictory spheres: a transatlantic security community grounded in Euro-Atlantic institutions, a regional emerging security community based on values of religious and ethnic identity, and a regional proactive policy based on *realpolitik*, devoid of any value based sentiments.
- Tensions between these three spheres can be avoided through a consistent internal democratisation process and externally, a coherent transatlantic and EU approach towards Turkey, which is lacking at the moment.
- Turkey has two roles to play in the Middle East region: first as a mediator in interstate relations. Despite the setback in its mediation efforts with Iran and Syria and Israel, Turkey's mediation efforts as an independent player who can talk to everybody can be useful when the alternative of isolating states or political actors on the basis of "non acquiescence" to international norms does not always work on its own. The second is Turkey's outreach on a normative level to the populations of the region. In this sense, Turkey's popularity in the "Arab street" cannot be underestimated or its potential as a "role model" in the post Arab spring. Although the Arab spring seems to have contradicted these two roles of Turkey in the region.
- The EU accession process has taken a new turn for the worst with the public declarations of two EU leaders in January, opening up the fault lines of Cyprus and the Aegean disputes. This was followed by Turkey's more assertive rhetoric on the isolation of Northern Cyprus. It would seem that both sides are not playing it safe anymore, which was not the case when accession negotiations started in 2005. A more consistent EU approach towards Turkey is needed.
- As the Turkish-EU accession process falters, alternatives to anchoring Turkey into the West can be explored. It is recommended to avoid the phrase of a "privileged partnership". Turkish-EU and more broadly Turkish-Transatlantic relations has to be seen outside the acceptance/rejection impasse of the EU accession process. Here, engaging Turkey as a regional partner rather than a functional ally is crucial. New forums for brainstorming over common strategic visions such as the Anglo-Turkish Tatdilil forum will be very useful in taking the exchange of views beyond the EU accession process.
- The UK has been a consistent supporter of Turkey's EU bid as Turkey finds its footing between a new regional assertive role and the continuation of its role as a NATO member and EU candidate country. The UK has acted as a balancing factor and stabilizer in continuing to anchor Turkey into the West at times when Turkey's relations with other EU members such as Germany and France and its bilateral relations with the US have become strained. The UK should continue undertaking this role.

2. BACKGROUND OF DR GÜLNUR AYBET

I am a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent at Canterbury, England and a Professor at the Izmir University of Economics, Turkey. I was a Southeast Europe Policy Scholar in 2009 at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington DC, and a Public Policy Scholar at the same institution between April-May 2010, working on a project on the “*Transformation of Modern Turkey and the its Transatlantic Relationship.*” I have also held fellowships at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Johns Hopkins University and European Studies Center, St Antony’s College, Oxford University. I have recently been invited to participate in the Anglo-Turkish Tatlıdil Forum, which will be a regular high level forum between leading figures from Turkey and the United Kingdom to discuss matters of mutual interest. Forty participants have been invited from each country from the world of politics, business, science and the arts. I am also a member of the national security task force of a new think tank in Istanbul, the Global Relations Forum, which is closely affiliated with the Council of Foreign Relations in New York. I have published widely on issues relating to Turkey and Turkish foreign policy as well as NATO and European security. For further information please see: www.gulnur-aybet.net.

3. SHIFTS IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY? CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

3.1 For the past few years, the dominant question asked by Western observers of Turkish foreign policy has been: Is Turkey shifting “East”? The decade since the AK Party came into power in 2002 will probably be remembered as the great transition from old checks and balances to new ones. The traditional checks and balances in Turkish politics consisted of a secularist elite and a politically powerful military as guarantors of stability. The watershed challenge to this tradition came with the 2007 elections where the AK Party won a second term in a landslide victory. The newly emerging checks and balances consist of a new Islamist centre right elite, committed to liberal economic policies and support for Turkey’s accession to the EU, and the gradual eradication of the so-called “deep state” which acted as an unorthodox support act to the old checks and balances. These changes have also started a new political and reform process initially induced by the conditions laid by the EU accession process. However, as the EU accession process has stalled, the process of changing Turkey’s political landscape has not. Despite the obstacles such as the Kurdish issue and the lingering polarisation between secular and religious groups, the AK Party’s unprecedented third term victory in the June 2011 elections has resulted in the inevitability of drafting a new consensual constitution which will replace the existing 1982 constitution drafted by the generals who carried out the 1980 coup. This is because despite the fifty percent win of overall votes, the AK Party has ended up with fewer seats in Parliament, due to an outburst of seats won by independent candidates and an increase in the number of seats by the main opposition Republican People’s Party. Therefore the result itself has made it impossible for the AK Party to carry forth a majoritarian constitution. Despite a more consensual internal political picture, in foreign policy the AK Party have become more assertive since their election to a third term. Much of this is determined by the rapid changes occurring in Turkey’s neighbourhood and the timing of the deterioration of relations with Israel and the conclusions of the Palmer report which investigated the Flotilla incident of 2010.

3.2 In foreign policy, the reflection of these internal changes has sometimes been interpreted as a shift away from Turkey’s traditional membership in the transatlantic security community (its membership of NATO and association with various Euro-Atlantic organizations as well as its candidature for the EU.) The assertive and independent regional foreign policy directed by Foreign Minister Davutoglu, coupled with the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s colourful rhetoric on Turkey’s relationships with Israel and Iran, may have added to this perception. However, despite this, the question of whether Turkey has indeed shifted towards the East has by and large remained theoretical. While Turkey has indeed continued its unprecedented outreach to the Middle East, and cultivated new regional partnerships on its own terms with countries like Russia, it has also continued to act in good faith as a long serving NATO member and has, despite some setbacks continued with its EU accession process and internal reforms.

3.3 Turkey’s relationship with the EU and the United States has oscillated from better to worst during the last decade of AK Party rule. Ironically while relations with the EU improved in the AK Party’s first term with the opening of accession negotiations, Turkey’s relations with the US deteriorated at the same time, especially after the parliamentary refusal for transit of US troops and the Suleymaniye incident in Northern Iraq in 2003 and Turkey’s growing frustration with US non-chalance over the PKK presence in Northern Iraq. In the second term of the AK Party, the EU accession process also slowed down. Just as the relationship with the US took a slight turn for the better with President Obama’s election and his first state visit to Turkey in 2009, Turkey’s relations with the EU stalled seriously during this period due to an impasse over the Cyprus issue and the publicly declared remarks of the French and German leadership over the negative prospects of Turkey’s EU accession.

3.4 Although Turkey is pursuing a more pro active regional policy, this is not a new approach. A pro active regional foreign policy was started under the late President Turgut Ozal in the 1990s. This regional activism dwindled for a while as Turkey in the latter half of the 1990s became more preoccupied with its internal security concerns. This has now been revived in a new manner by the AK Party, and the main difference from the Ozal years is that there is now more intensive engagement with the Middle East and a new engagement with Africa and less attention on the Caucasus and Central Asia which was really the main focus of the early

1990s. However, the region is also undergoing far more rapid and dramatic upheavals than in the 1990s, therefore, the AK Party's proactive foreign policy is constantly on the move and far more visible.

4. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THREE SPHERES

4.1 While there is continuity and change in Turkish foreign policy, the fact that both are occurring simultaneously has led to a clash of Turkey's priorities and interests both regionally and globally.

4.2 Turkey in its new found regional role seems to be operating a foreign policy in three spheres: The first sphere is the transatlantic security community. This is embedded in Turkey's NATO membership, EU candidature, its commitments to Euro-Atlantic integration and the basic norms of free market economies, democratic governance and human rights. This sphere also explains Turkey's continued contribution to NATO out of area operations from the Balkans to Afghanistan.

4.3 The second sphere is an emerging regional security community, where Turkey is cultivating new ties to the region and beyond based on the norms of religious and ethnic identity. Turkey's rising popularity in the Arab street, and Prime Minister Erdogan's public statements in defence of the Uighurs in China in 2009, are among many illustrations of these new outreach. Here there is more rhetoric than substance but if we take the fall out with the relations with Israel and the Flotilla incident of 2010 coupled with Turkey's determination to proclaim the blockade of Gaza illegal by the international community, we can also see that the gap between rhetoric and action in Turkish policy might become increasingly difficult to keep apart.

4.4 The final and third sphere has little to do with the values of the first and second sphere. The third sphere is where Turkey pursues a regional *realpolitik* devoid of any steering by values, whether transatlantic or religious or ethnic. The relationship with Russia and Iran, particularly in terms of energy deals should be viewed in this third sphere.

4.5 The problem is: the three spheres are incompatible with each other and there tends to be fault lines across the three spheres which lead to a clash. A good example is the Georgian crisis in 2008. After the Russian invasion of Georgia, NATO issued a declaration in support of Georgia's eventual membership. For Turkey, a NATO member signed up to that declaration, not only did Georgia constitute a crucial geopolitical role in the two pipelines that turned Turkey into a major energy hub for the supply of Caspian gas and oil to international markets, but Turkey's own relations with Russia were also based on an intricate economic relationship with a mutual interdependence on the supply and demand of gas. Which is why Turkey first consulted Russia during the Georgian crisis, than any of the other NATO allies. The Turkish proposal for a Caucasus Cooperation and Stability Pact was also first presented to Russia then Georgia.

4.6 The AK Party have been able to steer through these inevitable clashes remarkably well but have come under criticism for what appears to be inconsistency in the principles of foreign policy. Foreign Minister Davutoglu's "zero problems with neighbours" doctrine has become increasingly difficult to implement, not just because of the contradictions between the three spheres but because of ongoing unresolved conflicts in the region as well. Armenia and Azerbaijan and the stalled Middle East Peace Process are the main unresolved conflicts. Meanwhile the Iranian nuclear confrontation with the international community makes it difficult for Turkey to maintain normalized relations with Iran, including energy deals, while Turkey is also a NATO member. Not to mention Turkey's hosting of the radar component of a NATO missile defence system, which Iran suspects is aimed at itself.

4.7 Despite these contradictions, Turkey's foot in the West and the East has been seen as an asset that allows Turkey to engage countries like Iran, and to act as a mediator as it has done between Syria and Israel. However, Turkey's regional mediator role has been challenged of late. Earlier this year, Turkish mediation efforts after the collapse of the Lebanese government, to talk to all sides, including Hezbollah, did not yield any results. Neither did Turkey's hosting of the talks between Iran and the P5+1 in Istanbul in January 2011. While these initiatives may not have yielded direct results, the important thing is Turkey is engaged and in a position to talk to all sides concerned. At a time when international or "Western" presented norms are challenged by regional norms, Turkey's diplomatic ventures as an "independent" actor from the West, could be crucial in harbouring stability in the region. After all, it was Hezbollah's challenging of the legitimacy of the international enquiry into President Hariri's death that led to the collapse of the Lebanese government. Iran, continuing its challenge to international norms, earlier this year issued an invitation to a number of states, including Turkey, to carry out inspections on its nuclear sites, leaving out four of the P5+1 countries: Germany, Britain, France and the United States. Therefore, Turkey's mediation efforts as an independent player who can talk to everybody can be useful when the alternative of isolating states or political actors on the basis of "non acquiescence" to international norms does not always work on its own.

4.8 The clashes between the three spheres of Turkish foreign policy may become less acute in the future. This is especially true when we think about the Turkish-US-Israeli relationship. In that sense, the deterioration of relations with Israel ought to have mirrored a similar tension in Turkish-US relations. However, if anything, the recent visit of the Turkish Prime Minister to UN where he had a meeting with President Obama, shows that the U.S. relationship with Turkey is no longer directly linked to Israel.

5. ANCHORING TURKEY INTO THE WEST: THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS, NATO AND REGIONAL SHIFTS

5.1 Turkey's implementation of the Ankara Protocol by opening its ports and airports to EU member Cyprus, was not a precondition for the opening of accession negotiations with the EU at the end of 2005. That was over five years ago. Since then, the negotiations have been sluggish at best, but the EU for their part have so far avoided directly bumping into the latent fault lines, mainly the Cyprus question and the unresolved Aegean disputes with Greece.

5.2 Since January 2011, there has been a profound change in the EU's attitude towards Turkey and the Cyprus issue. In early January this year, the Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel's comments publicly poked the unresolved fault line of Cyprus and the Aegean disputes. Since the positive take off of "Earthquake diplomacy" in 1999, Greek-Turkish relations have never been better, and Greece has been one of the staunchest supporters of Turkey's EU accession. Even the unresolved Aegean disputes have been negotiated away from the limelight and public attention since the normalisation of Greek-Turkish relations more than a decade ago. On the other hand, the German government, largely playing to its own public opinion on enlargement, has been one of the strongest public critics of Turkey's EU accession, but have also until now avoided publicly drawing the red line over the Cyprus issue as the final stumbling block for Turkey's EU accession.

5.3 It is also telling that within the same week, during Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to Kuwait, there was talk of opening a representation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus there. This was followed a couple of months later by the Prime Minister's declaration that there is "No [unified] country called Cyprus" but only a Southern and Northern part of the island. Therefore, the first half of 2011 seems to indicate that both Turkey and the EU are no longer willing to play it safe in terms of the accession process. This is the big deviation since the start of accession talks in 2005. Ironically, it was only in December that the foreign ministers of Turkey's strongest supporters in the EU -Britain, Italy, Sweden and Finland—wrote an open letter to the New York Times strongly advocating Turkey's EU accession. In a post Lisbon EU where the mechanisms of decision making are more integrated than before, it is puzzling to see mixed signals coming out of the same institution where Turkey is concerned.

5.4 Apart from the shift in Turkey's EU relations, since January its regional role has also taken a different dimension with the Arab spring. Turkey's regional role now becomes two dimensional. To make the definitions easier to follow, I call Turkey's regional inter-state relations based on power politics and diplomacy the *macro* level and its intra-state impact on social forces such as Turkish popularity on the "Arab Street" or its role in democracy promotion, the *micro* level.

5.5 Therefore, Turkey's active diplomatic engagement with the Gulf states, its neighbours, including Iran, and the boosting of its trade volume with the region and introduction of visa free regimes with some of those countries, all come under the macro category. On the macro level, Turkey as an independent mediator can be a very valuable asset in these changing times, despite the setbacks in its mediation role in Lebanon and with Israel and Syria. Turkey still has the access to negotiate and talk with all sides in the region and this should not be underestimated.

5.6 On the micro level, as a result of people power transforming politics in first Tunisia and Egypt, and lately less smoothly in Syria and Libya, Turkey has been pushed, maybe somewhat reluctantly to centre stage as a "role model" of democratisation. However, it is also interesting that the Turkish government is still essentially steered by macro—realpolitik considerations rather than micro-social forces driven ones. In this sense, the AKP is quite traditional as far as Turkish politics go. One only has to think about the non-hesitant congratulations extended to Iran's President Ahmedinejad after the controversial elections of 2009 and Turkey's silence during Iran's subsequent brutal crackdown against the protesters. The same can be said about Turkey's wavering to criticize the Syrian regime at the early stages of the uprising. Yet on the micro level the popularity of Turkey on the "Arab street" cannot be underestimated. However, if macro-realpolitik considerations were the only determinant of Turkish foreign policy, relations with Israel would not have been allowed to deteriorate this far.

5.7 However Turkey's role vis a vis the NATO intervention in Libya has to be seen differently from a mere confusion between its macro and micro roles in the region. While Prime Minister Erdogan has sought to cultivate his personal ties with long standing leaders in the region to assert his independent foreign policy from the West, and his previous relationship with Colonel Gaddafi no doubt falls under this category, Turkey's reluctance to initially support military intervention in Libya was due to other factors. This was a continuation of traditional Turkish foreign policy: Do not get involved in regional conflicts or directly support outside military intervention in the region. However, as it became apparent that a French-led ad hoc coalition using NATO's assets would be taking over the military intervention in Libya, Turkey championed the idea of bringing not only the implementation of the UN endorsed "no fly zone" but also the UN endorsed Chapter 7 to use "all necessary measures" to protect civilians under the political direction of NATO. That way, for Turkey, bringing the operation under NATO would give NATO and of course Turkey more direct control over the way the operation unravelled. At the end, Turkey contributed to the operation quite constructively without direct military

involvement (by providing humanitarian assistance, sending frigates to monitor the arms embargo and allowing the use of the flight control centre in Izmir). This indicates that foreign policy planning during the Libyan intervention was carefully thought through and was not as some Western observers have called it: joining in on the Western consensus after publicly declaring an anti-Western rhetoric. This also proves that “reading” Turkish foreign policy is not as straightforward as it looks.

6. THE ROLE OF THE UK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The UK has been a consistent supporter of Turkey’s EU bid as Turkey finds its footing between a new regional assertive role and the continuation of its role as a NATO member and EU candidate country. Throughout this time as its relations with the US have become particularly strained this has also impacted Turkish domestic outlook towards the EU. Both the US and the EU are seen by Turkish public opinion as Turkey’s traditional Western partners. Therefore what happens in one relationship tends to impact the other. In this sense the UK has acted as a balancing factor and stabilizer in continuing to anchor Turkey into the West at times when Turkey’s relations with other EU members such as Germany and France and its bilateral relations with the US have become strained. The UK should continue undertaking this role.

6.2 There are two ways in which Turkey can find a balance between the three spheres in which its foreign policy operates. One external and the other internal. The first is the consistency in the internal democratization process—a consolidated democracy involving a new constitution and eventual resolution of the Kurdish issue, and stability in civil-military relations grounded in a healthy iterative reciprocal adjustment. The latter seems to have made more progress than the former. The UK should do everything it can either through the EU or bilaterally to support Turkey’s democratization process.

6.3 The second, which is the external factor is having a coherent transatlantic relationship and a coherent EU approach towards Turkey. The problem is not so much why Turkey does not from time to time act as if it belongs to the transatlantic relationship but what is wrong with the transatlantic relationship itself. For example incoherent energy strategies, incoherent policies in how to deal with Russia do not send a very good signal to countries that are keeping all their regional options open like Turkey. In fact, since the big transatlantic fallout in 2003 over Iraq, Europe and the United States only seem to agree if a crisis brings them together such as the Russian invasion of Georgia, which saw the receding of German and French reservations for future NATO enlargement to Georgia and Ukraine. If transatlantic approaches to Eurasia consist of a sporadic reactive consensus rather than a consistent long term strategy, then countries like Turkey will obviously look to alternative regional deals. Similarly, the EU’s own inconsistency in dealing with Turkey was starkly revealed between December 2010 and January 2011, when the fault lines of Cyprus and the Aegean disputes were publicly opened by two EU leaders while only a few weeks before another four EU leaders publicly declared their unwavering support for Turkey’s EU membership. As the Middle East unravels, further from the normative and material control of the West, Turkey’s roles at both levels, macro and micro, will be crucial. But Turkey can play those roles essentially well if it is still anchored in the West and continues with its own internal reform process unhampered. Therefore consistency in the EU’s approach to Turkey becomes more crucial in the light of these recent developments. The UK should use its role in the EU to champion for a more coherent strategy for Turkey.

6.4 Turkey’s two emerging regional roles: one as an independent player and potential mediator in a rapidly changing region and the second as a useful role model for the post Arab spring, are not mutually exclusive. What are the mutual benefits of these roles that Turkey can play for Anglo-Turkish relations? This should be a brainstorming priority in UK policy planning.

6.5 As the Turkish-EU accession process falters, alternatives to anchoring Turkey into the West can be explored. At this time, it is highly recommended to avoid the EU rhetoric of a “privileged partnership” as this has negative connotations to the EU’s 1997 Luxembourg summit which was taken very negatively by Turkey at the time, but also because this locks the Turkish-EU relationship to the acceptance/rejection impasse of the accession process. Turkish-EU relations and more broadly, Turkish-Transatlantic relations need to have a broader common strategic vision. Here, engaging Turkey as a regional partner rather than a functional ally is crucial. New forums for brainstorming over common strategic visions such as the Anglo-Turkish Tatlidil forum will be very useful in taking the exchange of views beyond the EU accession process. Similarly, task forces of think tanks like the Global Relations Forum, provide a platform for engaging in new concepts of security for the 21st Century. It is through these intellectual endeavours that Turkey and the United Kingdom might find common ground on what those concepts actually are.

28 September 2011

FURTHER READING

- Gulnur Aybet “Turkey and the EU After the First Year of Negotiations: Reconciling Internal and External Policy Challenges”, *Security Dialogue* (PRIO, Oslo), Vol. 37, No.4, December 2006, ISSN: 0967-0106, pp 343-361
- Gulnur Aybet and Filiz Baskan “Constitutional Overhaul?” in *The World Today*, July 2011 <http://www.gulnur-aybet.net/TWTAYBET.pdf>

- Gulnur Aybet “Turkey’s Energy Politics: Neither East Nor West” in Winter 2009 issue of *Private View*, the international review of TUSIAD, (Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen) Read article here: http://www.tusiad.org.tr/_rsc/shared/file/PV14.pdf
- N Tocci, *Turkey’s European Future: Behind the Scenes of America’s Influence on EU-Turkey Relations*, New York and London, New York University Press, 2011

Written evidence from John Roberts

THE AUTHOR

John Roberts is Energy Security Specialist with Platts. Platts, which is part of the McGraw-Hill group, is the world’s largest source of independent energy information. He has covered Turkey’s role as a transit state for Iraqi oil since the 1970s and, during the last 25 years or so, the subsequent expansion of its transit and market activities to include oil from Azerbaijan and other Caspian suppliers as well as gas from Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan.

SUMMARY

This testimony focuses on Turkey’s energy relations with Europe.

Key elements include:

- The development of the EU’s Southern Corridor.
- The stalling on gas transit from Azerbaijan.
- The bases of Turkey’s energy policy.
- The export options for Azerbaijani gas.
- The question of Turkey’s reliability as an energy partner.
- The Energy Community Treaty.
- Turkish hopes to become an energy hub.

1. THE CHALLENGES

Turkey is critical to the success of the European Union’s “Southern Corridor” concept, by which the EU hopes to vastly increase the flow of piped gas from the Caspian and eventually enable Middle East producers to access European markets by pipeline as well as in the form of LNG. The corridor has an oil component as well, but it is gas that is the prime focus.

Turkey, however, has not proved as cooperative on this issue as the European Commission would have wished, a reflection of the poor state of affairs concerning the extremely slow pace of negotiations on Turkish entry into the EU. In particular, Turkey looks set to remain a difficult partner for Europe in energy matters so long as the European Commission fails to open the chapter on energy issues. This point was summed up by Taner Yildiz, Turkey’s Minister of Energy & Natural Resources, in an interview with the author in September 2010 when he said: “While Turkey is actually opening the doors to gas supply security in Europe, Europe is not opening this single Chapter to Turkey. Therefore we need to resolve this issue. After that, other issues will be solved.” So far, the Chapter has not been opened; nor is there any indication when this might happen. Nonetheless, Yildiz has a vision of Turkey becoming “the centre of energy geopolitics.”

Although matters are now moving on a number of fronts, Ankara’s stalling on the key issue of gas transit across Turkey remains the main cause for around three years of delay to the giant €20 billion, 16 billion cubic meters a year (bcm/y), second stage development of Azerbaijan’s giant Shah Deniz gasfield. The SD-2 project is now expected to produce its first commercial gas in 2017, taking total field production to around 25 bcm/y—almost all of which (at least 24 bcm/y) is designated for export—in or around 2019.

But the delay means that a set of negotiations begun simply to discuss how to export SD-2 gas now appears outdated. Azerbaijan is now looking to see whether output from a cluster of further discoveries—the Absheron, Umid and deep-level Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli fields—can be harnessed for export within much the same timeframe as SD-2. One senior Azerbaijani official has said that if the country wants to use Turkey as a transit route for delivering even half a bcm of non-Shakh Deniz gas to Bulgaria, then it has to start a whole new set of negotiations. With the new fields being collectively comparable in size to Shakh Deniz, Azerbaijan’s desire to find a way to ensure that it can export gas from new fields as well as from Shakh Deniz is assuming considerable significance.

So, too, are the ongoing discussions concerning whatever precedence might be granted to Azerbaijani gas within the Turkish system, since Turkey’s current network code—which governs the day-to-day management of gas within the system—was developed at a time when the Turkish state had full control of all gas within the system, whereas the preliminary agreements concluded with Azerbaijan provide for Azerbaijan to be able to sell Shakh Deniz gas at Turkey’s border with Greece. The issue here, in either a crisis or purely on a routine management level, is who has priority in different parts of the Turkish system: An Azerbaijani shipper trying to get gas over the border to Greece? A Turkish distributor trying to supply a local market en route? Or perhaps

the importer of Russian gas via the Blue Stream network who would naturally wish to see their gas reach their Turkish customers as soon as possible?

The key points of a Turkish-Azerbaijani energy accord covering transit and such other core issues as the volume and price of gas to be delivered by Azerbaijan to Turkey itself were hammered out in April & May 2010, with a preliminary accord concluded in June 2010. As of 13 October 2011, no final agreement had yet been signed, but both Turkish and Azerbaijani sources were expecting one within a few weeks.

Overall, Turkey's energy policy seems to be permanently characterised by ambivalence. Officially it remains committed to helping the European Union develop the Southern Corridor; but it also conducts negotiations with Russia on a host of energy projects including the South Stream gas pipeline, widely seen as a competitor to Nabucco for the transit of Caspian gas to Europe. At the same time, whilst Turkey's state pipeline company, Botaş, is a founder member of the Nabucco consortium, it is quite clear that its favoured option for the transshipment of Azerbaijani gas to Europe is not Nabucco, but ITGI, the Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy system.

In the course of its energy diplomacy over the last decade or so (and the tradition goes back further) Turkey has managed to antagonize almost all its main suppliers, having failed to follow through on agreements with Azerbaijan, Russia, and Iran. It does appear, however, as if energy minister Yildiz is making a real effort to sort matters out, with the energy ministry, rather than Botaş, taking the lead in key energy negotiations.

The Bases of Turkey's Energy Policy

Turkish policy currently rests on the following bases.

1. Concluding an agreement with Azerbaijan covering the transit of Azerbaijani gas across Turkey for deliveries connected to all projects other than Nabucco (for which transit terms have already been formally agreed). This would comprise firm agreements on the delivery of six bcm/y of Shah Deniz Phase Two (SD-2) gas to Turkey itself; a renegotiation of the price paid for Shah Deniz Phase One gas currently being delivered (increased prices for SDI gas are already being paid); and an agreement that Azerbaijan will be able to price its gas exports at Turkey's exit points, notably the Turkey-Greece border.
2. Persistently reviewing both the role that Turkey can play in helping shape Azerbaijan's crucial decision on which gas export system to adopt for the 10 bcm/y of SD-2 exports to be exported beyond Turkey. In view of the potential impact on Turkey of this decision, this issue is discussed separately, below.
3. Developing an interconnector with Bulgaria, both for its own sake (it would connect up with storage facilities being developed in Turkish Thrace) and to discourage any Azerbaijani project to supply Bulgaria with gas by sea, rather than by pipeline across Turkey.
4. Developing Turkey's gas storage facilities, to help promote its ability to serve as an international gas hub.
5. Resolving energy issues with Russia, notably the scale of gas deliveries from a country that currently provides Turkey with two-thirds of its gas supplies; resolving the question of the necessary environmental permits for laying South Stream in Turkey's exclusive economic zone in the Black Sea; and settling the issues of the construction of and payment for a nuclear power plant at Akkuyu. Furnishing an environmental permit for South Stream should have been a straightforward issue, since a similar line under the Black Sea, Blue Stream, already connects Russia to Turkey. But Ankara's delay in providing such a permit prompted Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to call on Gazprom in March to provide an instant assessment of the possibility that Russia might deliver gas to Europe by means of an LNG liquefaction plant on the Black Sea. This LNG alternative remains highly unlikely, with Turkey expected to furnish the requisite environmental permitting for South Stream in due course.
6. Keeping open the possibility that a private Turkish company, Som Petrol, could import large volumes of gas to Turkey via the existing Tabriz-Erzurum gasline, perhaps enabling Turkey to re-export gas received from other suppliers whilst using the Iranian gas for domestic consumption. This possibility, originally envisaged as a *quid pro quo* for a major Turkish role in upstream development of Iran's giant South Pars gasfield in the Persian Gulf, remains highly controversial—and, indeed, unlikely—but the Turkish government has persistently declined to rule it out.
7. Keeping lines of communication open to Turkmenistan, in case a Trans-Caspian pipeline were to be built, thus enabling Turkey to implement a 1999 agreement to purchase 16 bcm/y of Turkmen gas for its own use and transport a further 14 bcm/y to European markets.
8. Developing gas relations with both the Kurdish autonomous region of Iraq and with the federal government of Iraq in Baghdad. In the short term, this relates to the question of whether to implement a preliminary agreement covering a short gasline of around 80 kms to connect the northern terminal of the new internal Kurdish region gasline at Dohuk with Turkey's existing network. The Kurdish region is expected to have a 5 bcm/y surplus of gas during the second half of this year and it is not clear whether this will be supplied to the rest of Iraq, to Turkey or to a combination of the two.

Azerbaijan's export system

Azerbaijan has secured submissions from three rival pipeline projects for transit of Azerbaijani gas to export markets in Europe and these looks set to become the basis of intensive negotiations over the next several weeks—or months. It is also considering backup option prepared by BP, the operator at Shakh Deniz for what it calls a capillary system: relying on upgrades to the Turkish system to deliver gas to the Bulgarian border, and then upgrading the pipeline network in the Balkans to receive—and utilise—the 10 bcm/y of SD-2 gas earmarked for European markets beyond Turkey. Azerbaijan's state energy company, Socar, now has to take two decisions: which export system to choose and which customers to supply. In practice, these decisions will not be implemented until SD-2 comes on stream, now expected in early 2017.

The three pipeline projects are, in *order of optimum volumes for transit*:¹

Nabucco. This project is intended to carry 31 bcm/y from multiple suppliers to multiple consumers by means of a pipeline system from Turkey's eastern borders to the Austrian gas hub at Baumgarten. Azerbaijan is nervous about committing itself to Nabucco, because it does not have enough gas to fill the line itself and does not want, in effect, to pay costs associated for a half-filled line whilst waiting for others to fill it up. Much therefore depends on whether gas from Iraq and/or Turkmenistan can also be secured at much the same time as SD-2 gas comes on stream. The Turkish perspective is curious. Botaş still lists Nabucco as a line intended to serve both Azerbaijani and Iranian suppliers; in practice, the Nabucco developers abandoned the Iranian option some years ago and are now looking to Iraqi supplies (a planned feeder line from Iraq is included in current plans) and possibly to Turkmen input as well. Current Nabucco costs are officially put at around €13 billion. In practice—as with all pipeline project costs—this is probably a gross underestimate. A set of Project Support Agreements by which Turkey and the governments of the other five nations through whose territory Nabucco was signed in Kayseri on 8 June. These agreements (equivalent to the Host Government Agreements signed by Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey for the Baku-Tbilisi-Çeyhan oil pipeline) demonstrate Turkey's official commitment to the Nabucco project. But the actual signing can also be viewed as simply being the fulfilment of something Turkey is already obliged to do.

The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). This project aims to carry 20 bcm/y of gas to Italy by way of Greece and Albania. Its strongest advantage is that its partners include Statoil, one of the companies engaged in developing Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz gasfield, and that it would probably have the least difficulty in actually raising funds for construction of the project on a conventional 70–30 debt-equity basis. The other partners are Switzerland's EGL Group, and Germany's giant E.ON Ruhrgas. The route is shorter and easier than that adopted by ITGI. And because the subsea crossing is shorter, it can use higher compression rates to push through more gas than ITGI. Moreover, it can also take advantage of Albania's ability to provide gas storage facilities in disused onshore gasfields. However, TAP suffers from one enormous weakness: it requires cooperation from Greece. Not only are the Greek authorities firmly wedded to ITGI, but they dislike the concept of any pipeline to Italy going through Albania (although they are prepared to consider a possible spur from ITGI into Albania).

The Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI). This is in fact an agglomeration of existing and planned systems. A 285-km interconnector between Turkey and Greece already exists, coming into operation in November 2007. But the main connection onwards to the Greek coast, together with the so-called "Poseidon" project which would be the interconnector between Greece and Italy, have yet to be built. The system is aimed at delivering some three bcm/y to Greece and a further 8 bcm/y to Italy. In addition, a spur from northern Greece would carry some 1–3 bcm/y to Bulgaria. Turkey strongly backs the ITGI concept. The one constant in its energy relationships to date has been a wish to retain strong energy links with Greece and, through Greece, with Italy. (Italy's Eni is a partner with Turkey's Çalık Enerji in attempting to develop the Samsun-Çeyhan line). One key problem with ITGI is whether Greece will be able to raise the officially estimated €900m required for the onshore section that still needs to be built to connect Komotini in northern Greece with the Adriatic coast of Thesprotia. The subsea route chosen limits optimal throughput capacity to around 8 bcm/y. The Greek public gas authority, DEPA, and Turkey's Botaş have recently been trying to promote the idea that ITGI can also supply gas throughout the Balkans and as far afield as Baumgarten (the intended Nabucco terminal) through utilization of existing pipelines and new EU-backed interconnectors currently under active development in the region.

All three proposed pipelines have their weaknesses as well as their strengths, if they did not, then work would have already started on implementing at least one of them. Nabucco suffers from overcapacity and from the apparent decision of its backers to abandon their original approach of a phased construction of the line in favour of construction at one go of the full 31 bcm/y capacity line (albeit, with a phasing in of compressor stations as volumes build up). Both TAP and ITGI suffer from the problem that Turkey's internal pipeline system will have to be significantly expanded to carry the 6 bcm/y of gas to be supplied to Turkey itself and the 10 bcm/y required for markets beyond Turkey by either of these projects. Turkey has not furnished details on either the current state of its network or of the costs required to upgrade the network. But these costs are

¹ A note on capacities: the figures cited in the main text are *optimal* capacities. All three projects are technically capable of delivering greater volumes without increasing pipeline size but by increasing compression. ITGI says it could go up to 15–16 bcm/y on the Poseidon link to Italy; TAP that it could raise trans-Adriatic capacity to 25 bcm/y and Nabucco that it could raise capacity significantly.

informally estimated at least €4.5 billion. In particular, a new line will have to be laid under the Dardanelles to connect Karaçabey in Turkey and Komotini in Greece.

From time to time, various European officials have spoken of the idea of a merger—by which they seem to mean a coordinated approach—between these rival projects. Turkey has kept silent on this issue. It favours ITGI, but it also wants to see gas exported via Turkey to Bulgaria and the Balkans. How it will endeavour to effect this remains far from clear.

Black Sea LNG and CNG Proposals

It should be noted that Turkey's delay in concluding a transit agreement with Azerbaijan directly prompted Azerbaijani consideration of a plan to develop an export route to Europe by means of a pipeline across Georgia, a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant on Georgia's Black Sea coast and then a regasification facility in Romania (with Hungary and Ukraine also interested in receiving Azerbaijani gas in this fashion). In addition, it also prompted Azerbaijan and Bulgaria to study a much smaller venture aimed at delivering gas (probably at the lower end of the 1–4 bcm figures commonly cited) to Bulgaria in the form of compressed natural gas shipped from Georgia. It should be noted that no producer has yet built an LNG liquefaction plant in another country. Moreover, an LNG plant on the Georgian coast, which would probably cost at least \$4 billion, would constitute an obvious target in the event of any resumption of conflict in Georgia. The bottom line on Azerbaijan's concern with Turkey, however, is summed up in a single line from a senior Azerbaijani official: "We want a dedicated pipeline across Turkey".

International consequences of a delayed Turkish-Azerbaijani agreement

An agreement is a necessary precursor to the full implementation of the SD-2 program. This means that progress on one of the world's biggest energy projects, for which BP is the operator and in which there are substantial other UK interests, is being held up. The consequences to Europe's near-term energy balance are not too severe, but further delays could impact on Europe's increased readiness to turn to gas as a major component in efforts both to promote energy security and environmental sustainability. There is also the danger that Turkey will gain much the same kind of reputation as Ukraine: as a difficult partner where transit is concerned.

Energy Relations with Europe

2. THE OPPORTUNITIES

The Outcome of Cooperation with Azerbaijan

The opportunities flow directly from the challenges. If Turkey is seen as a cooperative partner with Azerbaijan—and that will very much depend on what happens when Azerbaijan makes its choice of pipelines (an event officially due by end-2011 but more likely to take place next year)—then it will be seen as playing a role in improving European energy security that is both crucial and constructive. Under such circumstances, this should at least ease Turkey's somewhat strained relations with the European Commission. But whether, at this late stage, that is enough to prompt the Commission to override the delays to Turkish entry negotiations related to the opposition of Cyprus to the opening of key chapters in the negotiations is quite another question.

But at the very least the point could then be made that just as Turkey is seeking to prove itself a reliable partner of the European Union in the EU's search for energy security, so, too, should the European Union prove to be a reliable partner of Turkey in its quest to complete its negotiations on EU membership.

In strictly energy terms, Turkish cooperation with Azerbaijan on this key issue helps open the way for a major diversification of both Azerbaijani gas exports and of European gas imports. The development of a major new source of imports for Europe in effect ensures that Europe would now be able to import gas via a sixth major system, to add to those that serve supplies from its own North Sea sources, from Norway's "High North", from Russia, from North Africa and imports received as LNG.

In addition, the arrival of a major new set of gas supplies—coupled with the all-important development of a new series of regional gas interconnectors in southern and eastern Europe—has the potential to increase gas-to-gas competition within Europe, to the benefit of European consumers, notably by putting increased commercial pressure on Russia's Gazprom to adopt increasingly commercial approach to its gas sales to European customers, particularly those for whom it is, in effect, currently a monopoly supplier. In time, such commercial pressure should also help further reform Russia's internal gas market.

So, for Europe, much depends on both the strength and nature of Turkish cooperation.

The Energy Community Treaty

The specific issue of whether Turkey will become part of a single European energy space depends on whether Turkey is prepared to open serious discussions on entering the Energy Community Treaty. Turkey helped draft the treaty during prolonged negotiations from 2003–05, but it then declined to sign it in the wake of strong antagonism to the idea of Turkish membership of the EU from Austria and France once its formal candidacy for EU membership had been approved at the end of 2004. As well as ensuring the development of a common

European energy space, signing the Energy Community Treaty would, in effect, cover much the same ground as the Energy Chapter in Turkey's formal EU membership negotiations, since both extend the EU's *acquis* on energy regulation. However, whilst European officials say that Turkey does appear interested in entering into negotiations on signing this treaty, Energy Minister Yildiz has made it clear that opening the Energy Chapter is his government's priority.

This means that any prospect of creating a single European Energy *acquis* extending all the way from the Atlantic Ocean to the borders of Syria, Iraq, Iran and the South Caucasus—thus creating a single transit regime throughout this vast stretch of Eurasia—will likely have to wait on the outcome of Turkey's increasingly prolonged negotiations for full EU membership.

Turkey as an International Gas Hub

Turkey would like to become an energy hub, considering that geography and the growth of pipelines will ensure that a variety of suppliers—including Russia, Azerbaijan Iran and perhaps, in future, Iraq and Turkmenistan—bring gas into the Turkish market and the prospect of a variety of customers—including Greece, the Balkans and Syria—taking it out. But geography alone is not sufficient to ensure creation of a hub. True hubs, places in which gas is freely traded, require market liberalisation and transparency, and although Turkey has had these as goals for more than a decade, in practise it is still lagging in actually implementing its own reform programmes. Recent efforts, now abandoned to secure a preferential premium so that it could buy gas at one price and then sell it at another have not encouraged the idea that Turkey will develop into a genuine trading hub for quite some time.

Remaining Issues

A number of other elements have a bearing on Turkey's energy ambitions and thus on European energy issues. These include Turkey's so far largely unsuccessful exploration prospects in Turkey's Black Sea EEZ; the question of Bosphorus bypass pipelines; the development of Çeyhan as a major refining and petrochemical complex; and Prime Minister Erdogan's ambitious plans for a Bosphorus bypass canal.

Recommendations

The UK government should encourage Turkey to think positively about what can be achieved through developing closer energy ties with Europe, including membership of the European Energy Community.

The UK Government should encourage Turkey and Azerbaijan to conclude their transit agreement as soon as possible. Ideally, the agreement should also cover Azerbaijani gas from sources other than the Shakh Deniz field.

There is a quid pro quo between European energy security and the negotiations on Turkish membership of the European Union. The UK government should continue to encourage both the use of Turkey for transit and full Turkish membership of the EU.

Gas is the most flexible source of additional energy supplies for Europe over the next few decades. Its use should be encouraged, not least for environmental reasons, along with diversification of suppliers and supply routes.

23 October 2011

Further written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

TRADE AND COMMERCIAL ISSUES

1. As part of the the Prime Minister's goal of doubling UK/Turkey trade within five years, UKTI is developing its strategy of increasing collaboration between UK and Turkish firms. UK companies are working alongside Turkish companies on projects such as the Medina airport terminal in Saudi Arabia and an Olympics complex in Ashgabat. This follows earlier successful collaboration between UK and Turkish firms in the development of Erbil Airport in northern Iraq.

2. In February 2011, UKTI hosted a senior delegation for the Turkish Contractors Association when 55 UK companies were introduced to Turkish contractors. A return visit to Turkey is scheduled for February 2012. The Turkish Contractors Association and UKTI are in discussions over the potential for a joint trade mission to a third country. Officials are continuing to engage with individual Turkish contractors to introduce them to UK companies in their specific areas of interest.

3. Below is HMG's latest data on trade flows between the UK and Turkey:

UK TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES WITH TURKEY			
	<i>UK exports to Turkey</i> £bn	<i>UK imports from Turkey</i>	<i>Total value of trade</i> £bn
2007	3.1	5.9	9.0
2008	3.3	6.5	9.8
2009	3.3	6.0	9.3
2010	4.4	7.0	11.3

Source: ONS Pink Book, 2010 (released 23 November 2011), based on IMF Balance of Payments Manual 5th edition.

UK TRADE IN GOODS WITH TURKEY*			
	<i>UK exports to Turkey</i> £bn	<i>UK imports from Turkey</i> £bn	<i>Total value of trade</i> £bn
2007	2.4	4.7	7.1
2008	2.5	4.7	7.1
2009	2.2	4.3	6.5
2010	3.1	5.0	8.1
2011 forecast**	3.9	5.5	9.4

Source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics (taken from uktradeinfo 23 November 2011), based on customs declarations.

* As this data uses a different methodology to the first table, it cannot be subtracted from the first to get trade in services.

** Forecast is based on actual data for Jan-Sept 2011 with a projected figure for October to December 2011 assuming the increase on 2010 for January to September continues for the remaining months.

FCO RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMES

4. Please find attached a list of FCO bilateral projects in Turkey, for which the FCO is providing funding. The document is classified Restricted, as it contains detail relating to SOCA activity and sensitive FCO bilateral work. It is submitted to the committee only on the basis that it will not be published and will be treated in confidence.²

5. Amongst the FCO's current UK-based work force, approximately 20 have passed the FCO Operational exam in Turkish, and approximately 25 have passed the Extensive exam.

6. Approximately half of the jobs designated as UK-based "speaker slots" (at Confidence, Operational and Extensive levels), in Ankara and Istanbul, are currently filled by staff with Turkish language skills. One officer has passed the FCO Operational exam in Turkish, one has passed the Extensive exam, and one is due to take the Operational exam in the New Year.

7. Turkish nationals are eligible to apply for Chevening Scholarships. In the last five years approximately 1440 Turkish nationals have applied for Chevening Scholarships and 102 of these were successful and funded under the scheme.

WIDER UK GOVERNMENT POLICY

8. Under EU law, EU students studying in other Member States of the EU are entitled access to study on the same terms as the host state nationals. In respect of non-EU international students (including Turkey), there are no controls over the number of student places that individual universities can offer or the fees that they can charge. Turkish nationals are not normally eligible to pay only 'home' fees for English/Welsh/Northern Irish, and Scottish, universities; their position in this respect does not differ from the nationals of other EU candidate states.

9. However, the UK Government allows the children of Turkish workers (a Turkish national who is ordinarily resident in the UK and is, or has been, lawfully employed in the UK) in the UK to access Higher Education as "home" students, provided the student is ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course and has been ordinarily resident in the EEA, Switzerland or Turkey for three years preceding the course. This relates to the EEC-Turkey Association agreement and is not the case for nationals of other candidate states.

10. We can confirm that in July 2011, the NSC Emerging Powers Sub-Committee discussed priority areas for delivery against the UK-Turkey Strategic Partnership.

² The document was superseded by an unclassified version which we publish at Ev 75.

EU ISSUES

11. The negotiating framework for Turkey, as for other EU candidate countries, sets out the guiding principles on which accession negotiations should be based. The scope of any derogation on free movement of persons would be defined in Turkey's draft Accession Treaty and require agreement by all EU Member States, as well as Turkey.

12. The Government considers that the wording in Turkey's negotiating framework is unclear and therefore open to both interpretations. The right to free movement is a fundamental principle of Union membership and therefore it is unlikely that any proposal to exclude Turkish nationals permanently from exercising rights of free movement after accession would be acceptable. However, the framework implies that Member States can negotiate lengthy transitional periods on the free movement of persons. As negotiations progress, we will seek further clarity from the Commission on the intention and scope of the framework in the area of free movement.

13. We have committed to applying transitional controls on free movement, as a matter of course for all new EU Member States, which will include Turkey.

14. Please find below a list of pan-EU schemes and funding programmes for Turkey. Please note that Turkey doesn't participate in all of these but in principle it could apply to do so. The list presents the Community Programmes (<http://www.2007-2013.eu/community.php>) for the 2007-13 budgetary period through focusing on the new programmes, as well as the programmes that continue to exist:

Civil Protection Financial Instrument	CIP
Customs 2007	Consumer Programme
eContentplus Programme	Culture Programme (2007-13)
Erasmus Mundus	Europe for Citizens
FP7	Fiscalis
ID ABC	Fundamental Rights and Justice
LEFE+	Integrated Action Programme in Lifelong Learning
Media	Marco Polo II
Public Health	Progress
Security and Safeguarding Liberties	Safer Internet plus
Youth in Action	Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows

15. The EU negotiating chapters which cannot be opened with Turkey owing to a veto exercised by one or several individual Member States, aside from the eight chapters which are blocked under the December 2006 decision of the General Affairs Council are as follows:

<i>Chapter Blocked</i>	<i>Member State</i>
Energy	Cyprus*
Foreign, Security & Defence Policy	Cyprus
Free Movement of Workers	Cyprus
Judiciary & Fundamental Rights	Cyprus
Justice, Freedom & Security	Cyprus
Education & Culture	Cyprus
Agriculture & Rural Development	France (overlapped with GAC 2006 decision)
Economic & Monetary Policy	France
Regional Policy	France
Financial & Budgetary Provisions	France
Institutions	France

*Cyprus has let it be known that it will veto any effort in the European Union to open the energy chapter.

SECURITY ISSUES

16. The UK is at the forefront of EU member States' action against the PKK. This has included recent and successful police operations to disrupt PICK fundraising in the UK. This has led to several arrests, asset seizures and a significant reduction in fundraising revenue.

17. The United Kingdom Government offered to cede just under 50% of its Sovereign Base Area territory to a reunified Cyprus in the event of a successful conclusion to the settlement negotiations. This offer was not subject to review under the Ministry of Defence's study of the Sovereign Base Areas. The study is on schedule to be submitted to the Defence Secretary by the end of 2011.

Supplementary written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

DEFENCE INDUSTRY CO-OPERATION

1. Defence Minister, Gerald Howarth, signed a Defence Industrial Cooperation MOU with the Turkish Ministry of National Defence (MoND) during the State Visit of President Gül. The MOU provides for a committee to be formed to meet at least annually staffed from the MOD and UKTI DSO and from the Turkish MoND. The MOU establishes a framework for the potential acquisition of common defence equipment, for scientific and technical cooperation to meet the needs of both our armed forces and the development of joint projects.

2. Two other industry-to-industry agreements were signed during the State Visit:

- Thales UK and Aselsan on the series of Missile Launchers for the Lightweight Multi-role Missile (LMM).
- MBDA UK with Roketsan and Tubitak Sage on the development of missile and rocket systems.

3. Any UK defence sales made under these agreements will be subject to UK export controls in the usual way.

UKTI STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING TRADE WITH TURKEY

4. UKTI's strategy for achieving the Prime Minister's goal of doubling trade with Turkey is given at Annex A.

TRADE BARRIERS TO EXPORTS OF SCOTTISH WHISKY TO THE TURKISH MARKET

5. HMG is aware that the current Turkish system of control certificates, the lack of controls over counterfeit spirits, and the differential in excise duties between imported and domestic spirits, combine to frustrate exports of UK spirits to the Turkish market. Although control certificates are set to be abolished in 2012, the HMG will monitor very closely any plans by the Turkish authorities to introduce an alternative system with similar effects. UKTI staff in Ankara are discussing with the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture how to reduce the numbers of counterfeit spirits circulating in the Turkish market. They are also working with the EU Delegation in Ankara to press the Turkish authorities on the need to deliver against Turkey's Action Plan, agreed with the EU, for elimination of discriminatory taxation on spirits.

EU FOREIGN MINISTERS ARTICLE SUPPORTING PROGRESS IN TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION

6. To clarify, the article referred to in Mr Lidington's evidence session was the article for the EU Observer "The EU and Turkey: steering a safer path through the storms", signed by the Foreign Ministers for Lithuania, Sweden, Latvia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia and the UK.

10 January 2012

Annex A

UKTI TURKEY STRATEGY

THE GOAL

To use our network to contribute to HMG's prosperity/growth agenda by delivering the Prime Minister's target of doubled trade (from 2009 levels) between the UK and Turkey by 2015.

DELIVERY

We will achieve this by helping UK business to engage more actively and strategically in Turkey, "Europe's emerging economy," building successful and durable business relationships, and by attracting more Turkish investment into the UK. This will involve:

- identifying and developing high value business opportunities;
- encouraging and supporting SMEs;
- promoting the UK as an attractive and beneficial destination for investment;
- creating a dynamic bilateral collaboration in science and innovation; and
- using our contacts with Turkey to support UK bids for contracts and to resolve market access issues.

PRIORITY SECTORS

We will give particular priority to the sectors we judge offer the best opportunities to UK business:

- energy and renewables;
- ICT;
- infrastructure from design to construction, and including railways, ports, and airports;

- financial and business services;
- defence technology; and
- education and skills.

CHALLENGES

Competition in the market is fierce, from international and Turkish companies. In Turkey, we need to persuade the authorities to create the regulatory transparency and consistency needed to deliver a predictable, level playing field for business, and to address market access issues. In the UK, we must raise awareness of the opportunities and market conditions in Turkey, and of the benefits from partnerships with Turkish companies to sell into and work in third markets.

THE TOOLS

We can use:

- our UKTI network, which we are reshaping to provide more extensive regional coverage;
- ministerial visits and contacts;
- senior business visits and contacts;
- the JETCO (Joint Economic and Trade Committee) and its annual Ministerial meeting to assess the business environment and discuss opportunities and problems;
- the UK Business Council of DEIK (Turkish Foreign Trade Promotion organisation);
- the UK/Turkey CEO Forum, which brings together leading CEOs and reports their views directly to Prime Ministers in both countries;
- the newly-formed Knowledge Partnership to promote collaboration in science, technology and higher education from university to industry; and
- the Tatlidil, a new annual networking forum involving business, politics, and academia.

MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

- Annual progress towards the 2015 target.
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Further supplementary evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION ON FCO PROJECTS IN TURKEY: 2011–12

<i>Funding Programme</i>	<i>Current projects—title</i>	<i>Period of Funding</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Funding Organisations</i>
DIV—Reuniting Europe Fund	Supporting Ministry of Interior and the work of local administrations in Turkey in making more effective use of EU funds	April 2011 to March 2012	Enabling local administrations to make more effective use of EU funds.	FCO
	Public Engagement in Strategic Planning and Policy Making	August 2010 to February 2012	Improving the capacity of Turkish Government institutions to increase public involvement in state-wide strategic planning.	FCO
	EU Communication Campaign	May 2011 to February 2012	Improving the communication/public diplomacy skills of key public officials in the Secretariat General for European Affairs (EUSG), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister's Office of Public in order to promote Turkey's EU accession to the general public.	FCO
	Turkish Local Media Campaign	April 2011 to March 2012	Raising local media awareness in Turkey about the EU and Turkey-EU relations.	FCO
	Enhancing the Capacity of the Inspection Board of the Ministry of Interior	August 2011 to May/June 2012	Enhancing the capacity of the Inspection Board of the Ministry of Interior.	FCO
	Protection of vulnerable People, Especially Women, in line with EU standards	August 2011 to May 2012	To ensure that vulnerable groups, especially women subjected to violence, are given sufficient legal protection.	FCO

<i>Funding Programme</i>	<i>Current projects—title</i>	<i>Period of Funding</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Funding Organisations</i>
Bilateral Programme Budget	Raising Awareness about Women's Rights	April 2011 to March 2012	To prevent violence and discrimination against women (a major social issue in Turkey) by increasing the awareness of leading religious officials on gender issues.	FCO
	International Criminal Court in 100 Questions	April 2011 to March 2012	To raise awareness about the International Criminal Court in Turkey.	FCO
	Sexual assault in Turkey: Improving reporting procedures	April 2011 to March 2012	To change perceptions and improve handling procedures for rape and sexual assault victims by the Local Authorities (Prosecutors, Police, Health) in the Mugla region.	FCO
	Pembe Hayat QueerFest	April 2011 to March 2012	Raising awareness and visibility on LGBT rights in Turkey, thereby advancing the case for Turkish accession to the EU. Funding support for a film festival to take place in Ankara.	FCO US Embassy; Embassy of Netherlands; Embassy of Finland; Embassy of Denmark; Embassy of Germany; Embassy of Norway; Planet Romeo FCO
	Human Rights and Gender Training with Youth	April 2011 to March 2012	Project is targeted at increasing awareness of Human Rights in the Diyarbakir region. Participants would attend seminars on the subject of human rights and gender equality.	
	Environmental Protection project in southern Turkey	October 2011 to February 2012	The June Haimoff foundation together with the local and British community has worked for over 25 years to protect the sea turtle in the Dalyan/Mugla region of Turkey. The project will pave the way in the area for a subsequent the "Crimestoppers" project, helping to establish better relations with the local government.	FCO
	Restriction of Political Speech on the Internet: Implications for freedom of expression in Turkey	April 2011 to Mar 2012	To understand whether the current Turkish approach to internet regulation complies with the requirements of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.	FCO

<i>Funding Programme</i>	<i>Current projects—title</i>	<i>Period of Funding</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Funding Organisations</i>
Prosperity Fund	Simplification of Administrative Burdens in FDI Intensive Sectors and Import Procedures A Self Certification Programme in Energy Efficiency in Buildings Creating Low Carbon Pathway via Green Procurement	July 2011 to March 2012 July 2011 to March 2012 July 2011 to March 2012	The Project will map administrative burdens and identify cost saving options in selected FDI intensive sectors and in relation to import licenses and related procedures. To improve Turkish awareness of the need to develop more energy efficient buildings. To pioneer the introduction of green procurement policies in Turkey by assisting in implementing green procurement policies of key public and private sector institutions in Turkey. Improving the emission transparency and climate change responsiveness of Turkish companies.	FCO World Bank (in kind) FCO FCO
	Expanding the Carbon Disclosure Project to Energy Intensive Sectors in Turkey	July 2011 to March 2012		FCO Sabanci University (in kind)
	Supplier Academy- Learning about Low Carbon Economy	November 2011 to March 2012	Decreased carbon emissions and increased knowledge on low carbon economy of the retail sector suppliers in Turkey.	FCO TESCO (£13850)
	China's 12th five year plan and the global "low carbon race": sharing lessons and influencing the strategic outlook in Turkey for low carbon transformation	November 2011 to March 2012	Use China's experience and lessons in low carbon development in order to inform and influence a more proactive position among key Turkish officials/business leaders.	FCO
	Tactical Fund: Increasing the capacity of Turkish decision-makers and businesses on carbon and sustainability foot-printing	April 2011	Increase awareness and technical capacity of Turkish decision-makers and businesses in the areas of carbon and water foot-printing in order to inform the development of a new regulation in 2011.	FCO Global Tan Energy (in kind)
Commercial Diplomacy Fund	Improve and create market opportunities for UK maritime sector	October 2011	To facilitate UK SME penetration into Turkish naval market to increase bilateral trade.	FCO

<i>Funding Programme</i>	<i>Current projects—title</i>	<i>Period of Funding</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Funding Organisations</i>
Returns and Reintegration Fund	Fighting Against Illegal Migration Through Fraud Detection	January 2010 to March 2012	To prevent illegal migration through capacity building by means of detecting forged documents.	FCO US (joint funding) FCO
	Support to the establishment of civilian migration and asylum structures and policies in Turkey	June 2011 to March 2013	To improve the capacity of new Turkish Bureau to manage migration and asylum by drawing on UK experience and input of Turkish NGOs and academics.	FCO
	<i>Best Practices Exchanges</i> Developing a Framework for Risk Analysis as part of the Turkish Integrated Border Management (IBM) Strategy Language Analysis Support for Turkish National Police	December 2010 to December 2011 June 2011 to March 2012	To enhance the Risk Analysis Capability of the National Integrated Border Management Task Force—by the introduction of an EU compliant model of risk analysis across all frontline Integrated Border Management (IBM) relevant agencies. Support capacity building in nationality detection through interviews for illegal migrants and asylum seekers who claim to be from different nationalities. Support Turkish authorities in legislation drafting, language analysis/nationality testing, returns to difficult third countries, AVR and document fraud.	FCO
	<i>Tactical Fund</i> Joint needs assessment to identify priority areas for Turkish government for best practice exchange.	January 2012 to March 2013		
	<i>Assisted Voluntary Return Program</i> Voluntary removal and assistance of illegal migrants from Turkey	January 2012 to December 2012	Support Turkish authorities in combating illegal migration through assisting voluntary return of the illegal migrants through IOM.	

*This annex summarises those FCO projects in Turkey for which information is available at an unclassified level.

12 January 2012

Further written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

- There are currently 22 UK-based staff in Ankara and 24 in Istanbul (this includes one “network shift” position in Istanbul). The network shift will add a further two positions—one in Ankara and one in Istanbul which have both been appointed. Most UK-based positions in Ankara and Istanbul contain some element of political work.
- The recommended number of hours of training from beginner to extensive level in Turkish is 960 hours of one to one tuition. The allowances for an extensive Turkish speaker are: oral £1,781, written £1,781 and translation only £1,603 all per annum.

15 March 2012

Additional Written evidence

Written evidence from MigrationwatchUK

TURKISH ACCESSION TO THE EU: IMMIGRATION ASPECTS

SUMMARY

1. Striking similarities with the miscalculation over Poland, including government complacency. We should insist on an “opt-in” arrangement.

INTRODUCTION

2. There are very striking similarities with the accession of the Eastern European countries, especially Poland, in 2004. In particular, four major drivers of immigration are very similar:

(a) *A large gap in living standards*

GDP per head for Poland in 2004 was \$13,000 while for the UK in the same year it was \$32,000. Turkish GDP per head was \$14,000 in 2008 while in the UK it was \$35,600.¹(In Eastern Turkey they are poorer still). In both cases the UK was roughly 2.5 times as wealthy as the new member.

(b) *Size of population*

Poland’s population was about 40 million but declining. The present population of Turkey is 76 million and the UN projects that it will increase to 97.4 million in 2050. Of the latter, some 12 million will be in the age group 15–24 who are most likely to migrate. Eastern Turkey has a particularly high birth rate and is a likely source of migrants.

(c) *An existing community*

The UK already has a population thought to be up to ½ million people of ethnic Turkish origin—many, of course, from Cyprus. However, whereas the UK’s Turkish Cypriot population has been coming here since before Cyprus independence in 1960 and arrived speaking some English. Mainland Turks did not begin to come here in significant numbers until the 1980s and 1990s. The Annual Population Survey gives a figure of 64,000 Turkish born living in the UK between October 2009 and September 2010. The Home Office however estimate the population to be far larger. They estimate that there are 150,000 Turkish nationals among 500,000 people of Turkish origin currently living in the UK.² There were very few Poles of working age in the UK in 2003.

(d) *Benefits*

The number of benefit claimants from Poland is starting to increase, as is the pressure on maternity services. The EU benefit system which extends benefits available in richer member states to those from members which are very much poorer was drawn up at a time when the accession of much poorer states was not envisaged. Over time, this is bound to be a pull factor for both Poles and Turks.

EXTENSION OF BORDERS

3. Just as the accession of Poland generated new and extensive borders with Ukraine and Belarus, the accession of Turkey would result in land borders with Syria, Iraq, Iran and Armenia, all of which would be very difficult, if not impossible, to police.

INTEGRATION

4. The Poles are Catholics of European heritage, and while there are Western-oriented Turks, the bulk of Turkish immigrants in this country, and elsewhere in Europe, are poorer, less educated Muslims of Middle Eastern heritage who form the majority of Turkey’s population. Experience so far suggests that it is such Muslims who have more difficulty integrating into a European community, as we have seen with Turks in Germany.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

5. It is astonishing that, despite the profound public disquiet about immigration, the government appear to have made no effort to estimate the impact of Turkish accession on immigration to the UK—especially as all the circumstances point to a very high potential for migration. It is not enough to suggest that such an exercise is impossible until we know the terms of the accession agreement. The process should be the reverse of this. We

¹ Source: OECD.

² HAC 10th Report into Turkish Accession (Paragraph 96)
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmhaff/789/78906.htm>

should set our accession conditions in the light of our assessment of likely immigration flows and, preferably, on actual patterns once established.

6. Nor is it sufficient to point to relatively low flows from Turkey in present conditions. This risks exactly the same error as was the case in Poland where there was a total failure to appreciate the impact on migration flows of a completely new situation. We could, once more, find that the private sector reacts very much more swiftly than the government. The availability of cheap Labour in Poland led rapidly to the growth of employment agencies to recruit them and cheap travel to transport them. Nor can we assume that economic growth in Turkey, even if it occurs, will be such as to keep Turkish workers at home. We could well find a situation in which young Turks migrated to Europe for wages several times higher than are available in Turkey, while workers from neighbouring countries replace them in their previous occupations. Again, we are seeing this with Ukrainians moving into Poland to replace some of those who have gone to Western Europe. It is already the case that 2.4 million Turks make up the largest proportion (7.5%) of foreigners resident in the EU—mainly, of course, in Germany.

CONCLUSION

7. It is inescapable that all the key factors are in place for a major influx of economic migrants from Turkey. We warned of exactly this in respect of Eastern Europe. In July 2003³ we said that the Home Office upper estimate of 13,000 net migration per year was “both highly theoretical and divorced from the realities...”. It was, we said, “almost worthless”. We were right then and we repeat our warning now in the case of Turkey.

RECOMMENDATION

8. In view of all the uncertainties, we recommend that the government negotiates an outcome such that the UK “opts in” to labour market access for Turkish workers only when the pattern of their migration has become clear. If the numbers are as small as suggested, that should not worry the Turks.

15 August 2011

Written evidence from Bill Park, Senior Lecturer, King’s College, London

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkish foreign policy has altered much in the wake of the Cold War, and under the AKP government. It has become more regionally based, more active, more mercantile, more swayed by Islamic identity, and more independent. Although these shifts can be regarded as a “normalisation” of Turkish foreign policy, they can also indicate some distancing of Turkey from its western alignments. Furthermore, Turkish foreign policy is over-stretched, and the country remains vulnerable to regional forces over which it has little influence.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. There is today much comment, conjecture and some concern about the recent direction of Turkish foreign policy. It is argued that it has undergone a ‘paradigm shift’, that there has been ‘a shift in axis’ (from west to east), or that it is characterised by a kind of “Turkish Gaullism”. In the US in particular there is some debate about whether Turkey has been ‘lost’ to the west, and why.

2. This paper will:

- (a) trace the origins of this supposed shift in policy;
- (b) outline its underlying philosophy, and in particular the thinking of Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu; and
- (c) consider some of the content of current Turkish foreign policy, d/offer a critique of Turkish foreign policy as it has evolved in recent years, and e/consider the extent to which a UK-Turkish partnership in Turkey’s region is feasible.

ORIGINS

3. With the end of the Cold War new foreign policy opportunities were opened up for Turkey in the post-communist world. Turkey was the first state to recognize Azerbaijan’s independence and to open embassies in the Central Asian republics, initiatives that were in part driven by pan Turkic aspirations. Economic and cultural agreements followed, as Turkey sought to exploit a ‘soft power’ approach to the region. Turkey also initiated the formation of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992, as an element in its opening to the Balkan and Caucasus regions. In the Yugoslav crisis of the 1990s, Turkey played an active and constructive role, whilst championing the Bosnian Muslims.

³ Migrationwatch Briefing Paper 4.1.

4. Even before the November 2002 election of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, Turkey had sought to restore relations with Greece. In the Middle East, the 1998 crisis with Syria heralded a remarkable transformation of the hitherto frosty relationships between Ankara and Damascus. This opening reflected the greater diplomatic fluidity and room for manoeuvre that were now replacing the rigidities of the Cold War.

5. There were other developments that influenced the subsequent course of Turkish foreign policy. During the 1990s Turkey suffered economically as a consequence of the embargo on Saddam's regime, and politically with the emergence of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq and its use as a safe haven by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Turkey was uneasy with the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. Turks across the political spectrum now pondered the mismatch between Ankara's interests in the region, and those of the US—and indeed the UK.

6. The 1980s Ozal's government also laid the economic foundations for the emergence of the mercantile and trading economy that we see today. This has created an imperative for Turkey to align its foreign policy with its economic interests, which are now increasingly focused on the immediate neighbourhoods—although the Arab Spring might yet cause a reconsideration of this. Turkey's spectacular economic growth has also led to an increase in demand for energy, most of which is obtained from Russia and Iran. This has meant that its relationships with Moscow and Tehran in particular have become imperative for Turkish foreign policy makers.

7. All this preceded the 2002 AKP election victory. In a reactive, incremental, not always fully articulated way, both the context and content of Turkish foreign policy was already undergoing considerable change by the time the AKP gained office.

THE AKP'S FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH

8. The AKP's November 2002 election victory was seen as a domestic challenge to the secular and Kemalist order in Turkey. The events of 9/11, and the 'clash of civilisations' thesis with which it sometimes became associated, put AKP-led Turkey under the international spotlight too. In fact, the new AKP government prioritised Turkey's EU bid, leading to the opening of accession negotiations in October 2005. It showed considerable political courage in its support for a solution to the Cyprus crisis. Trade, tourism, and military and intelligence cooperation with Israel was sustained, and in November 2007 Shimon Peres became the first Israeli president to address the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA).

9. Turkey also tried to soften the confrontational post 9/11 global diplomatic atmosphere. Thus, in 2005 Turkey and Spain jointly initiated the 'Alliance of Civilisations' under the auspices of the UN. Its purpose is to help counter the forces that fuel polarisation and extremism, and encourage instead greater dialogue and understanding. Turkish secretary general of the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the first Turkish incumbent of that post, has been instrumental in persuading the organisation to reform and to adopt a programme of action. As Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu noted in his speech at the OIC's foreign ministers meeting in May 2009, 'this guiding document embraces shared values and principles that uphold peace, transparent, accountable and democratic good governance, the rule of law, the rights of women, respect for human rights and human dignity'. Indeed, Washington has sought to present Turkey as a 'model' to less democratic and less developed Muslim states, first in Central Asia and then in the Middle East.

10. Turkey constructively supported the UN mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for Afghanistan in December 2001, and has been a force contributor ever since. Turkey has twice commanded ISAF and currently has around 1,700 troops in the country. Turkey is also contributing 1,000 Turkish troops to the UN SCR 1710—mandated UNIFIL mission in southern Lebanon. In recent years Ankara has also engaged energetically in mediation between regional adversaries. It has sought to mediate between states (Israel-Syria, Syria-Iraq, Serbia-Croatia-Bosnia, Iran-US, Pakistan-Afghanistan etc) and within states (between factions in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and most recently between the Libyan government and opposition). At least during the early years of the AKP government Turkey's western allies, including the UK, were generally content with the direction of Turkish foreign policy.

11. However, Ankara is guided by a set of ideas that pose challenges to Turkey's traditional western alignments. First as foreign policy adviser, then since May 2009 as Foreign Minister, Davutoglu is identified as the driving force behind this "new" Turkish foreign policy, although Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul also have significant inputs. Davutoglu's main tenets are that:

- Geopolitically, historically, and increasingly economically, Turkey is a central rather than a peripheral country. Thus, it can forge links with and between regions, and across civilisations. Its own wellbeing depends on multiregional security and stability. It is simultaneously a European, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Balkan, Caucasian, Eurasian, Middle Eastern, Islamic, democratic, and economically emerging (member of G20, 17th largest economy in the world) country, and its foreign policy should reflect that complexity and multidirectionality.

- Turkey should strive to achieve “zero problems” with and between neighbours. This requires diplomatic engagement, and mediation, and has obliged Turkey to interact with regimes of all types (in Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan etc). It also requires an emphasis on “soft” power—trade, diplomacy, cultural interaction and societal contact—rather than on “hard” power. This foreign policy approach might eventually have an impact on the size of the Turkish military, to add to challenge to its domestic political status that is currently underway.
- Western hegemony is coming to an end. A multipolar, culturally diverse, and globalised international system is emerging. In this new global order, Turkey’s experiences and prospects are similar to those of the emerging powers—the so-called “BRICS” (Brazil-Russia-India-China)—and its foreign policy is likely to exhibit a comparable independence and content.
- Turkey is now a mercantile state, and this too should drive its foreign policy and determine its interests. Turkey’s trade with its regional neighbours has soared, and EU trade as a percentage of the Turkish total has declined.

SOME WORRIES ABOUT TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

12. Some of Davutoglu’s ideas, and their implementation, have worried the west. They imply that Turkey’s western alignments enjoy lower priority, and that Turkish foreign policy is undergoing a deeper “axis shift”. The slowdown in Ankara’s EU-inspired domestic reform programme reinforces this impression. Erdogan’s harsh rhetoric towards Israel offers another example, although his sentiments broadly reflect those of the Turkish public. The 2006 hosting in Istanbul of Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal, the January 2009 row between Erdogan and Shimon Peres in Davos, the October 2009 cancellation of an air force exercise involving Israel, and above all the May 2010 Gaza humanitarian aid convoy crisis, all further highlight the apparent shift in Turkish policy.

13. Turkey also seems to have gone out of its way to befriend some of the region’s more anti-western regimes, including Iran and Syria. Erdogan congratulated Ahmedinijad on his contested election victory, and Turkey has sought to develop its energy relationship with Iran in the face of US unease. In the summer of 2010, Turkey not only sought with Brazil to secure a nuclear swap deal with Iran, but also voted against a subsequent toughening of UN Security Council sanctions against Iran. Erdogan has also courted Sudan’s President Omar al Bashir, and in November 2010 became the last recipient of Ghaddafi’s International Prize for Human Rights. Indeed, Erdogan’s actions and utterances appear to wreak most of the damage to western perceptions of Turkey, and should be distinguished from Ankara’s generally more palatable foreign policy initiatives and actions.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE “NEW” TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

14. There is now an Islamic identity to aspects of Turkish foreign policy—for example, in the Balkans where Ankara has made a particular effort to cultivate Bosnia, Albania and Kosovo; and in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. Ankara’s cultivation of the Turkic world is a longer term project, and in any case must contend with Russian and increasing Chinese counter-influences—not least with respect to energy politics. Turkey can be seen as a “model” for Islamic states, although the preferred term in Ankara is “source of inspiration”. Turkey’s support for better governance, human rights, democracy, freedom, and economic development in the Islamic world is clear, but it also thinks countries should find their own path. There is evidence that one current of the Arab Spring has been a degree of admiration for Turkey’s achievements.

15. However, Turkey’s treatment of its Kurdish ethnic minority tarnishes its image somewhat, and its Kurdish problem looks set to worsen. Furthermore, Turkey’s process of democratisation has pursued a unique path, not least as a consequence of the role that its military have traditionally played in the country’s political evolution. This trajectory cannot be readily replicated elsewhere. Nor is Turkish democracy yet consolidated, and a shadow is cast over the AKP’s credentials in this respect. The country is not ready for EU membership, and at least for the moment seems disinclined to prioritise this foreign policy goal. Its treatment of its religious minorities has been less good than that of, say, Syria. In other words, Turkey is not a ‘model’ in all respects, and in any case some of the forces behind the Arab Spring might not even seek to emulate the Turkish example.

16. Turkey’s closer links with Islamic countries have been paralleled by the development of healthier relationships with non-Muslim countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Georgia, Ukraine and Russia. Ankara has also sought to normalise its relations with Armenia. Some have detected a neo-Ottoman strain (although Davutoglu dislikes this term) to Turkish foreign policy given that its regional focus overlaps with former Ottoman territories. However this fails to capture the totality of Turkish policy. Ankara is cultivating Turkic states and, further afield, Pakistan, South Korea, China, and sub-saharan Africa, none of which are former Ottoman territories. Rather, Ankara is bidding to be economically and diplomatically more globally engaged, within and beyond both the Islamic world and Turkey’s immediate geographical region(s).

17. In any case, Ankara’s pursuit of improved relationships with neighbours who also often happen to be former colonies can be regarded as a ‘normalisation’ of foreign policy. After all, most countries seek to engage with their neighbourhood, and most former imperial states maintain contact with their former colonies. What is clear is that Ankara now pursues policies that are informed more by its assessments of its own interests than by any automatic instinct to align with its western friends, and that it is prepared to stand in opposition to US

and EU preferences where it deems it appropriate. In other words, there does appear to be a strain of Turkish ‘Gaullism’ at work in its foreign policy, of a more independent spirit.

18. Turkey also prefers that regional issues be addressed regionally, and isn’t happy with external intervention. This has been apparent in Turkey’s initially cool reaction to the western involvement in the challenge to Ghaddafi in Libya, and its reluctance to fully align itself with the west’s stance against the recent Syrian crackdown. In other words, Ankara is frequently at odds with the west where regional issues are concerned. This inclination inhibits closer Turkey-EU diplomatic alignment with respect to regional issues.

SOME QUESTION MARKS

19. There are some deeper question marks against Turkey’s diplomatic approach, many of which are relevant to the UK’s approach to Turkey. One is that to regard Turkey as central to many regions, and as part of a less west-centric global order, is to inevitably relegate the significance of Europe in Turkish foreign policy. There might not be a drift eastwards as such, but there is surely a drift away from the west, for all Ankara’s continued rhetorical commitment to EU accession.

20. In any case one might query the “centrality” Davutoglu attributes to Turkey. The Balkan states aspire to join the EU, and will probably achieve this aim before Turkey does. The Arab world has internal preoccupations, which could well increase as a consequence of the Arab Spring. Russia remains the major power in much of the former Soviet space. Iran is hardly more trusted by the Arab world than it is by the west. Is Turkey in fact rather peripheral to all the regions that it neighbours? Will Turkey’s new diplomatic approach serve to loosen its western friendships without creating alternatives? Furthermore, Turkish power and potential do not match that of China or India. Indeed, Turkey’s diplomacy is over-dependent on Davutoglu’s ambition and energy. Turkey’s foreign ministry is small, its list of foreign policy issues long and complex, and it is overcommitted to a range of mediation and other foreign policy initiatives. Its behaviour can easily appear as self-aggrandizement, and as over-stretched.

21. In aligning itself with the Islamic or Turkic side in so many of the world’s contests, Turkish foreign policy can serve to reinforce some of those very barriers to interaction that it claims it is committed to lowering. Thus, its sympathy with the Palestinian cause has undermined its relationship with Israel. Its support for Azerbaijan obstructs the normalisation of its relationship with Armenia. Its commitment to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) bedevils its relationships with Nicosia, Athens and of course the EU. Its sympathy with the Turkic and Muslim Uighurs of China blots the relationship with Beijing.

22. In any case, it is difficult for Ankara to avoid being compromised given the plethora of nearby regional conflicts—between Israelis and Palestinians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Russians, Iranians and the US, Iranians and conservative Arab states, and so on. In short, a ‘zero problems with neighbours’ approach is not easy in a region that is characterised by so many rivalries. With the Arab Spring, Turkey has also now found itself delicately poised between its friendships with many of the region’s regimes on the one hand, and its support for democratisation, economic development, and the people’s will on the other. This is proving awkward for Turkish diplomacy, and might in due course return Turkey to a more western foreign policy orientation. Its political and economic prospects in the Middle East region are clearly vulnerable and delicate.

23. In addition, a degree of hypocrisy has crept into Turkey’s foreign policy postures. Thus, Erdogan has criticised Israel’s excesses, but has also embraced Ahmedinijad’s disputed election victory and the Sudanese leadership—despite international condemnation of its human rights abuses. Turkey’s treatment of its own Kurds and its approach to the Armenian “genocide” issue, combined with its failure to sign up to the International Criminal Court, also sit uncomfortably with the norm-based international system Davutoglu advocates. Perhaps in more actively embracing a complex and fractious world, Turkish foreign policy is increasingly mirroring the inconsistencies and contradictions of that world.

TURKEY AND THE UK

24. Thus, although the UK should be relaxed about Turkey’s quite natural endeavours to ingratiate itself with its more immediate region(s), it should also be aware that this will not invariably lead to policies that London will find comfortable. There is an element of “third worldism” in Turkey’s diplomatic stances that could lead Ankara to adopt policies that are as likely to align with those of Russia, China and Iran as with those of the west. Furthermore, Turkey’s professed aspiration to join the EU is both weaker than it once was, and is not currently backed by a sufficient commitment to domestic political reform. Turkey is an increasingly important and crucial country and for that reason should be cultivated and given space. However it is as yet nowhere near as powerful and influential as Turkish foreign policy sometimes appears to assume or believe, and it remains highly vulnerable to external events and forces over which it has little control.

Written evidence from Dimitar Bechev, European Council on Foreign Relations

SUMMARY

- Turkey's regional influence has grown thanks to its democratic achievements, economic growth and the power vacuums in the neighbourhood.
- Turkish neighbourhood policy is driven by pragmatism, owes much to the EU, and is not antithetical to the country's ties with the West.
- The EU has lost much of its leverage over Turkey, complicating the consolidation of Turkish democracy.
- The Arab Spring has shown the limits of Turkey's regional influence and opens opportunities for reinvigorating ties with Western allies. The UK should lead the efforts to engage Ankara.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Dimitar Bechev is Senior Policy Fellow and Head of Sofia Office at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). He is also affiliated with South East European Studies at Oxford, a programme based at St Antony's College, Oxford, as well as with Oxford Analytica. Dr. Bechev has published extensively on the domestic and international politics of South East Europe (post-communist Balkans, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus) and Euro-Mediterranean relations. He holds a D.Phil. (2005) from the University of Oxford. He is the editor of *What Does Turkey Think?*, a collection of essays by leading Turkish political commentators published by ECFR in co-operation with Stiftung Mercator and the Centre for Liberal Strategies (Sofia) in June 2011.

THE RISE OF A NEW TURKEY

1. Turkey is no longer the country the West knew. Once a peripheral member of the Western community Turkey is now at the centre of its own world spanning the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus and beyond. Its foreign policy has undergone change too. The crisis in Libya has shown that Turkey's support for NATO is qualified. Ankara prefers engaging rather than containing Iran, and is comfortable talking to Hamas, Hezbollah and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. Until recently Turkey was amongst Bashar al-Assad's closest friends as well. Its once warm relations with Israel are now in tatters. Turkey is no longer frantically banging on the EU's door but pursues a multi-vector policy serving its commercial and security interests. Ties with Russia are thriving, while Ankara is reaching out to rising powers such as Brazil. Turkish entrepreneurs are making inroads in far-off places in Africa or Latin America. In short, Turkey is now an actor, an economic pole, and perhaps an aspiring regional hegemon—or "*order setter*" (*düzen kurucu*). The paradox is that in the process Turkey has also become more like us: globalised, economically liberal and democratic.

2. The UK and other allies have to take into account that Turkey's new foreign policy does not result from the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party's roots in political Islam but reflects long-term, structural shifts. At the international level, the end of the Cold War was followed by a lengthy and challenging adjustment period in the 1990s. Turkey was at pains to find a new role in a highly insecure and volatile regional environment with conflicts erupting in former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus and the Middle East. Outside the Yugoslav crisis, its traditional alliances have been of little use in dealing with new challenges. The loss of influence by the US after the 2003 Iraq War and the persistence of sclerotic authoritarian regimes in the Arab world opened space for Turkey to emerge as a new pole of power.

3. The second change relates to the profound transformation in the country's political economy and society. Liberalisation reforms opened Turkey to the global marketplace in the 1980s, including neighbouring regions, energised growth and empowered to a new, conservative and economically dynamic middle class. Over time, the latter challenged the secularist establishment. Such tectonic shifts reordered Turkey's relations with the outside world too, paving the way in the 2000s to a policy towards neighbours based on trade integration, open borders, deepening people-to-people contacts—as opposed to the traditional posture reliant on military deterrence and exclusively focused on the West.

4. Since 2002 AKP has harnessed change to expand democratic rule and continue market-friendly policies, with the aid of the EU's political conditionality. Deepening democracy has curbed the power of the self-appointed guardians of the republican order in the military, civil service and the courts, the foresworn enemies of the AKP and its predecessors. Having been re-elected for a third consecutive term, AKP has largely won this battle to emerge as dominant force in Turkish politics (by way of comparison, in the period between 1960 and 2002, governments lasted on average 14 months). The party effectively controls key institutions such as the Presidency, the General Staff, the judiciary and the police. Concentration of power without a properly functioning system of checks and balances is certainly a cause of concern.

5. For a majority of Turkish citizens, rising prosperity is more significant than the AKP's authoritarian tendencies, whether real or perceived. Turkish GDP per capita (at PPP) rose from around USD 3,000 in 2002 to well over 10,000 at present. Unlike the EU and the US, Turkey weathered the 2008 global crisis with few casualties, with economy expanding by 8.2% in 2010 and reaching 11% in Q1 of 2011. Consumption and investment are key components in the growth model. Scholars have written at length about the rise of the "trading state" but Turkey's exports are expanding at a slower rate than imports and the current account deficit has reached 8% of GDP. Government spending therefore plays a principal role with large projects in public

infrastructure and housing. Such initiatives, as well as its popular reform in the area of healthcare, boost the appeal of Erdoan *et al* to voters.

6. Strength at home has empowered AKP to pursue an over-confident policy abroad. Its goals are highly pragmatic. First, engaging neighbouring countries, especially in the Middle East, adds to Turkey's security, eg with the view of the Kurdish issue which tops the agenda. Secondly, to balance its economy, Turkey seeks to open new markets for its vibrant businesses, buying support for the AKP. Thirdly, Prime Minister Erdoan has the penchant for grandstanding on issues outside Turkey, such as the plight of Palestinians, to score points domestically. Last, but not least, Turkish "neighbourhood policy", or "strategic depth" as Foreign Minister Davutolu has it, advances Turkey's claim for a place in the new pecking order of emergent powers. The UK needs to assess Turkey's policy on a case-by-case basis: sometimes Ankara acts in concordance with Western allies (Iraq, Afghanistan), other times its activism is seen as competing though it is essentially geared towards the same goals as the West (Bosnia-Herzegovina), while on Iran or Sudan Turkey has adopted a line clashing with the one pursued by the US and EU members.

THE ONGOING STALEMATE IN EU-TURKEY RELATIONS

7. Turkey's neighbourhood policy cannot be an alternative to the EU. Turkey has become more democratic and prosperous, hence appealing to neighbours, thanks to its engagement with the EU. EU anchored progress in human rights and democratisation, on divisive issues such as the Kurdish question, civil-military relations, the reform of criminal law, freedom of religion, the rights of minority communities. Integration into the EU's Single Market bolstered trade, brought in billions of euro in FDI, and made Turkey's economy more sophisticated, globally competitive and attractive to neighbours. The process predates the AKP but the party was in position to drive it forward and reap the benefits, securing the opening of membership negotiations in October 2005.

8. The EU shapes Turkey's neighbourhood policy as well. What proponents of the "turning East" view fail to appreciate is that, in relations with neighbours, Turkey is re-applying the EU toolbox centred on diplomatic engagement, trade liberalisation, cross-border investment, lifting barriers to free movement of people. Though abolishing visas for citizens of neighbourhood countries might not be compatible with Turkey's desire to gain visa-free travel to the Schengen Area, Turkey is spreading the gospel of integration and interdependence to regions where the EU has little, if any, influence.

9. However, Turkey is less and less interested in the EU. Membership negotiations are now all but blocked. No new chapter has been opened since the EU Council's Spanish Presidency in 2010. The principal stumbling block is Turkey's failure to implement its commitment to open its ports and airports to traffic from Greek Cyprus. Added to that is France's opposition to membership prompting it to block 4 chapters, in addition to the 12 chapters frozen over the Cyprus impasse. There are only three chapters left to open and they are highly demanding and require extensive technical work. Accession negotiations are running out of steam, though Turkey remains committed to the process and will not be the one to "pull the plug", as its chief negotiator famously put it. But the AKP government will not take bold steps to unblock the stalemate either. Despite its secure position at home in the wake of the June elections, Erdoan has given no indication that he is prepared to strike a compromise on Cyprus, reinvigorate the negotiations and revive his country's EU bid.

10. This stalemate suits AKP as it has more urgent business on its hands: the renewed PKK insurgency in the southeast, Syria, possibly initiating constitutional reform as promised during the election campaign. But it also serves Turkey-sceptics inside the EU: France, Germany, Austria, Cyprus and others. The current state of affairs is a serious setback for the UK, a leading advocate of enlargement, as well as various "middle powers" such as Italy, Spain or Poland sharing its stance. With the membership negotiations nearly emptied of substance, the pro-Turkey camp needs to identify novel ways of reaching out to the EU's large neighbour. Cooperation in foreign policy—eg in assisting the Arab Spring—is an option. But the UK government should ensure such initiatives are not seen as an alternative framework to the membership talks. France has been tacitly, and at times openly, supportive of Turkey's focus on the Middle East, as a diversion from the EU track. Germany, by contrast, has been more circumspect, as it perceives Turkey as a competitor of the EU in places like Bosnia.

11. There are further points of friction in EU-Turkey relations that require attention. Turkish businesses, officials and experts increasingly view the 1996 Customs Union as a burden as the EU embarks on bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the likes of South Korea and India. Such FTAs bind Turkey as well without granting reciprocal market access for Turkish exporters. Even more politically sensitive is the EU's reluctance to offer Turkey a visa-liberalisation roadmap, on the model already implemented in the Western Balkans. As a result Turkey has declined to sign the readmission agreement with the Union. The openness of Turkish borders with neighbours in the East as well as the increase of illegal migration across the border with Greece both accentuate fears in core European countries. Unless the EU and Turkey find practical solutions to such contentious issues bilateral cooperation, outside or parallel to the negotiations, will remain difficult.

PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRATISATION

12. The deadlock in relations with EU is not good for Turkey, which still needs Brussels to consolidate its democracy and improve governance standards. Without EU oversight the Turkish state is falling back on its old authoritarian instincts. Restrictive legislation concerning Internet access and the heavy-handed response to

Kurdish militancy are two fresh examples to that effect. To its critics, AKP has proven as susceptible to clientelism and unprincipled power grabbing as its secularist predecessors in government. High-profile court cases such as *Balyoz* (Sledgehammer) involving hundreds of top-ranking army officers continue to deepen polarisation as part of the public sees them as Erdoğan's instruments for asserting his personalistic rule. Many, though not all, amongst AKP's erstwhile liberal fellow travelers have now grown disappointed, especially as the party has embraced all-too-familiar Turkish nationalism.

13. Yet it would be far fetched to claim that the process of democratisation has been reversed. Even without the EU, robust civil society and media are checks against the government excess. The outcome of the June general elections prevents AKP from unilaterally imposing a presidential system, as its opponents feared. Credible parliamentary opposition is the missing link however. The Republican People's Party (CHP) has yet to prove that it has outgrown its former role as an extension of the "deep state" and the anti-AKP military. While Kemal Kılıçdarolu has relinquished his predecessor's xenophobia in favour of a pro-EU, social democratic vision, recently the party criticised the government's efforts at intervening in Syria blaming the AKP of being "a subcontractor of the US".

14. The Kurdish issue remains the litmus test for Turkey's democratic credentials. Despite hopes that a new constitution could accommodate Kurds' ethno-cultural demands, the standoff between the AKP government and the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and the PKK hostilities are charting a worrying trend. Once Turkey's most pro-EU constituency, nationalist Kurds are not as enthusiastic about Brussels as in the past. To them the Copenhagen standards are both too vague and modest, failing to address issues of territorial and cultural autonomy that are of high-priority for the Kurdish activists. The ball is very much in the AKP's court: in addition to the armed campaign against the PKK the government needs to propose a new round of political and legislative measures, in the spirit of its much publicised 2009 "opening", to respond to the Kurds' demands.

WHITHER TURKEY'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY?

15. The ongoing Arab Spring has posed the gravest challenge to Turkey's regional role to date. Zigzagging through the Libyan and especially the Syrian crisis, Ankara has realised the hard way that it cannot have "zero-problems" with both authoritarian rulers and recalcitrant Arab publics. Turkey faces the same transformation-vs.-stability dilemma US and EU policy makers have been grappling for a long time. On the one hand, Turkey would like to remain a source of inspiration (Turkish policymakers refrain from using "model"!) for neighbouring Muslim-majority countries as they look for a way out of the decaying authoritarian status quo. On the other, it fears protracted communal conflicts next door and the shifts in the balance of power towards regional rivals such as Iran or post-Mubarak Egypt. Finally, the AKP government is facing domestic pressure to do something about the wholesale murder of Syrian civilians in the holy month of Ramadan. Yet, save from a military intervention which is not very likely, Ankara has sobered up to the fact it has little leverage left to shape the course of events. That is true elsewhere too. Despite early breakthroughs in 2010, Davutolu's shuttle diplomacy has achieved little in Bosnia-Herzegovina and failed to build bridges to Republika Srpska. The opening to Armenia has been derailed and held hostage to ties with energy-rich Azerbaijan. Little has been achieved regarding the decades-old disputes with Greece in the Aegean.

16. The exacerbation of the Kurdish issue and the armed campaign against the PKK causes additional problems to Turkey's position. It is a thankless job to preach conflict-resolution abroad, with a conflict in your own backyard. Furthermore, it is ironic that Turkey should enjoy better relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq than with its own citizens, particularly the nationalist supporters of the BDP. The festering Kurdish issue tarnishes Turkey's reputation as a (potential) model for Arab neighbours. Paradoxically, the "old" Turkey where the military set red lines and overthrew elected politicians are as much a model for countries like Egypt as the more advanced democratic regime built by the AKP. Egypt is now searching for an independent foreign policy role and is reluctant to see itself as a pupil of either the West or Turkey.

17. Turkey's present difficulties are a good starting point for reinvigorated dialogue with the EU and the US. Ankara is belatedly confronting the limits of its ambitions. The attraction of democratic achievement and living standards (that is, its soft power) or commercial weight is not the same as influence. Similar to the EU, Turkey is better equipped to act as a passive, long-term transformative force: projecting an example rather than getting foreign autocrats to do what it wants. Rhetoric has backfired creating inflated expectations of what Ankara could deliver in Syria and elsewhere. What is even worse, the rapid deterioration of relations with Syria strengthens Iran's hand at the expense of Turkey, which once believed that it could lure the Assad regime away from its long-standing alliance with Tehran. The cracks in Turkey's neighbourhood policy should nudge Ankara towards reaffirming links with Western allies in a joint effort to respond more credibly to the upheavals engulfing the Middle East and North Africa. UK should push forward in engaging and binding Turkey more tightly through NATO and/or the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Exert friendly, behind the scenes pressure on Turkey with respect to democracy and human rights. UK can play a leading role here as it is viewed in favourable light thanks to its bona fide support for Turkey's EU membership bid.

- Focus on the Kurdish issue as it remains central to both Turkey's domestic politics and relations with Middle Eastern neighbours. As devolution of power will become growingly important, work out lessons from Northern Ireland that can be used in the Turkish context.
- Invest in foreign policy dialogue, including through the ongoing initiative of the European External Action Service (EEAS), to encourage cooperation in peacekeeping, reconstruction and/or aiding political transition and reconciliation in post-Gaddafi Libya, in Tunisia and Bosnia as well as in stemming violence in Syria.
- Continue work on a roadmap for visa liberalisation. Specify technical and political conditions Turkey needs to meet to qualify for such a concession by the EU.
- Start political dialogue on the Customs Union and Turkey's integration in the EU's external trade policy.

25 August 2011

Written evidence from Human Rights Watch

SUMMARY

This submission focuses on the domestic human rights record of the Turkish Government. Human Rights Watch believes that there are principled reasons, and reasons of self-interest, why the UK Government should attach higher priority to human rights issues in its relations with Turkey.

Turkey is growing in importance across the region, and many reformers in the Middle East are looking to Turkey for help and guidance with their own political and economic reform challenges. Turkey will be a much more credible and effective regional player, and a model for reform elsewhere in the region, if it can demonstrate greater commitment to human rights and the rule of law within its own borders.

In this submission, we highlight some of the key human rights issues currently facing Turkey, especially following Turkey's June 2011 general election. We also make recommendations to the Committee and the UK Government—substantive points that we hope might be raised with the Turkish Government.

II. HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES FOR TURKEY

Rewrite the constitution

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a record 50% of the vote in the 12 June 2011 general election. It pledged to begin immediately to draft a new constitution to replace the 1982 constitution, which is widely seen across the political spectrum as an obstacle to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and the rule of law.

The governing party's 327 seats in the new parliament is three short of the number required for unilateral action. So the AKP will need to work with opposition parties on constitutional reform. To achieve consensus, the government should consult fully with civil society and academics, as well as opposition parties.

A new constitution should remove existing restrictions on freedom of expression and association, uphold the rights of all groups in Turkey and end discrimination against Turkey's various ethnic and religious minorities. It should guarantee the separation of powers, strengthen the role of parliament and limit the powers of the president, ensure the independence of the judiciary, and secure full civilian oversight of the military.

Recommendation to the UK Government

The UK Government should urge the Government of Turkey to introduce far-reaching reforms to its constitution that ensures freedom of expression and association, a stronger role for Parliament, protection for minorities and full civilian oversight over the military. The UK Government should urge the Turkish Government to proceed in this initiative with full consultation with the political opposition, civil society and academics.

Protect the rights of Kurds and other ethnic and religious minority groups

At the time of writing (August 2011), there has been an escalation in hostilities between the Turkish military and the armed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). While the Turkish Government tends to view this issue through the prism of counter-terrorism, there is unlikely to be any sustainable resolution of this conflict without a more concerted effort to strengthen and protect the rights of the Kurdish minority. As part of a comprehensive strategy to address the Kurdish issue, the Turkish Government should end restrictions on peaceful political association, representation in parliament, freedom of expression, and the right to benefit from mother-tongue language education in school. Far-reaching constitutional reform, of the kind proposed above, will contribute significantly to this process. Ending the restrictions on the right of children to learn to read and write in mother-tongue languages including Kurdish would be an important first step.

The Turkish Government's pledge in 2009 to launch a "democratic opening" to address the Kurdish problem in Turkey and to uphold the rights of all groups in society, including the heterodox Alevi religious minority and Roma, represented a ground-breaking shift of language. However, it has not yet been translated into concrete changes on the ground.

In recent years, there has been a serious clampdown on the legal political activities of hundreds of Kurdish officials and activists of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Many face charges of membership of the armed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) for their alleged connections with the Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK). The defendants on trial in at least 16 different cases have faced prolonged pretrial detention, and Human Rights Watch has concerns about the weak evidential basis in a number of these cases. Turkey's wide definition of terrorism still allows for the arbitrary imposition of the harshest terrorism charges against individuals about whom there is little evidence of logistical or material support for terrorism, or involvement in plotting violent activities (see Human Rights Watch's November 2010 report: "*Protesting as a Terrorist Offense: The arbitrary use of terrorism laws to prosecute and incarcerate demonstrators in Turkey*").

Recommendation to the UK Government

The UK Government should urge the Government of Turkey to take urgent steps to end the arbitrary use of terrorism laws against those who express critical opinions, join protests or engage in non-violent political activities.

The UK Government should also urge the Government of Turkey to better protect the rights of minority communities. This should be addressed in the context of Turkey's constitutional reform, by Turkey withdrawing its reservation to article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and by Turkey ratifying the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Uphold women's rights

While the AKP Government took important steps in its last term to improve women's rights, such as becoming the first signatory to the Council of Europe Convention against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women, women's rights in Turkey are still given insufficient protection and priority. The extent of Turkey's gender inequality and discrimination and the scale of violence against women was documented in Human Rights Watch's May 2011 report: "*He loves you, he beats you: Family Violence in Turkey and Access to Protection*". While the new Turkish parliament will have 78 women parliamentarians (out of 550), an increase of 28 on the previous one, greater efforts are also needed by the government to ensure the participation of women in political life and in the workplace. Women make up only 27% of the paid work force in Turkey, with only 19% of them in income-generating work.

Recommendations to the UK Government

The UK Government should urge the Government of Turkey to take further steps to combat violence against women, with an important first step being revision of the Law on the Protection of the Family. This should widen the applicability of the law to unmarried and divorced women as well as married women, and address deficiencies in the implementation and monitoring of police protection orders for victims of domestic violence.

End unfair trials in Turkey

The Turkish government should make the reform of the criminal justice system a priority, and implement the many decisions of the European Court of Human Rights which have found Turkey to violate fair trial rights. The weakness in Turkey's criminal justice system coupled with vaguely drawn laws restricting freedom of expression, assembly and association lead to persistent human rights violations.

Key problems highlighted by the European Court of Human Rights that should be prioritized by the government include prolonged pre-trial detention, and excessive length of proceedings, arising from infrequent court hearings (with defendants often having to wait several months between hearings, delays which are especially concerning in the case of defendants held in pretrial detention).

The Turkish government should abolish the separate system of heavy penal courts whose remit is terrorism offenses and organized crime. The stricter regime operated by these courts undermine defendants' rights. Prosecutors in these courts routinely impose secrecy orders on criminal investigations for suspected crimes, denying defendants the opportunity to know the full evidence against them, and undermining the ability of those in pretrial detention to successfully apply for bail, often resulting in abusive prolonged pretrial detention.

Recommendation to the UK Government

The UK Government should urge the Turkish Government to take concrete steps to address the deficiencies in the Turkish criminal justice system, by implementing the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights relating to fair trial rights, and by abolishing the separate system of heavy penal courts whose remit is terrorism offenses and organized crime.

Uphold freedom of expression

While the last decade has demonstrated the momentum in Turkey for increasingly open debate on even controversial issues, Turkey's laws, prosecutors, judges and politicians are still lagging behind. Prosecutors frequently prosecute individuals for non-violent speeches and writings, and journalists for reporting on trials and criminal investigations. Politicians sue their critics for criminal defamation. Courts vindicate these prosecutions without having due regard to the obligations to protect the right to freedom of expression.

The Turkish government should undertake a comprehensive review of all existing laws that restrict freedom of expression, including provisions in the Anti-Terror Law and provisions in the Penal Code relating to terrorism offenses.

The worrying trend on freedom of expression is illustrated by the internet filtering plan put into place by the government during its previous term. Under the plan, all internet users will be obliged to use internet filter packages at home and at work in order to be able to have internet access. The measure was introduced through a regulation and not a law passed by parliament. In the assessment of Human Rights Watch and other independent observers, it will impose what is essentially a government-controlled internet filter system on all users. The regulation notably lacks detail on the criteria for filtering, while offering no possibility for individuals to challenge decisions to restrict sites. Human Rights Watch already has concerns about the practice of frequent websites bans in Turkey as restrictive of freedom of expression and a violation of the right of citizens to access information.

Recommendation to the UK Government

The UK Government should urge the Turkish Government to lift restrictions on freedom of expression, including by not proceeding with the internet filtering regulation. The UK Government should also urge the Turkish Government and Government officials not pursue legal action against those who criticize the government or public officials.

End police violence and combat impunity

Despite a decrease in torture in formal places of detention over the past 10 years, there are still credible reports of ill-treatment in custody, including of deaths in disputed circumstances, and it is still not possible for domestic or international non-governmental human rights organizations to conduct independent visits on a regular or *ad hoc* basis to places of detention in Turkey.

Police violence against demonstrators continues. Video footage of police using disproportionate force to disperse demonstrations and beating individual demonstrators remain a familiar element of TV news broadcasts in Turkey, and there has been limited improvement in this area of policing. The Turkish Government needs to take further steps to prevent police abuses and to ensure that offending officers and their superiors are held accountable. (All the issues are discussed in HRW's 2008 report: *Closing Ranks against Accountability: Barriers to Tackling Police Violence in Turkey*).

In the context of efforts to combat impunity for torture and ill-treatment, Human Rights Watch welcomes Turkey's commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (CAT), which provides for the setting up of an independent national preventative mechanism for monitoring places of detention.

Given the frequent ineffectiveness of prosecutors' investigations, Human Rights Watch has recommended to the Turkish government the creation of an independent police complaints authority. This body should be empowered to conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into allegations of police misconduct capable of leading to the identification and prosecution of offenders. The Turkish government has plans to set up such a body, but there has been no progress to date, and it will be important that such a body meets the above criteria and to monitor its effectiveness.

Recommendations to the UK Government

The UK Government should urge the Turkish Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and to set up an independent police complaints authority.

ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH AND ITS WORK IN TURKEY

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is a non-governmental human rights organization established in 1978, which now has more than 280 staff members around the globe. Each year, HRW publishes more than 100 reports and briefings on human rights conditions in some 90 countries.

HRW has been working on Turkey for over 20 years, closely monitoring the human rights situation, producing numerous reports and other documents describing its research findings (available at www.hrw.org)

and conducting advocacy, including towards the UK government, especially in respect of UK foreign, development and security policies.

25 August 2011

Written evidence from the European Azerbaijan Society

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission considers the importance of UK-Turkey relations, and the vital role that Turkey plays in the wider region, especially the South Caucasus.

1.1 Turkey has, in recent years, greatly increased its influence in its neighbourhood through a combination of rising economic power and the success of regional engagement through its “Zero-problems” policy. This rising influence is of tremendous importance for securing UK interests in the region, particularly when taking into account Turkey’s alliance with Azerbaijan, where the UK is the largest foreign direct investor.

1.2 Key to maintaining stability in the region and thus safeguarding these assets is to address the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkey’s influence over Azerbaijan will be essential to stop a military escalation, and its border closure with Armenia since 1993 has helped maintain pressure on Armenia to withdraw its troops from their illegal occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

1.3 Turkey plays an extremely important role in the UK’s energy security strategy. It is a transit route for energy from the Middle-East and Asia but, just as importantly, it acts as a counterbalance to Russian and Iranian aspirations to control the energy resources of the Caucasus and Caspian.⁴ This makes it possible for countries like Azerbaijan to implement independent energy policies and allows the UK and EU to work towards diversification of supply through the EU-sponsored “Southern Corridor” projects.

2. SUBMISSION BY THE EUROPEAN AZERBAIJAN SOCIETY (TEAS)

2.1 The European Azerbaijan Society (TEAS) is headquartered in London and also has offices in Brussels and Berlin. The Society regularly organises events across Europe in order to raise awareness of Azerbaijan. TEAS also operates as a networking centre, focusing on such areas as business development, culture and education, thereby promoting greater understanding and co-operation between the UK, Europe and Azerbaijan.

2.2 The value of UK-Turkey trade is over \$9 billion a year. Trade volume between the two countries has continued to develop in 2011, with a 59% increase in exports (to Turkey) and 28% increase in imports during the first two months of 2011, when compared to the same period in 2010. Turkey now ranks as the 15th largest economy in the world, having doubled since the turn of the century. This rising economic power has been matched by the success of regional engagement through Davutoglu’s “Zero-problems” policy. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey has gradually become a regional hub of increasing importance. This rising influence is of tremendous importance in securing UK interests in the region, particularly when taking into account Turkey’s alliance with Azerbaijan, in which the UK is the largest foreign investor, having committed some £20 billion through BP⁵ since 1991.

2.3 The UK has offered solid support for Turkey’s entry into the EU. On his first visit to Ankara as Prime Minister, David Cameron said the country could become a “great European power”, helping build links with the Middle-East. He compared hostility to the membership bid in some parts of the EU with the way the UK’s entry was once regarded. This supportive stance plays well with Ankara, and will enable the UK to take advantage of Turkey’s position as a bridge for engagement to nations such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Lebanon and Azerbaijan.

2.4 As a secular Muslim country, Turkey also serves as a model to other nations in the region and as a useful counterbalance to theocracies like Iran. Azerbaijan is, if anything, even more staunchly secular than Turkey and has long suffered from Iranian attempts to undermine its secular stance. It is without doubt that Turkey’s example and support allow Azerbaijan to maintain independent policies and help to ward off outside fundamentalist interference.

2.5 One of the most destabilising influences on the region is the unresolved Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) and the seven surrounding territories. If the conflict were to escalate again into open warfare, the energy infrastructure would be one of the first targets. This would threaten the UK’s interests in

⁴ Bloomberg—*Iran Influence in Azerbaijan may Unsettle BP’s Oil Investments*
<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-03-31/iran-influence-in-azerbaijan-may-unsettle-bp-s-oil-investments.html>

⁵ Bloomberg—*Iran Influence in Azerbaijan may Unsettle BP’s Oil Investments*
<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-03-31/iran-influence-in-azerbaijan-may-unsettle-bp-s-oil-investments.html>

Azerbaijan. As the biggest foreign direct investor, through BP, the UK has invested £20 billion in the country since gaining independence in 1991.

2.6 Turkey has always supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, and during the war closed its border with Armenia in solidarity with Azerbaijan. TEAS supports the view that the ongoing conflict over NK cannot be divorced from UK foreign policy on security, energy security and also from the commitments and strategic support Turkey has pledged to Azerbaijan. Turkey and Azerbaijan have an extremely strong political alliance and are culturally very close as well, the two often being described as "one nation with two states". As a result, Ankara has pledged not to reopen its borders with Armenia without progress on the occupation of NK. TEAS believes that in the interest of long-term stability, it would be right for the UK government to take a more vocal stance and support Turkey's position that Armenia should withdraw its troops from NK and the seven surrounding regions.

2.7 The *Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support*, signed between Azerbaijan and Turkey in December 2010, pledges that both countries will support each other "using all possibilities" in the case of a military attack or "aggression" against either side. Plans to upgrade hardware for joint military operations, co-operation in "military-technical" areas, joint military exercises and training sessions are also specified. With this in mind, it is worth noting that a conflict over NK could have far-reaching consequences, drawing in Russia on the Armenian side, Turkey on the Azerbaijani side, and Iran would be unlikely to sit on the sidelines. As a member of NATO, Turkey's involvement would have obvious implications for the alliance.

2.8 A recent Chatham House report stated: "By 2020, around 20–30% less natural gas will be available from UK production. This means that imports are likely to rise from a third to around 70% of gas consumption."⁶ In January 2009, disagreements between Russia and the Ukraine resulted in supply disruptions, with 18 European countries reporting major falls or cut-offs of their gas supplies. Although, at this time, the UK was not receiving supplies direct from Russia, it was still affected by the resultant spike in gas prices. Potential repercussions in the future are set to rise, as the UK's dependency on energy imports increases.

2.9 Turkey already serves an important role as a transit country for energy supplies to the EU. The only current gas pipeline that avoids Russian territory is the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP), also known as the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) pipeline. This transports natural gas from the Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan to Turkey. Running parallel to the SCP is another Azerbaijani pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, which opened in July 2006. This exports oil from Azerbaijan, and up to 600,000 barrels a day from Kazakhstan, running along a 1,040-mile route from Baku, via Georgia to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan and on to Europe.

2.10 Europe's total gas imports in 2007 amounted to 300 billion cubic metres (bcm).⁷ The Southern Gas Corridor is designed to open a new supply route for gas from Caspian and Middle-Eastern regions to Europe and the UK. Together, the Southern Corridor projects could provide the necessary capacity to annually deliver 60–120bcm of Caspian and Central Asian gas to Europe, amounting to between 20–40% of overall imports. This would amply meet the EU's targets for supply diversification and help ensure the UK's own energy security needs.

2.11 Nabucco is the preferred project to bring gas to the EU and increase diversity of supply. The cost has been estimated at €7.9 billion, and an intergovernmental agreement between Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria was signed on 13 July 2009. The pipeline is expected to be operational by 2017 and, when complete, it will carry up to 31bcm of natural gas per year. Turkey's participation in this project is essential.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- Turkey is becoming an increasingly influential force in the world. There is a convergence of interests with the UK on several issues, the most important of which are Turkey's role as an energy transit route for Europe and ensuring stability of the Caucasus region.
- TEAS would recommend that the UK government continues to support Turkish accession to the EU, works more closely with Ankara on resolving the NK occupation and steps up efforts to ensure the success of the "Southern Corridor" projects.
- In turn, the UK has much to gain from safeguarding its own interests in the region and in using Turkey as a springboard to increase its presence in surrounding countries.

26 August 2011

⁶ Chatham House Report, *Investing in an uncertain future: Priorities for UK Energy and Climate Security*, Nick Mabey, July 2010.

⁷ European Council on Foreign Relations. *The EU and Russia's Gas*
http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_the_eu_and_russias_gas/

Written evidence from the Embassy of Turkey

TURKEY'S VIEWS ON THE QUESTIONS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE UK

How should the Government's efforts to strengthen UK-Turkey relations be assessed, especially with respect to the economic and commercial spheres?

Turkey and the UK enjoy strong multi dimensional relations due to historical ties, and consequently their foreign policy visions converge in many aspects. The renewal of the "Strategic Partnership Document" during H.E. Prime Minister David Cameron's visit to Turkey on 26–27 July 2010 is a clear testament with regard to the mutual will to further increase the existing cooperation.

The frequency of high level visits between Turkey and the UK also clearly demonstrates the commitment of both governments to deepen relations in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. H.M. Queen Elizabeth II visited Turkey in May 2008 and H.E. President Gül visited the UK in November 2010 to receive the prestigious "Chatham House Prize 2010". H.E. Prime Minister Erdoan paid an official visit to the UK in March 2011 and H.E. Prime Minister Cameron visited Turkey in July 2010. This year on 22–24 November, H.E. President Gül will pay a state visit to the UK upon the invitation extended by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II.

On the other hand, economic and commercial ties constitute an important dimension of Turkey-UK relations. This is also reflected in the bilateral annual trade volume which increased to 11.8 billion Dollars in 2010. As for 2011, in the first half of the year trade volume reached 6.6 billion Dollars. This increase also conforms with the target set during Prime Minister Cameron's visit to Turkey in 2010, which is to work towards doubling the trade volume within the next five years.

The success of the Turkish economy certainly contributed to the intensification of bilateral economic and commercial relations. Indeed, thanks to the comprehensive economic and financial measures taken in advance, Turkish economy has managed to stay on course despite the world economic crisis and grew by 8.9% in 2010. This made Turkey the fastest growing economy in Europe. In addition, Turkey continued providing unique opportunities for foreign investors with its dynamic internal market, young and highly qualified labour force and strategic location, which British companies have also been benefiting from. In fact, British investors have a significant share in FDI inflows to Turkey. Currently 2,298 British companies operate in Turkey, with an investment value of approximately 5 billion Dollars. Likewise, the Turkish private sector has increased its presence in the UK.

Moreover, there is mutual political will to strengthen economic and commercial relations. Prime Ministers agreed in 2010 to invite Turkish and British business leaders to set up a "CEO Forum" to support the two governments in identifying new areas and sectors to further boost relations. The first meeting of the CEO Forum was held in March 2011, within the framework of Prime Minister Erdoan's visit to the UK, under the theme of "Grow with Turkey", with participation by relevant Turkish Ministers and prominent Turkish and British businessmen. The Forum's second meeting will be held in London on 23 November 2011.

The Turkey-UK Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meetings also contribute to the further enhancement of bilateral economic relations. The 3rd Turkey-UK JETCO meeting was successfully held on 27 April 2011, in Ankara.

Mutual visits by business delegations and prominent figures, both from the Government of UK and from business circles also play an important role in boosting relations. Recent visits by Michael Bear, Lord Mayor of London, Lord James Sassoon, Commercial Secretary to the Treasury and Lord Peter Levene, Chairman of Lloyd's of London, have been significant in this regard.

There is still much room to further intensify and diversify economic and commercial relations, particularly when all feel the effects of the global economic crises one way or the other.

To what extent is Turkey a helpful partner for the Government's foreign and security policy, in the Middle East and North Africa, the South Caucasus, Central Asia or the Western Balkans? To what extent is Turkey such a partner for the UK in NATO?

Due to the radical changes in the international environment and the economic, political and social progress it achieved in the last decade, Turkey feels more responsibility to make positive contributions to peace, welfare and stability both in its region and beyond. Along the same line, Turkey started pursuing a more proactive foreign policy based on the vision of averting crisis, developing a sense of ownership of regional problems, promoting dialogue, mutual confidence and cooperation. This effort has become ever more relevant in view of the fact that many of the problems affecting world peace and security are taking place in Turkey's vicinity.

In light of the recent events, the Middle East and North Africa have become regions where the whole world is watching with utmost attention. The movement in the region seems to generate historical steps towards democratization, and demonstrates that the dynamic of change and transformation can no longer be postponed.

The recent developments harbor huge opportunities as well as daunting challenges for the region as a whole. If transition could be managed smoothly, regional socio-political landscape would certainly change dramatically in a positive direction. On the other hand, turmoil in the region would pose serious risks to unity, peace,

stability and economic development, especially if it turns into a protracted conflict. Such a negative outcome would have serious ramifications not only in the region but also beyond. Therefore, much remains to be done and solidarity is more essential than ever to ensure an orderly transition to fully-functioning democracies and economic systems.

Turkey is well-placed to play a constructive role in steering the reform dynamic in the right direction. Not only do we enjoy special historical ties with all countries of the region enabling us to engage in an effective dialogue and cooperation, we also have valuable experience of our own democratization process that can be shared with the regional countries and provide a useful guidance. In this regard, we do not only work together with the transitional authorities in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, but try to encourage positive change in all other relevant cases, including Syria, Yemen, Morocco and others. Likewise, we play a role of moderation in Iraq where ethnic and sectarian tensions are still too high and affect the functioning of democracy. As regards Iran, on the other hand, Turkey is one of the very few countries that has the will and the ability to reinvigorate the diplomatic negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 about Iran's nuclear program.

Against this background, Turkey and UK's policies towards the Middle East and North Africa resemble on many aspects, as both countries are strong supporters of the reform dynamic in these regions and work to resolve conflicts through peaceful means.

Turkey's foreign policy vision towards South Caucasus and Central Asia aims the establishment of long-lasting, durable and comprehensive peace and stability in the whole Eurasian region. Regional economic integration is also a very important aspect of this vision.

Strategic projects which contribute to the development of the entire region, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline (operational since 2006), Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline (operational since 2007) and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway (will be operational as of 2013, are among the main achievements of this policy. These projects will not only improve economic activity between Europe and Asia but will also promote humanitarian contacts.

As frozen conflicts negatively affect peace, security and stability in South Caucasus and in the OSCE zone, Turkey has adopted a proactive policy in order to change the stalemate in this region. The signing of the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the Protocol on the Development of Relations between Armenia and Turkey, on October 10, 2009 in Zurich was a major achievement towards building comprehensive and sustainable peace in South Caucasus. Turkey remains committed to this process. With the same understanding, as tension between Georgia and Russia developed into an armed conflict in 2008, Turkey launched a new initiative, namely the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) to find a new approach to deal with the problems of the Caucasus region.

Turkey supports the preservation of the territorial integrity of Georgia and engagement of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, therefore, attaches importance to the exploration of more creative and conducive ways for the re-integration of these regions to Georgia.

Central Asia is also strategically important for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region. Since they gained independence 20 years ago, Turkey played a leading role in helping Central Asian countries embrace free market rules and provided them support for their integration with Euro-Atlantic structures. Along this line, a network of Turkish businesses has been created across the Central Asian Republics. There are more than 1.000 Turkish-owned companies and several thousand more joint ventures with local partners in the region. Turkey is also a prominent trade partner of these countries.

As such, Turkey actively supports South Caucasian and Central Asian countries' aspirations for integration with Euro-Atlantic structures and intense cooperation among NATO members to reinforce collective security in these regions.

Turkey assumed the Chairmanship of the Conference of Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) with the understanding that the Conference constitutes a proper forum for the promotion of security and confidence building measures in the broader Asian geography. The current Turkish Chairmanship of CICA aims to focus on the concept of indivisible and cooperative security in Asia through dialogue.

Likewise, Turkey fully favors the development of OSCE values and broadening of its activities in South Caucasus and Central Asia. With this understanding Turkey contributes to OSCE projects in these regions, most notably in the areas of border management, customs control, drug trafficking, democratic policing as well as public order. Some of these projects have been implemented with a distinct perspective on Afghanistan where Turkey plays a prominent role in rebuilding the country's war-torn infrastructure through an extensive assistance programme and its contributions to NATO's Stabilization Force, while promoting regional cooperation among neighbors of Afghanistan with tangible and mutually-beneficial projects.

Having unique historical ties and full-fledged high-level political dialogue with all the countries in Central Asia, Turkey also promotes the values and standards of the Europe Union in these regions.

The Balkans remains to be the most fragile part of Europe. It is the test case for lasting peace and stability on the continent. Turkey's policy towards the Balkans is guided by the principles of "regional ownership" and "all-inclusiveness" and is based on four main pillars: security for all, high level political dialogue, economic

interdependence, preservation of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious social fabric of the region. Turkey also supports the integration of the Balkan countries with the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Efforts towards the Balkans were intensified beginning from the second half of 2009. In addition to successfully conducting of the SEECP (South East European Cooperation Process) Chairmanship, Turkey established trilateral consultation mechanisms BiH and Serbia on one hand, and BiH and Croatia on the other, which have proven to be effective and resilient cooperation schemes. These mechanisms greatly contributed to fostering good neighbourly relations, reinforcing regional cooperation and creating a new atmosphere of mutual understanding and tolerance.

Turkey and UK perspectives for the Balkans are quite similar. Both countries attach great importance to the stability in the Balkans and strengthening of dialogue and cooperation in the region. Preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and supporting the country to overcome the challenges that impede its progress towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration is a common goal of Turkish and UK policies. Likewise, support given to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kosovo is another shared priority. Turkey and UK are two allies that lead the efforts of the international community to uphold its responsibility in the Balkans so that the tragedies of the recent past are not repeated.

Turkey, like UK, attaches utmost importance to NATO as the primary forum for transatlantic consultation and action on the security of Euro-Atlantic area. Turkey supports NATO's enlargement to countries sharing the Alliance's ideals and goals as well as enhancement of its partnership relations with the countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Middle East and beyond. The Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation initiative, in particular, were spearheaded and developed by Turkey's active contributions. Against that backdrop, strategic relations between Turkey and UK gained ground within NATO. In this regard, Turkey and the UK continue to maintain close coordination and cooperation on issues high on the Alliance's agenda, particularly on NATO operations and missions from the Balkans to Afghanistan. Turkey's cultural and historical ties with the countries in these regions play an important role for the success of these operations and missions.

A recent example where Turkey and the UK jointly contribute hand in hand to security and stability beyond the Euro-Atlantic area is the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya. From the outset, Turkey has been actively taking part in this operation. Furthermore, Turkey decided to enhance its contribution to the OUP. Thus, one additional aerial refueling tanker aircraft was allocated. Turkey now has three frigates with Special Forces Teams onboard; one submarine, two (aerial) refueling tankers, one logistics ship and 6 F-16 fighters deployed at Sigonella air base in Italy.

Turkey is engaged in her most comprehensive assistance program ever in Afghanistan. Turkey has around 1,20 troops deployed under ISAF. We have extended our lead country role at the Regional Command Capital (RCC-Kabul) for the third time until November 2012. Turkey also provides training programmes to the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police members, both in Afghanistan and in Turkey. Through the projects conducted by its Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Wardak and Shibirgan, Turkey deploys its efforts for the security, stability and development of Afghanistan.

To what extent do Turkey and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) function as models for other Muslim countries and organisations in a way that is helpful for UK Government policy, particularly in the context of the 'Arab Spring'? How should Turkey's role in this respect affect UK Government policy towards it?

The "Arab Spring" has been a historic revelation by the people in the Middle East and North Africa, who have long been aspiring for more democracy and freedom and better living conditions. As a functioning democracy which shares a common history and culture with the region, Turkey supports the legitimate expectations of these people, and hopes that lasting stability and democracy is established in this area.

Following the events very closely, Turkey has established close contact with the people and administrations in the region, encouraging and supporting the emerging reform dynamic, with the understanding that sustainable stability can only be achieved through securing the peace, welfare, security and happiness of the people.

Turkey is indeed a country bound to the Middle East in many ways and naturally, it has many commonalities emanating from history and culture. This is why Turkey is often presented as a model for the countries in the region. Nevertheless, every country has different historical, cultural, traditional and social backgrounds. Hence, it is not possible to adopt a one size fits all approach in the region. Turkey's own democratization and modernization process started almost two hundred years ago and has followed a unique path due to its own specific dynamics as well as its extensive interaction with the Western World, including through its accession process to the EU.

Therefore, rather than a model Turkey could be a significant source of inspiration for these countries. Seen from the region, Turkey is a success story and the Arab people want to enjoy the same level of development. Turkey's success which came about as a corollary of its commitment to democracy, rule of law and market economy is encouraging these countries to follow the same line and adopt a similar attitude. Accordingly, Turkey is ready to share its experiences with the countries of the region to help them advance their own democratization process. Other than sharing of experience, Turkey is also well-placed to help the reforms in

these countries by undertaking several projects in the fields of education, economy, political pluralism and development of civil society, among others.

Should the UK Government be concerned about trends in the quality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Turkey, including the rights of ethnic and religious minorities (including the Kurds) and freedom of expression?

As a result of a transformation process that goes back almost two hundred years, Turkey has covered important ground in integrating with the international community on the basis of universal values, by establishing a functioning democracy based on respect for human rights and rule of law.

On the other hand, especially in the last decades, an important factor that guided Turkey in this effort has been its European Union membership aspiration. In line with the requirements for full membership, Turkish political, economic and judicial structures and institutions are being aligned with European system and standards.

Towards this end, in 2010, a quite significant step forward has been taken in the democratic transformation process through the adoption of the Constitutional Reform Package by referendum on 12 September. This development has displayed the Turkish nation's clear will to live in a freer and more democratic environment. This has also conformed with European Union standards, as the amendment package was prepared with the aim of fully meeting the EU membership criteria.

As an outcome of the provisions contained in the constitutional amendment package, human rights and fundamental freedoms have been expanded and the Turkish constitutional system has been brought in line with its international obligations.

Turkey, as a country deeply committed to the universal democratic values, and with the understanding that no country can be considered as flawless in its human rights record, will keep its political and legal system under constant review for further improvement and modernization to keep up with the highest norms and standards and to meet the evolving conditions and needs of the present era.

Is the Government correct to continue to support Turkey's membership of the EU? If so, what should the Government do to reinvigorate Turkey's EU accession process—for example, with respect to other EU Member States and EU policies, or the issue of Cyprus, as well as Turkey itself? Does Turkey still want to join the EU?

Turkey's membership to the EU will first and foremost enhance EU's ability to play a more effective role in our wider region. Turkey is a strong regional power sharing the same goals and principles with the EU and as such will be an asset for EU's external policies. Likewise as a strong emerging economy with the highest growth rate in Europe, Turkey will also strengthen the EU in the face of important global economic challenges. Finally with its predominantly Muslim population Turkey's membership to the EU will confirm that democracy and its values are indeed universal and EU is a true community of values with a global impact.

As an important EU Member State with a strategic and long-term vision, UK is cognizant of the added value that Turkey will bring to the EU in all these political, economic and socio-cultural domains. Turkey appreciates UK's continued strong and active support to its EU membership process. The maintenance of the vocal and visible support of UK is particularly important at a time when Turkey's accession process confronts politically motivated obstacles.

Here are some examples of what UK can do to reinvigorate Turkey's accession course:

- To continue to send strong messages supporting Turkey's accession.
- To play a leading role in the group of Friends of Turkey and to encourage the members of this group to make their support more visible and vocal.
- To encourage all member states to take the necessary steps in order to prevent Turkey's accession process from being hostage to unilateral interests of certain member states and to overcome the stalemate in accession negotiations.
- To counterweight the Greek Cypriot manoeuvres, prevent Turkey's EU accession process from being taken hostage by the Greek Cypriots.
- To support the Commission's view that "bilateral disputes should not hold back the accession process".
- To make positive interventions and to be more vocal regarding our accession process during discussions among member states at every level, starting from the Council Enlargement Group (COELA) meetings.
- To support starting the process aimed at the removal of the visa barrier faced by Turkish citizens.
- To support the strengthening of Turkey-EU Strategic Political Dialogue.
- To emphasize in appropriate fora the contribution that Turkey's EU accession will bring to inter-cultural dialogue and harmony among different cultures.

- To support the fullest involvement of Turkey in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy and to urge the EU to fulfill its commitments to Turkey in this respect.

To sum it up, Turkey should be made to feel part of the European family.

Accession to the EU is still a strategic goal for Turkey. Turkey will continue its accession and reform efforts resolutely. A significant message regarding Turkey's determined drive towards EU membership is the establishment of the Ministry for European Union Affairs. The Secretariat General for the European Union Affairs has been upgraded to a full-fledged Ministry. Furthermore, a new progressive and comprehensive constitution which will address the needs of all segments of the society will be drafted through a broad consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The new constitution will bring us even closer to meeting EU membership criteria. Yet, the EU should also take steps to overcome the current stalemate in the accession negotiations.

However, the Cyprus issue should not continue to poison Turkey-EU relations. The real remedy to all problems related to the Cyprus issue is the comprehensive settlement. No other alternative could be a real substitute to a mutually agreed political settlement in Cyprus, which would also remedy the unjust situation created by the unilateral EU-membership of the Greek Cypriot side and is indispensable for a successful conclusion of Turkey's EU accession process.

The UN settlement negotiations in Cyprus have reached a moment of truth. A kind of road-map could be laid out during the leaders' third tripartite meeting with the UN Secretary-General in Geneva on 7 July. The leaders are now conducting intensified negotiations until October, when they will meet with the Secretary-General for a fourth time in New York. The target is now a settlement until the end of the year: if convergence can be reached on core issues during the intensified negotiations through a meaningful give-and-take, we believe a high-level meeting with the participation of the two sides and the guarantors can be convened in late 2011 in order to seal the settlement. The Secretary-General shared this understanding in his statement in Geneva and in his last assessment report of 8 August 2011.

This opportunity should not be missed. As the Secretary-General underlines in his last assessment report, "with enough political will, a deal should be possible" and "time is definitely not on the side of a solution". On the other hand, the UN believes that if progress cannot be made until the end of this year, the window of opportunity will close. This, in turn, would be highly undesirable in terms of Turkey's EU accession process. It is therefore crucial to reach a mutually agreed political settlement in the Cyprus issue before the end of the year.

A more active support of the United Kingdom to the ongoing process as a guarantor state in Cyprus and as Permanent Member of the UN Security Council is important in the narrow window of opportunity ahead. Turkey expects the UK to encourage and support the Secretary-General so that the high-level meeting⁸ can timely be convened in a result-oriented manner.

The Greek Cypriot side has been procrastinating since the very beginning of the ongoing process. Their blame-games as well as their exploitation of the current domestic political situation all reflect this unforthcoming attitude. The Greek Cypriots' provocative policy of concluding maritime delimitation agreements and conducting oil/gas exploration activities around the Island is currently the primary destabilizing factor in terms of the settlement process. Turkey expects the United Kingdom, in keeping with its responsibilities as a guarantor state, to do all that is possible to prevent the Greek Cypriots' destabilizing unilateral activities, which could cause serious tension not only on the Island but also in the region especially at this critical moment in the comprehensive settlement negotiations.

On the other hand, as far as the potential difficulties related to the progress in Turkey's EU accession negotiations are concerned, there are ways of overcoming these as long as they contribute to the settlement aim. This was the purpose of our Action Plan of 24 January 2006 concerning the simultaneous lifting of all isolations towards the Island by all concerned parties. But the stance of the Greek Cypriot side displayed until today shows that they have no intention to resolve the "isolation/Additional Protocol/chapters" issue. Turkey will continue to maintain its positive stance in this regard, provided the balance is maintained. If there is a real chance of progress in this area, it might also contribute to the settlement of the Cyprus issue by injecting trust. However, these efforts do not distract Turkey from the efforts for a comprehensive settlement, which must be the priority. It must be kept in mind that any steps taken to facilitate Turkey's EU accession process cannot be a substitute to a mutually agreed settlement in Cyprus, which is an indispensable factor for Turkey's accession to the EU.

How important is Turkey to UK and EU energy security? How compatible are UK and EU, and Turkish, energy interests? How should Turkey's energy role affect UK Government policy towards the country?

Situated at a crossroads between regions containing countries with highly rich natural resources and the largest consumer markets, Turkey constitutes a natural bridge in the flow of these resources from producers to consumers, namely from the Middle East and Caspian region to Europe, as well as UK. As oil and gas resources

⁸ This has also been endorsed in the past by the UN Security Council: "a high-level international meeting chaired by the Secretary-General in which the two communities and Greece and Turkey would participate" (Security Council resolutions 716 (1991), 750 (1992) and 774 (1992)).

are indispensable commodities for economies, Turkey has assumed the responsibility of developing projects which would secure the flow of these resources to consumers through various routes. It is with these considerations that the Southern and East-West Energy Corridors were elaborated. The Southern and East-West Energy Corridors essentially aim at transporting the Caucasian and Central Asian oil and natural gas resources to the Western markets through safe and alternative routes. In this manner, Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline (BTC), Turkey-Greece-Italy Natural Gas Interconnector (ITGI) and Nabucco Natural Gas Pipeline Projects are important components of these energy corridors.

Along the same line, Turkey has been playing a central role in the safe and reliable transportation of Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean for a quarter of a century through the Kerkük-Yumurtalık Crude Oil Pipeline. Furthermore, through realizing the Samsun-Ceyhan By-Pass Crude Oil Pipeline Project, Turkey aims to enhance supply security by creating an alternative route which by-passes the already congested Turkish Straits.

With regard to Turkey-UK relations, energy constitutes a key area where both countries have converging interests and similar objectives. For instance, projects such as the development of Southern and East-West Energy Corridors, which serve the natural gas and oil supply security of both Turkey and UK, constitute particularly important areas of cooperation.

Moreover, as a rapidly developing country, Turkey has one of the highest rates of increase of energy demand in the world (9.8% in 2010). Therefore, there is a huge cooperation potential for UK & EU energy companies as Turkey conducts projects towards meeting its energy demand. Particular areas of cooperation include renewables, clean coal technologies, energy efficiency, as well as nuclear power. Furthermore, companies of both countries are performing economic activities in important third country projects such as the Shah Deniz Phase 1 and 2 in Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, Turkey and UK have established strong relations and common interests in the field of energy so far and these ties should be further developed to the interest of both countries.

26 August 2011

Written evidence from Bahar Yesim Deniz

- I am currently working working as a full-time lecturer at the Department of International Law, Faculty of Law, Izmir University in Izmir, Turkey. I lecture on European Union Law, English Law, Comparative Law and International Law at the University. My main expertise is in the field of European Union Law on which I completed my LLM studies at the University of Essex, UK as a Jean Monnet Scholar of the European Union. Afterwards, I was a British Council Scholar and completed my pre-doctoral research studies at the same University. I am recently admitted to commence my PhD studies on European Union Law at the European Union Institute, Marmara University in Istanbul, Turkey.
- I worked at the—recently-called—Ministry for European Union in Ankara, Turkey as an European Union Expert in the Political Affairs Directorate for five years. I mainly dealt with the legal issues relevant to the fulfillment of the Copenhagen Political Criteria for accession to the European Union and was awarded with a honorary degree of distinction by the Secretary General for my efforts in the preparation of legal harmonization packages. Eventually, I was glad to hear the EU's declaration confirming that Turkey had fulfilled the criteria adequately and decision of opening the accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005.
- I believe that the UK Government is correct to continue to support Turkey's membership of the EU. I think that to reinvigorate Turkey's EU accession process, the most important issue is the development in the field of human rights. As an expert in the preparation and evaluation of the projects in the field, I would like to emphasize the importance of projects to be developed by the UK Government and working with the Turkish Parliament, Judiciary, Government and Turkish NGO's would be useful in this respect.

28 August 2011

Written evidence from Firat Cengiz and Lars Hoffmann

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Firat Cengiz received her PhD from the University of East Anglia and is assistant professor in the European and International Public Law Department of Tilburg University (Netherlands). Lars Hoffmann received his DPhil from St Antony's College, Oxford University and is assistant professor in the International and European Law Department of Maastricht University (Netherlands). The authors have a joint research agenda in Turkish-EU relations and have published on this issue in, among other places, Parliamentary Affairs (forthcoming), Open Democracy and the Euro-Atlantic Quarterly.

SUMMARY

- The UK Government should be aware of the impediments to democracy in Turkey, particularly with regards to the limitations on freedom of expression.
- Turkey will make a strong partner to the UK government in the pursuit of democracy in the newly emerging regimes after the Arab Spring. Nevertheless, to what extent Turkey can represent a “model” to those regimes is uncertain.
- Turkey-EU relations have faced a stalemate due to lack of credible commitment to Turkish accession by some EU Member States as well as the Turkish government. However, still, the UK Government is correct in pursuing the Turkish EU membership as a long-term objective.
- The Cypriot conflict cannot realistically be resolved in the near future due to the wide gap between the Turkish and EU positions. Nevertheless, incremental steps may be taken for the establishment of free trade between the island as a whole and the Turkish-EU customs union area.
- In the meantime, the UK government should pursue strategies to prove credible EU commitment to Turkish membership that would re-elevate the public support for EU membership in Turkey, such as an easing of visa restrictions.

A. QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY, THE RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN TURKEY

1. Between the recognition of Turkey’s EU candidanship in 1999 by the Helsinki European Council and the second term of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) in government (2007–11) Turkey adopted painstaking reforms to improve democracy and the rule of law. These reforms served Turkey most significantly by shifting the political power from military to civil institutions. Nevertheless, during the second AKP government in parallel to the stalemate in Turkey-EU relations the reform process came to a halt and a trend (re-)emerged for the centralisation of power in the hands of the government. We are of the opinion that the UK government should be aware of the current impediments to democracy in Turkey. In support of this argument we provide evidence below from two specific incidents (the 2010 constitutional reform process and the political crisis surrounding politicians held in jail) as well as the general impediments to freedom of expression.

2. The AKP government proposed an extensive constitutional reform initiative in 2010 that pursued convergence with the EU standards in certain matters, such as the judicial control of administrative and criminal decisions of the military.⁹ However, the reform package also brought a significant increase of political power in the appointment of high court justices. Additionally, the reform process was not in line with the standards of an established participatory democracy where constitutional reforms are expected to reflect a societal consensus reached through deliberations between different political groups and civil society organisations.

3. The 2010 reform package was drafted by the AKP government almost singlehandedly and despite the strong opposition of civil society organisations, including the Union of Judges and Prosecutors, and the Union of Bars. The parliamentary vote on the reforms failed to reach the required two-third majority and the reform package was henceforth sent to a public referendum. The opposition parties demanded that the different amendments were split into different questions on the referendum ballot paper to avoid a take-it or leave-it choice. The government rejected this request, and the entire amendment package was passed with the support of 57.9% of the vote.

4. During the 2011 election, the government has campaigned on its intend to overhaul the constitution. However, the AKP manifesto did not make any concrete suggestion as to what constitutional clauses should be amended and how. Prime Minister Erdoan pleaded the electorate to provide his party with a 2/3 majority of seats in the Parliament which would allow for constitutional reform without the cooperation of opposition. This forthcoming reform process needs to followed closely particularly in the light of the experiences with the 2010 constitutional reforms.

5. After the June 2011 elections, the Parliament found itself in a political crisis surrounding politicians held in detention: two MPs of the CHP (Republican People’s Party) are imprisoned under the *Ergenekon* investigation into an alleged coup attempt; six MPs of the Kurdish BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) were arrested under the *KCK* operations against the urban wing of PKK (the Kurdish Workers’ Party); finally, one MP from the MHP (Nationalist Action Party) is held under the *Balyoz* investigation, yet another investigation into an alleged coup. Of these nine MPs, only one MP of the BDP, Hatip Dicle, is convicted in a court of law for being a member of the PKK based on his public statements.

6. After the elections, the Turkish Board of Elections stripped Dicle of his parliamentary mandate and reallocated his seat to AKP, since the BDP fielded independent candidates—rather than a party list—to circumvent the 10% national election threshold. Additionally, Turkish lower courts have so far refused to release the four of the remaining eight jailed MPs, while final decisions regarding the remaining detainees are pending. The BDP MPs called the AKP to initiate necessary legal reforms for the release of their imprisoned members; and with this aim they have boycotted the Parliament. Negotiations between the AKP and the BDP failed, after the AKP refused to amend Article 7 of the Turkish Anti-Terror Act to allow the detained BDP

⁹ See the comparative table regarding the Proposed Legislation for the Amendment of Certain Provisions of the Constitution, www.akparti.org.tr/media/www/Anayasa%20de%20de%20C4%9Fi%20C5%9Fi%20C4%9Fi%20kar%20C5%9F%20C4%B1%20C5%9F%20C4%B1%20teklif%20tablosu.pdf

members to take their seats in the Parliament. This was followed by escalation of violence and terror in Southeast Turkey and a declaration by the Kurdish Democratic Society Congress (that brings together a wider spectrum of the Kurdish political elite) of what they called “democratic autonomy”.¹⁰

7. This political crisis constitutes a significant cursor for the current state of democracy in Turkey from different perspectives: first, it shows that despite the abovementioned constitutional reforms, some clusters of society still face significant barriers on the way to democratic representation. Second, the upfront refusal of the AKP to implement the necessary reforms for the release of arrested politicians leads to a serious questioning of this party’s commitment to democracy when it benefits other political groups. NB that AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoan was subject to a similar legal caveat during the 2002 elections; and he became eligible to assume office as MP and prime minister only after the CHP had cooperated with the AKP to amend the constitution accordingly.

8. The immediate reliance by the Kurdish forces to methods of violence leads to a serious questioning of the Kurdish opposition’s commitment to democratic process in the search for equal representation and minority protection. If this crisis remains unresolved and if the reforms are adopted without the contribution of Kurdish representatives, the new constitution will have limited value at best for the improvement of democracy and minority protection in Turkey. Overall, the crisis does not bode well for the future of Turkish democracy.

9. Finally, the Turkish civil society and media have been under serious pressure.¹¹ Most significantly, Turkey currently holds the largest number of imprisoned journalists in the world.¹² For instance, the aforementioned *Ergenekon* investigation has notoriously become a pretext to punish government-critical journalists. The most prominent names in this respect include Mustafa Balbay, Soner Yalçın, Ahmet İnkilap and Nedim Ener.

10. The general discrepancies in the Turkish justice system, most notably unusually long arrest periods, exacerbate the impediments to freedom of expression. At the time of the writing of this report, Ahmet İnkilap and Nedim Ener have been arrested for more than 160 days without a formal indictment against them.

11. Self-censorship is also an issue in Turkey. Over the last few years, numerous government-critical journalists have lost their jobs. Banu Güven, a top TV anchor who shared this destiny, recently wrote a public letter to the Prime Minister and pleaded for the removal of pressures on media.¹³

B. TURKEY AS A MODEL FOR OTHER MUSLIM COUNTRIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ARAB SPRING

12. Turkey has arguably the most solid democratic regime in its region, not least because of its regular, open and transparent parliamentary elections. The threats of military coups have decreased significantly—mainly due to the AKP’s de-militarisation of state institutions.

13. Turkey has strong political and economic ties with the countries of the “Arab Spring”, particularly Libya. During the time of writing of this report the Turkish government is preparing the Libya summit that is taking place in early September in Istanbul. The Turkish government has recognised the National Interim Council as the legitimate representation of the Libyan people in early July and the Turkish government has since kept close relations with the Council’s president, Mustafa Abdel Dschalil.

14. Additionally, after the appointment of Ahmet Davutolu as Foreign Affairs Minister, the government has adopted a policy of ‘zero problems’ with neighbours. Therefore, the AKP government initially adopted a cautious tone with regard to the civil awakenings in the Middle East and North Africa. Nevertheless, eventually the government became openly critical and vocal about the state imposed violence on protestors in these countries.

15. Most recently, Mr. Davutolu communicated a clear message of discontent to the Syrian Government with regard to human rights violations taking place in Hama during his visit to this country. This message was communicated in close collaboration with the US Department of State. In contrast to the decreasing popularity of the UK (and other Western countries) among the peoples of Muslim countries, particularly after the invasion of Iraq, Turkey has become immensely popular in these countries with its strong economy, its vibrant popular culture and its vocal stance in international politics.

16. Prime Minister Erdoan, in particular, has come to be seen as a potential leader for the Muslim world in general after his open and strong criticism of the Israeli government in the 2009 World Economic Forum and after the 2010 flotilla incident. All of these stand as evidence that the Turkish government will make a strong partner to the UK in the pursuit of democracy in the countries of Arab Spring. Due to cultural similarities as well as the popularity of Turkey in those countries, the Turkish government may be able to communicate closely and deeply with the local forces involved in the design of new regimes.

¹⁰ In the light of the previous declarations of the BDP and the Congress, democratic autonomy refers to regional autonomous governance that is somewhat similar to a state within a federal regime.

¹¹ Report by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe following his visit to Turkey, from 27 to 29 April 2011—Freedom of expression and media freedom in Turkey, Strasbourg, 12 July 2011, CommDH(2011)25.

¹² “Turkey ‘world leader’ in imprisoned journalists, IPI report says”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 8 April 2011.

¹³ “Bir Mektup” [“A Letter”], <http://banuguyen.com/2011/07/14/bir-mektup/>
See also Ayla Albayrak, “Zipped-Lips in Turkey’s Media”, *Wall Street Journal*, 18 July 2011.

17. Whether Turkey represents a “model” for the region is an altogether different question. As many as seventeen countries are involved in the Arab Spring—Egypt, Libya, Syria and Tunisia being subject to the most substantial systemic changes.¹⁴ Searching for a single model of democracy in a post-dictatorial scenario for even these four countries is an insurmountable task. Such a plan would fall short due to cultural, historical and institutional differences between the different Arab nations; and a “regime transplant” from Turkey to these countries is, thus, destined to fail. Even if Turkey is to constitute a model for those countries, it has to be established beyond the separation-of-state-and-religion rhetoric in what way the Turkish regime represents an ideal from the institutional perspective; in our eyes this is not at all certain.

18. The answer to this question will also depend on the level of ambition of the UK government in the pursuit of democracy in the newly emerging regimes. In collaboration with the local forces, the UK government and its partners should press for, *inter alia*, free and transparent elections, judicial independence, gender equality, freedom of expression and effective minority protection. As the evidence presented above suggests, in some of these areas Turkey itself should be regarded as a work in progress rather than a transferable model for the Arab Spring nations.

C. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR TURKEY’S EU MEMBERSHIP

19. Turkey has long tried to become a member of the European Union and we are convinced that the UK government should continue to advocate in favour of Turkish membership. To shed light on the background: Turkey has first voiced its intention to join the then European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959. Although the Ankara Agreement was signed in 1963 to pave the way for a customs union, this goal was achieved eventually in 1995. When it was finally declared in 1997 that Turkey was eligible to join the EU, ten years had passed since the country had formally applied for membership. Cultural discrimination aside, it is difficult to see why the Union would need ten years to declare a country eligible for membership—which is a far cry from membership itself.

20. Turkey has climbed to 17th place in the list of largest economies of the world, while most of the EU member states are struggling under the economic crisis. Turkey offers dynamism to Europe with its young, vibrant and growing population.

21. Turkey had adopted the most courageous reforms in its history when the EU membership appeared as a realistic goal; and the trend for centralisation of power emerged only when Turkey-EU relations came to a halt. Therefore, if the accession process is reinvigorated successfully the EU could again serve as a significant reference point for the improvement of democracy and the rule of law in Turkey.

22. The European Union was not created as a judeo-christian institution but rather a union of like-minded countries that seek common economic (and political) goals. There is thus no reason why Turkey should not join its neighbouring union for cultural reasons. Turkey’s Muslim population will clearly be enrichment to the Union that reflects the political reality of today’s world. A reinvigoration of the accession process and building of closer ties with the Turkish people would also help the EU countries in the fight against Islamophobia. Therefore, the UK government would do well in standing up against some of the more prejudiced European governments that are against Turkish membership due to religious and/or ethnic reasons.

D. GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO REINVIGORATE ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

23. Turkey’s EU accession suffers from two key impediments: the current division of Cyprus and the drop in public/political support for EU membership in Turkey.

24. Concerning Cyprus a wide gap between the positions of the EU and Turkey continues to exist: the Turkish government perceives the admission of Cyprus as an EU Member State without the resolution of Cypriot conflict a discrimination between EU candidates. This is because under the Copenhagen criteria, the EU officially does not admit a country with political conflicts with its neighbours. In 2004 Turkey signed the Additional Protocol with regard to the application of Turkey-EU customs union rules to the new EU Member States. Nevertheless, Turkey refuses to apply those rules to Cyprus unless economic isolation of the Turkish society in Northern Cyprus is lifted. The EU, on the other hand, refuses to negotiate key accession chapters with regard to the internal market with Turkey unless the customs union rules are applied to Cyprus.

25. Due to this wide gap and the sensitive nature of the Cyprus issue in national politics in Turkey and within some EU Member States the conflict cannot realistically be resolved all at once in the near future. Nevertheless, both sides may be convinced to take incremental steps over time for the establishment of free trade between the island as a whole and the Turkish-EU customs union area. The UK government, with its close ties to Cyprus as well as Turkey certainly occupies an ideal position to pursue a proactive role with this aim. The swift establishment of a functioning customs union must mark the starting point to solve the Cyprus issue in the long term.

26. The decreasing public support for EU membership in Turkey can be seen partially as a result of its remarkable economic performance during the least years. However, part of the reason is also lack of credible commitments on behalf of the Union and some of its member states to Turkish membership. So far, the EU

¹⁴ See the Guarding guide on Arab Spring at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2011/mar/22/middle-east-protest-interactive-timeline>

accession process has resulted in only marginal, if any, implications on the daily life of Turkish citizens. For instance, Turkish citizens face extremely strict visa policies when travelling to the EU, in contrast to the citizens of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia who are all given visa-free travel rights throughout the Schengen area. We argue that a liberalisation of the visa restrictions will go a long way in rekindling the Turkish popular support for EU membership. The UK government should work towards a less rigid visa policy for Turkish citizens. This would increase popular support for EU membership in Turkey; and would provide the Turkish government with incentives to commit to the accession process and to continue implementing the necessary legal and political reforms.

E. DOES TURKEY STILL WANT TO JOIN THE EU?

27. The Turkish government appears to have put its EU-ambitions onto the backburner with a political focus shifted to the goal of regional leadership instead—particularly due to the Arab Spring. Yet, it is unlikely that Turkey can assert its regional leadership role without its close relations to the EU; and this includes a continuation (and eventual conclusion) of the accession negotiations. Turkish government must surely be aware that Turkey's raising profile in its region at least partially stems from the different status of Turkey as a EU candidate and a NATO member. Therefore, we believe that an effort by the EU institutions and the Member States to overcome the current stalemate will find a positive reaction on the side of Turkey.

29 August 2011

Written evidence from the Scotch Whisky Association

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Scotch Whisky Association warmly welcomes the Committee inquiry and the UK government's effort to strengthen relations with Turkey. Our sector greatly appreciates the dialogue with government departments and the collective effort to improve trading conditions for Scotch Whisky exporters in Turkey.

1.2 Scotch Whisky exporters have long faced significant trade barriers in Turkey, ranging from onerous import permit requirements to discriminatory excise rates under which Scotch Whisky is taxed 66% more than Turkey's national spirit, raki.

1.3 Turkey should already be applying most EU laws under the terms of the 1995 EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement. That it has not done so is a matter of great concern, as is the current low ebb in EU-Turkey relations. Strong bilateral relations between the UK and Turkey have therefore become even more important.

1.4 All previous phases of EU enlargement have brought marked improvements in trading conditions for Scotch Whisky. We therefore support Turkey's EU accession, even though the process currently appears to have stalled.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) is the trade organisation which represents the interests of the Scotch Whisky industry. Its main objective is to protect and promote Scotch Whisky at home and in its overseas markets.

2.2 The SWA welcomes the Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry. Our submission includes an overview of the market for Scotch Whisky and other spirits in Turkey, a summary of the numerous barriers we face, and perspectives on trade aspects of UK-Turkey relations and EU enlargement. We have not addressed the Committee's other questions, ie foreign and security policy, energy and governance in the Middle East.

2.3 Scotch Whisky is vitally important to the economy of Scotland and the UK. Despite the unfavourable economic climate, overseas sales continue to grow. Exports of Scotch Whisky were £3.45 billion in 2010, a record year. They have risen continuously since 2004, when they were worth £2.2 billion. Confidence in the industry is high and there is currently growth in every export region.

2.4 Scotch Whisky alone represents 80% of Scotland's food and drink exports, 23% of the UK's and 7% of the EU's. The industry employs over 10,000 directly and a further 35,000 jobs across the UK are supported by the industry. Our sector spends £1 billion each year with UK suppliers of goods and services. Prospects for further export-led growth have resulted in our member companies investing around £1 billion in additional distillation, maturation and bottling capacity over the last five years.

2.5 More than 90% of all Scotch Whisky is exported. The ability to trade in international markets is vital to the health of the industry. The SWA is a proactive campaigner against trade barriers and seeks to ensure fair and non-discriminatory trading conditions in export markets.

2.6 Our members have been exporting in significant quantities for over a hundred years and we sell in more than 200 markets worldwide. Our members are fully familiar with the mechanics of international trade and a wide variety of national trading environments, not all of which are benign. Turkey is among the most challenging trade regimes in which our members operate around the world.

3. SCOTCH WHISKY IN TURKEY

3.1 In 1995, the year the EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement (CUA) was signed, Scotch Whisky exports to the market were worth £33.6 million. Despite the CUA's intention to improve and increase trade between the two sides, barriers against Scotch Whisky imports were put in place immediately and our exports nosedived; they have never since regained the 1995 level. In 2010, exports to Turkey were worth £21.5 million.

3.2 The Turkish spirits market was thought to be around 7.7 million cases (each of 12 bottles), in 2010, nearly 90% of which is produced domestically. It is dominated by the national aniseed spirit, raki, which alone has two thirds of the market. The domestic industry (until 2004 a state monopoly), has effectively been shielded from competitive pressures. The principal raki producer has, however, been bought (in 2011) by the leading Scotch Whisky producer and local awareness of the advantages of international trade is expected to improve.

3.3 The Turkish economy has experienced significant growth over the last 15–20 years and, in our sector, there is strong demand for premium imported products. SWA members believe that non-discriminatory trade conditions will result in Turkey becoming a key export destination. Traders believe there is scope for annual exports to Turkey to reach £100 million. In neighbouring Greece (with a 7th of Turkey's population), our exports (prior to 2010) were regularly over £100 million.

4. MARKET ACCESS BARRIERS FACING SCOTCH WHISKY IN TURKEY

4.1 Market access for imported spirits is tightly restricted. Although the CUA prohibits restrictions on EU imports or measures having equivalent effect, shortly after the agreement took force, Turkey introduced a "control certificate" (CC—effectively an annual import permit), for Scotch Whisky and all other spirits.

4.2 To obtain a CC, companies are required to provide the Agriculture Ministry with numerous documents (on issues including: price; chemical analysis; origin; ingredients; and proof of production in a hygienic environment) on each of the brands they hope to import. CC rules are subject to frequent change and existing rules are re-interpreted without warning or consultation. The import quantities on the CC cannot be exceeded; separate permits have sometimes been required for each bottle size of each brand.

4.3 While the CC currently takes between two to four weeks to issue, at various times all the main importers have faced serious delays (up to six months) in renewing permits. Traders therefore always seek to renew well in advance. Thus the annual permit is often only used for nine months; at one point the leading importer renewed all CCs every six months.

4.4 There are further restrictions associated with the CC. Scrutiny of applications has often resulted in a requirement to amend labels. Some of the world's leading internationally traded spirits have had to re-design labels exclusively for Turkey. In addition, goods arriving at Customs are "sampled". Numerous bottles are removed even though the analysis conducted requires only a few cl of spirit. Separately, our members' ready-to-drink (RTD) products, eg pre-mixed whisky and cola, are banned. Turkish beverages akin to RTDs are permitted to be manufactured and sold.

4.5 There is no CC or equivalent requirement for domestic spirits. There is no CC or equivalent requirement for Turkish spirits in any EU Member State. The CC is not compatible with Turkey's CUA commitments. We believe it also contravenes Turkey's WTO obligations.

4.6 When Turkey sought to open EU accession negotiations, the Commission and Member States agreed that CUA obligations needed first to be met. An opening benchmark was therefore set (in the "free movement of goods" chapter), requiring Turkey to abolish the CC on imported spirits before negotiations could begin.

5. TAX DISCRIMINATION FACING SCOTCH WHISKY

5.1 Legislation in 2002 and 2003 introduced minimum excise tax rates for each category of spirit. The rates on the main imported spirit, whisky, were double those on the main domestic spirits, ie raki and vodka.

5.2 The excise tax law also included a value component. Importers of Scotch Whisky and other spirits had to make two tax declarations to Turkish Customs: one based on the value of their goods; one based on alcohol content—Customs chose whichever yielded most. The system was designed in a way that the discriminatory minimum rates usually applied.

5.3 Tax rules were subjectively interpreted, however, and disputes arose over the declared value of spirits imports. Despite importers showing their pricing policies were compatible with OECD guidelines and trade in other jurisdictions, hundreds of legal challenges were instigated. When importers lost cases the sanctions were punitive. The dispute ran for several years and eventually included every shipment; the collective potential liabilities would have driven Scotch Whisky and other importers from the market. A legislative resolution was finally reached in 2011.

5.4 Meantime, Turkey continued to apply discriminatory excise tax rates. In 2008, Scotch Whisky paid TL71 per litre of pure alcohol (lpa) while the domestic spirit raki paid TL36 per lpa. EU rules require a single rate of tax on all spirit drinks. WTO rules require excise taxes not to discriminate between competing products.

5.5 When Turkey sought EU accession status, we were very grateful that a “benchmark” required Turkey to agree a plan for the removal of excise tax discrimination before negotiations could begin in the tax chapter. In 2009, an ‘Action Plan’ was agreed in which, following an immediate 30% cut in discrimination, a timetable was established for the gradual elimination of all discrimination by April 2018.

5.6 Although the Action Plan included specific dates and rates of tax, Turkey subsequently increased taxes beyond the level set out in the agreement. The differential between the tax on Scotch Whisky and raki (currently over £3.30 per bottle) is now as wide as before the Action Plan was agreed. The Commission has advised Turkey it needs to bring rates back into line, but Turkey does not accept the need to do so. It remains uncertain what will happen in April 2012, when the next step in the Action Plan is due to be taken.

5.7 Turkey also discriminates in the way taxes are collected. Imported spirits must pay excise tax before they can be put into circulation in Turkey. Locally produced spirits are allowed to defer payment of excise tax for as much as 45 days.

5.8 The level of excise tax in Turkey is extremely high, especially considering purchasing power and the lower levels in neighbouring countries. Were Turkey in the EU, the tax levied on whisky would be the third highest of all Member States. The excessive tax rates provide an incentive for the large market in smuggled and counterfeit spirits, some of which are highly dangerous. Several Russian tourists died recently after consuming fake spirit; the worst incident was in 2005, when at least 40 Turks died from counterfeit raki.

5.9 Turkey has long been a market or a transit route for fake whiskies. In 2003 we concluded legal negotiations which brought an end to the sale of fake whiskies in Turkey (3 million bottles in 2002), by four companies based in N Cyprus. Investigations on another issue revealed that Turkey had been the transit country for over 15 million cans of fake Scotch Whisky that were sold throughout the middle east between 2002 and 2005. While the extent to which Turkey is committed to eradicating such trade remains uncertain, we were very grateful that in 2011 Scotch Whisky became the first foreign product to be registered as a ‘geographical indication’ in Turkey, thereby helping its legal protection.

6. UK—TURKEY RELATIONS: TRADE ASPECTS

6.1 The Association has discussed the difficulties in Turkey with all the relevant UK government departments over many years. We have been extremely grateful for their readiness to raise our concerns directly with Turkey and also with the Commission which leads on the EU’s external trade policy.

6.2 UK officials at all levels have regularly provided guidance and advice in relation to the effort to remove the trade barriers. They have also provided invaluable support in, eg securing the two benchmarks for the accession negotiations and in the effort to resolve the valuation dispute.

6.3 There are no immediate signs that Turkey is ready to improve trading conditions for imported spirits; indeed the opposite appears possible. Changes in the CC regime are planned and there has been talk of requiring a CC for every shipment—operationally this would be highly problematic. New restrictions have been introduced on advertising and promotion; and reports suggest the national Tobacco and Alcohol Board (TAB) has a new remit purely to restrict the availability and sale of alcohol. While we have hitherto liaised closely with the TAB in removing fake whiskies from the market, it has recently ignored all such efforts.

6.4 While UK officials, in many fora, promote Turkey as an export destination and encourage UK traders to explore the potential of the market, our experience means that we are unable to support the effort to highlight Turkey’s potential. Although we often stress the advantages that 3rd country trade agreements or EU accession negotiations bring Scotch Whisky, Turkey cannot be included as it has breached all the provisions that would have benefitted our sector.

6.5 The UK’s effort to broaden and deepen relations with Turkey, via, eg the recently established JETCO, “knowledge partnership” and Tatlidil, are very encouraging. We hope these and other fora will improve the environment in which UK and Turkey interact. In addition, it will be important that the forthcoming Ministerial and other bilateral visits are used to try to secure improvements in trade relations.

6.6 We strongly support the UK government’s dialogue with Turkey, and very much hope this effort will convince Turkey that it would be preferable to improve trading conditions. The UK is by far the most important producer of internationally traded spirit drinks. It is therefore all the more regrettable, and perplexing, that despite the excellent bilateral relations, the trade barriers adversely affect UK interests more than any other.

7. TURKEY’S EU ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

7.1 The accession negotiations appear currently to be the only forum through which the EU and Turkey can secure improvements in trading conditions. While the CUA should already have brought our sector barrier-free access to the Turkish market, this has not happened and the Agreement’s problem-solving mechanisms have proved to be ineffective.

7.2 We were extremely grateful that, in an effort to ensure Turkey’s non-compliance with CUA did not defer remedial action until the accession negotiations concluded, two important opening benchmarks were agreed: abolition of CC (import permits) and removal of tax discrimination. Regrettably there has been no movement

on the first because the free movement of goods chapter is frozen. An agreement on the second initially was very promising but Turkey's subsequent, unilateral re-interpretation of the provisions has meant the level of discrimination is as bad as before.

7.3 Five years after they began, the accession negotiations have therefore yet to benefit our sector. The problems that existed in 2006 remain; new barriers have arisen.

7.4 The negotiations have been hampered by political objections from some Member States, and which have resulted in the freezing of many chapters. It is not easy to see how the negotiations might be re-energised. It was therefore disappointing that in 2010, when presented with an opportunity to cut through the logjam by supporting direct trade links with North Cyprus, the European Parliament opted for the status quo. It is unlikely there will be many chances to break the deadlock and secure genuine movement. We cannot help feeling this was a missed opportunity.

7.5 Despite the difficulties, we continue to support the accession negotiations. If they are allowed to proceed they will, as has been the case for 12 other countries since 2004, result in implementation of the EU *acquis* in our sector and the removal of trade barriers facing Scotch Whisky.

7.6 We would urge the UK to continue to liaise closely with the Commission and Member States to try to find a mechanism to thaw the various frozen chapters and allow accession talks to resume.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Scotch Whisky (and other UK spirits) have been unable to secure meaningful market access to Turkey due mainly to the onerous and unpredictable import permit regime, and application of excise taxes on whisky which are 66% higher than on the national spirit.

8.2 Turkey offers significant potential as an export market for Scotch Whisky. Turkey has already committed itself to implementing the EU's *acquis* under the Customs Union Agreement. However, as yet it has not met its CUA and WTO commitments.

8.3 The SWA is seeking fair market access and non-discriminatory taxation in line with Turkey's existing obligations. Removal of the barriers will demonstrate Turkish ability to implement the *acquis* in the spirits sector and thereby remove suspicion of protectionism; a more transparent and stable trade regime will encourage inward investment.

8.4 We welcome the UK's close dialogue with Turkey and the effort to strengthen it—this will bring opportunities to seek improvements in trading conditions. UK interests are most affected by the trade barriers in the spirits sector.

8.5 Despite the blockages in the accession negotiations, we continue to support the effort to bring Turkey into the EU and hope a mechanism can be found to break the deadlock and re-energise the process.

8.6 The SWA would be ready to provide further written evidence on any aspect of this submission where such additional briefing might be helpful to the Committee.

30 August 2011

Written evidence from Peace in Kurdistan

This paper is submitted by Peace in Kurdistan, a UK based lobby group which seeks to raise awareness about the situation facing the Kurds—primarily in Turkey—and campaigns for a change in UK government policy. Peace in Kurdistan supports the rights of the Kurdish people to self-determination and to choose their own political representatives. The campaign seeks to communicate the arguments for a democratic peace settlement to be achieved through negotiations between Turkey and the Kurdish side.

We recognise the geo-political importance of Turkey to the UK and welcome this inquiry into UK-Turkey relations. We have submitted evidence relating to human rights and democracy in Turkey, particularly focusing on the Kurdish Question.

In summary:

- The Kurdish people continue to face discrimination in Turkey despite the claims of the government of Prime Minister Tayip Erdogan to be implementing democratic reforms and reaching out to them. The Kurds effectively have the status of second-class citizens in their own country. Their right to choose and elect their own political representatives continues to be heavily restricted. A climate of repression prevails in the Kurdish provinces of the southeast and Turkey's apparent current preference for a combined military and legalistic strategy to eliminate Kurdish resistance is very much a step backwards from the hopes of a "democratic opening" announced only a couple of years ago.

Should the UK Government be concerned about trends in the quality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Turkey, including the rights of ethnic and religious minorities (including the Kurds) and freedom of expression?

1. Identity Rights

1.1 Turkey's historic failure to come to terms with the complex multi-ethnic nature of its population is the root of protracted conflict, unrest and instability and should be of great concern to UK policy makers. The Turkish state has been compelled to use violence and repression in its attempts to impose a uniform Turkish identity on its mixed population.

1.2 Since the Turkish Republic was established, the state has sought to forge a national identity by force. "Turkification" all its citizens irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds has involved monstrous repression including measures such as forced migration, cultural assimilation, criminalising the use of mother tongue languages other than Turkish, limits on freedom of expression, arrests, torture and extrajudicial killings.

1.3 This official policy of enforced and uncompromising Turkishness, which remains the basis of Turkey's approach to its minorities to this day, fosters deep resentments, discourages any sense of allegiance to the state and breeds social discontent; in the case of the Kurds, the largest unrecognised ethnic group inside the country (numbering 10 to 20 million depending on estimates), this denial of their identity and right to play a full part in society as Kurds has led to armed conflict in recent decades which has squandered resources, destabilised the state, impeded the march of democratisation, as well as having been tremendously costly in terms of the human lives lost.

2. Freedom of expression: Restrictions on the Kurdish language

2.1 The use of the Kurdish language is actively discouraged by the Turkish state; for decades it was banned outright and although it is not today banned in informal conversation, it is not permitted in formal situations such as court proceedings, education and public service. Turkish remains the only official language in Turkey, which amounts to discrimination against millions of its citizens whose mother tongue is not Turkish. Business and commercial transactions are all carried out in Turkish and legal proceedings take place entirely in Turkish. Elected politicians are not permitted to use languages other than Turkish, which means that often they are not able to effectively represent, or enter into dialogue, with their own constituents.

2.2 Restrictions on Kurdish, although relaxed in recent years, mean that freedom of expression is severely restricted in Turkey. The repressive climate that Kurds endure continues despite the "democratic opening" and reforms announced in recent years by the AKP government. Restrictions are rooted in the refusal of the Turkish state to see the Kurdish issue as little more than one of terrorism. This has far reaching ramifications. The freedom of journalists to report on Kurdish issues remains tricky and controversial. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the Kurdish issue is still the most difficult one for journalists to deal with because of the judiciary's reliance on Anti-Terror Laws and repressive articles of the Penal Code which criminalise speaking out on Kurdish issues.¹⁵ This repressive climate prevents open and honest discussion of these matters which prevents the search for a resolution of the conflict. Thus the preferred policy of the Turkish government with regards to the Kurds actually perpetuates the conflict by making discussion extremely difficult. Politicians and public figures who raise issues are routinely accused of making propaganda for the PKK and risk prosecution on terrorism charges.

3. Impact of Kurdish Conflict

3.1 The scars run deep in Turkish society and will take many years to heal; unfortunately the process of establishing peace and reconciliation has hardly begun. An unresolved conflict on this scale on Europe's borders or possibly as part of the EU in future certainly of concern for the UK and the government in Westminster should make a satisfactory resolution of the conflict a priority policy matter. This resolution must be based on persuading Turkey that justice for the Kurds is the only option for lasting peace and stability; this means that Turkish leaders need to change course and resist the attempt to impose a military solution to eliminate Kurdish resistance.

3.2 Talk of a "Tamil solution" to the Kurdish question is truly frightening and must be resisted at all costs; not only is this option not based on any principles of justice, it is impractical; the Kurds engaged in armed resistance are not a small minority.¹⁶ There has been reference to an "Arab awakening" in recent months, but the Kurdish awakening has been taking place over several decades and in recent years the Kurdish population have grown conscious of themselves as a people and have demonstrated unity and resilience.¹⁷ This movement for change has emerged as a result of the decades of struggle and campaigning at various levels within Kurdish society where large mobilisation has taken place and many organisations and institutions have been created by the Kurds themselves in the face of enormous obstacles and repressive measures from the Turkish state.

¹⁵ Courts continue to hound journalists who cover Kurdish minority issues, 31 March 2011; Reporters Without Borders: <http://en.rsf.org/turquie-courts-continue-to-hound-31-03-2011,39920.html>

¹⁶ Why Turkey's Kurdish conflict is making a worrying comeback, 19 August 2011; Time Magazine: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2089602,00.html>

¹⁷ Kurds threaten Turkish government with civil disobedience, 9 June 2011; The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/nov/10/turkey-show-trial-of-kurds>

3.3 Deadly air strikes launched by Turkey against Kurdish bases across the border in Iraq on 17 August are a misguided strategy aimed at eliminating the resistance of the entire Kurdish people who have been demanding justice and equal rights since the Turkish Republic's foundation in 1923.

4. Unfair Electoral Process

4.1 Most recently the will of the Kurds has been expressed in this year's Turkish general election when Kurdish backed independent candidates received unprecedented support from the electorate and won the largest number of seats ever.¹⁸ Here it seems pertinent to point out that the Turkish electoral system operates a 10% threshold which militates against political parties with a strong regional base of support from winning elections. This is an issue of controversy as it is seen as specifically designed to exclude pro-Kurdish parties from representation in the country's parliament. The existence of the barrier has forced Kurdish politicians to stand as independents in concert with other parties and in the recent election Kurds achieved success as part of a Labour, Democracy and Freedom block, but they had to attract far more individual votes in order to get one member elected than if they had stood as party candidates. In this way, the 10% threshold prejudices the electoral opportunities of the Kurds and is hence deeply discriminatory and inherently unfair.

4.2 The members of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), won a total of 36 seats in the last election standing as independents as part of its alliance with a group of other smaller parties. Those elected on this occasion included Leyla Zana, who is well known internationally for her 10-year imprisonment after she sought to swear her oath in Parliament in the Kurdish language when she was first elected in 1991.

4.3 Unfortunately, Turkish state officials refused simply to accept the outcome graciously and resorted to legal manoeuvres and repressive measures to undermine the clear decision of millions of Kurdish voters. This reaction exposes the fragility of the Turkey's commitment to democracy and indicates that the state still has to find a way of accommodating the wishes of the Kurds, who should be permitted to elect whom they wish as long as they are committed to the democratic process.

4.4 Pro-Kurdish independent elected deputies (MPs) have refused to take their oaths in Parliament as a solidarity gesture with their colleagues who remain in jail facing accusations of links to the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK), an umbrella group which the Turkish state claims is a front for the banned PKK. Six of the BDP's deputies are currently under arrest as part of the KCK trial, which the Kurds widely regard as a mass show trial designed to criminalise all Kurdish civil society organisations.¹⁹

4.5 It should be emphasised that the Kurdish representatives have repeatedly disavowed violence and repudiated the idea that they wish to see the break-up of the Turkish state. The negative portrayal of Kurdish political activists as separatists is erroneous and outdated. Leading Kurdish representatives have adopted a position of pursuing their rights by peaceful means and are advocating "democratic autonomy", a form of devolution, as a way of democratising decision making within the Turkish state.²⁰ The proposal could underpin not undermine the search for a new democratic constitution for Turkey, which is a policy on which the current AKP government campaigned during the recent election.

5. Mass arrests and show trials

5.1 The number of political prisoners inside Turkish jails should be a cause of concern. Those arrested consist of senior elected politicians, writers, journalists and human rights defenders.²¹ This resort by Turkey to mass arrests of Kurdish political representatives and civil society leaders has been increasing in the months running up to the June election and the practise has continued in the wake of the AKP's re-election. Mass show trials of Kurdish activists are currently taking place, including elected mayors and MPs such as Hatip Dicle, whose election as MP for Diyarbakir, the unofficial capital of Turkish Kurdistan, was overturned by the Turkish judiciary, prompting a boycott of Parliament by the remaining 37 independent MPs among his party block.

5.2 Those presently standing or awaiting trial include respected human rights lawyers whose only crime is to seek to bring to light the widespread human rights abuses against Kurds in prison cells and detention, including murder, rape, torture and the mutilation of the bodies of suspects and opponents. One such example is Muharrem Erbey, the president of the Diyarbakir branch of the Human Rights Association of Turkey (IHD), who has been held in detention since December 2009. Erbey is charged with undermining the state following speeches that he delivered in Geneva where he touched on the sensitive matters of human rights and the Kurdish question. For this the lawyer is accused of giving "moral support" to the PKK.²²

¹⁸ Elections in Turkey raise hopes for Turkish Kurds, 18 June 2011; Alliance for Kurdish Rights: <http://kurdishrights.org/2011/06/18/elections-in-turkey-raise-hopes-for-turkish-kurds/>

¹⁹ Mass trial of Kurds viewed as touchstone of Turkish democracy, 28 October 2010; Medya News: <http://medyanews.com/english/?p=3644>

²⁰ Arab Spring—Kurdish Summer, 11 August 2011; Defence Update: http://defense-update.com/wp/20110811_arab-spring-kurdish-summer.html

²¹ The KCK Trial: Human rights violations in the name of the law?, 13 January 2011; International Association of People's Lawyers: <http://iapl.net/index.php/en/home/44/118>

²² Turkey Rights Defender Arrested: New crack down on Kurdish Mayors and Activists, 12 January 2010; Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/01/12/turkey-rights-defender-arrested>

5.3 The KCK Case, as it is known, is the largest mass trial to be held in Turkey in over a decade and has provoked major unrest in the Kurdish region with large protests held outside the Diyarbakir court when hearings took place immediately before the June election.

5.4 The trial first opened in October 2010 when 151 high profile Kurdish political and civil society leaders including six newly elected MPs, six elected mayors from cities in southeast Turkey and lawyer Muharrem Erbey.²³ The protracted trial which resumed again on 2 August has stalled with the defendants seeking to defend themselves in the Kurdish language which is not officially recognised by the courts. A 7,578-page indictment has charged the defendants variously with offences such as “aiming to destroy the unity and integrity of the state”, being a “member or leading member of the PKK”, and “aiding and abetting the PKK”, for which they face penalties of between 15 years and life in prison.

5.5 The outcome of this trial will have huge ramifications for the future of Turkey and its relations with, and treatment of, the minority Kurdish population. Those standing accused represent a vast array of civil society and political organisations established by members of the Kurdish community over many years and the individuals command respect and loyalty from great swathes of ordinary Kurdish people. It is perceived as a trial of the entire Kurdish people and as a result perceived bodes ill for the future peace and stability of Turkey.

6. Our recommendations

6.1 Turkey’s decision to launch air strikes on Kurdish positions inside Iraq is a serious escalation of the conflict and should be stopped immediately. The British government needs to exercise its influence to persuade Turkey that there can be no military solution to this conflict.

6.2 The UK should be more proactive and local in its support of the opening of a genuine dialogue between Turkish and Kurdish leaders. The elusive peace that everyone wants will only be secured through a negotiated settlement in a process that involves all parties to the conflict. Years of repression have failed to eliminate the unrest and discontent among the Kurdish population because the injustices they face have simply been denied.

6.3 Turkish policies need to respect the outcome of the general election and adequately address the popular support achieved by Kurdish backed candidates; it clearly does not encourage Kurds to pursue their demands by constitutional means when they see their elected representatives jailed and their political parties closed down and banned.

6.4 Political prisoners should be released and legal actions against Kurdish organisations should be abandoned. This only exacerbates the social tensions and sends the message to Kurds that legal and constitutional activities are futile.

6.5 In the new constitution, Turkey should accept that it is a multilingual country and grant equal status to the Kurdish language specifically. Languages are vitally important for a person’s identity, sense of self-worth and feeling of belonging and the refusal to recognise a person’s language undermines the individual as well as being inherently discriminatory against an entire people.

6.6 British and European anti-terrorism laws that criminalise Kurdish organisations and political activities impose unfair restrictions on freedom of expression among Kurdish migrant communities but they contribute towards prolonging the conflict inside Turkey. The proscribing of Kurdish groups in Europe lends support to Ankara’s own anti-terrorism laws which criminalise a broad range of civil and community organisations established by the Kurds. UK and EU bans on the Kurds act as encouragement to Turkey to see the issue as a terrorism problem when it is in fact one of the denial of legitimate social, cultural and constitutional rights. The UK should revise its policy in regard to the bans and proscriptions on Kurdish organisations that have long disavowed violence.

30 August 2011

Written evidence from the City of London Corporation

Submitted by the Office of the City Remembrancer

INTRODUCTION

1. The City Corporation welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee’s inquiry into UK-Turkey relations. In his capacity as ambassador for UK based financial and professional services the Lord Mayor, Alderman Michael Bear, and a thirty-strong business delegation, visited Turkey in January this year. This visit followed on from the July 2010 visit of the Prime Minister, who pledged to double UK-Turkey bilateral trade in the next five years. The Lord Mayor’s visit sought to emphasise the contribution that the UK’s business services can make in meeting this undertaking.

2. The key theme of the visit was to highlight the continued attractiveness of the UK as an inward investment destination and partner of choice for the increasing number of Turkish companies seeking to expand or acquire

²³ Kurdish show trial shames Turkey, 10 November 2010; The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/nov/10/turkey-show-trial-of-kurds>

financial and business services products. The current Lord Mayor's background in engineering prompted detailed discussion to take place with senior government officials and a range of key business leaders, on their plans for construction, transportation, ports and general infrastructure and in the promotion of UK expertise in PPP/PFI to fund such projects. Strengthening existing ties between the two countries in the maritime and shipping communities was also a topic of discussion.

3. During the visit it became clear that UK-Turkey relations remain very strong, not least because the UK is the strongest advocate of Turkey's accession to the European Union. Turkey's economy has diversified massively in the last 20 years and has become increasingly industrialised. However, it was noted that certain obstacles to expanding trade still exist—especially in the development of the tax system which lags behind Europe's.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

4. Turkey has a 10 year plan to develop infrastructure in time for the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic in 2023 and to that end the delegation met with contractors, working in the infrastructure and construction sectors, to discuss PPP/PFI opportunities for UK firms. Minister of Transportation and Communications, Binali Yildirim, emphasised that he was keen to work with UK firms on implementing key projects focusing on maritime infrastructure (including ports), roads (including highways and interstates), rail (both urban and intercity fast rail), airports and an advanced metro system in Istanbul, where traffic congestion posed a real problem. The delegation stressed the City of London's expertise in this arena, with particular strengths in raising capital for projects. In particular, developing the infrastructure of Istanbul as a regional (and potentially an international) financial centre would be of interest to City firms.

5. The potential for PPPs to be developed in Turkey was highlighted at a UKTI Seminar supported by the Ankara Municipality. It was noted that the most vital aspect of delivering this agenda is defining a new law to facilitate PPP, in line with international standards. Finance models for such projects were also discussed and particular interest was taken in the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) model where councils raise finance for infrastructure projects by borrowing against future gains on tax revenue and business rate income, and asked for further details to be provided in future correspondence.

MARITIME SERVICES

6. The Turkish shipping industry has strong links with London and a developed client base. Through the work of Maritime London and the Baltic Exchange, the Lord Mayor's visit sought to reinforce the support for the already-strong maritime cooperation between the two countries. In meetings, the Lord Mayor said that London wishes to be Turkey's partner of choice, emphasising the important role that Turkey plays in the Black Sea and the Middle East region. Maritime London and the Baltic Exchange pledged to continue to work with industry interlocutors on improving commercial links between the UK and Turkey's maritime services sectors.

BRANDING AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

7. Building Istanbul into a financial hub is an objective of the current government, who wish to develop Istanbul as a rival to other major centres of world finance. Istanbul is a very clear and well recognised brand in tourism, culture and sport, but is not widely seen as a global leader in finance. At a seminar on improving Istanbul's global branding and reputation, the Lord Mayor, spoke on how to create and maintain the reputation of a city as a successful financial business centre. The importance of location reputation, and factors which have made the brand "London" enticing for investors, were set out as possible exemplars for Istanbul.

30 August 2011

Written evidence from Fadi Hakura

BACKGROUND

Fadi Hakura, Associate Fellow and Manager of the Turkey Project, Chatham House.

SUMMARY

- Instruments and strategies are needed to coordinate more effectively between the crown jewels of British diplomacy (ie the Foreign Office, UKTI, think-tanks, universities, cultural entities, and business and trade associations) to further bilateral ties with Turkey.
- Setting up a joint public-private sector facility to fund targeted research projects and events is one possible way of promoting UK-Turkey relations.
- Turkey is an important but not the leading player in the South Caucasus, Central Asia, Middle East and Western Balkans.
- Turkey's strategic location affords an enhanced British footprint in the South Caucasus, Central Asia, Middle East and Western Balkans.

- Turkish foreign policy is constrained by: the unresolved Kurdish issue; challenging bilateral relations with Armenia, Cyprus, EU, Greece, Iran, Israel and Syria; domestic economic capabilities; and over-dependency on Russian and Iranian hydrocarbon supplies.
- The governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) is an inspiration for Islamist-rooted parties in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Turkey itself is not necessarily a model for Muslim countries and organisations imbued with ethnic and sectarian diversity for numerous reasons ranging from a distinctive history to incompleteness of Turkey's nation-building process.
- Turkey's human rights' deficit and gender inequality restrains the full potential and quality of its democratic institutions.
- Turkey's Kurdish issue is a major litmus test of the maturity of Turkish politics.
- If the Kurdish issue is unresolved, it could escalate into a mass popular mobilisation along the lines of so-called "Arab Spring" with regional implications.
- Turkey's EU membership is at a standstill driven by fears of its Muslim identity. Prospects for a Cyprus settlement in the near future look dim.
- There is nothing more that the UK can do in the short-term to re-mobilise the moribund EU-Turkey relationship and to encourage a settlement in Cyprus.
- Turkey will increasingly cooperate with individual or a group of EU member states rather than with EU as a whole. Libya and Syria demonstrate this relational change, where Ankara is coordinating with Berlin, London and Paris rather than Brussels.
- Turkey's geostrategic position offers opportunities for strengthening UK and EU energy security underpinned by one of the three competing pipeline projects: Nabucco, Interconnector Turkey-Italy-Greece or the Trans-Adriatic Pipelines.
- The chosen pipeline is intended to carry Azerbaijani and, perhaps, Turkmen gas to European consumers from 2017. So far, the Nabucco pipeline seems to be the leading proposition.
- Turkey's ambitions as a regional energy hub have lagged implementation.
- Turkey appears to be becoming more dependent on Russian energy supplies. It concluded an agreement with the Russian state-controlled Atomstroyexport to build a nuclear power plant on the Mediterranean coast of Akkuyu starting in 2013.
- Atomstroyexport will wholly-own and pay the full cost of construction, which is estimated at around US \$ 20 billion. It will be able to transfer up to 49% of its share in the Akkuyu venture to another party.
- Whether Turkey's recent abolition of the autonomy of the Energy Market Regulatory Authority portends a movement from an EU-style transparent, market-based approach in the energy sector to more opacity and state intervention remains to be seen.

EVIDENCE

How should the Government's efforts to strengthen UK-Turkey relations be assessed, especially with respect to the economic and commercial spheres?

1. Turkey already has extensive close economic relations with the UK. Both countries aim to double bilateral trade volumes from US \$ 9 billion to US \$ 18 billion by 2015.
2. UK-based think-tanks (eg Chatham House), universities (eg the London School of Economics), cultural entities (eg British Council), business and trade associations (eg the Middle East Association) and government bodies (eg Foreign Office and UKTI) are quite active in promoting UK-Turkish links.
3. Arguably, the UK and United States are the only countries in the world enjoying such an enviable infrastructure for international outreach. But, their understated use in the UK may diminish this critical advantage.

Recommendation

4. The UK government should consider instruments and strategies to coordinate more effectively between the crown jewels of British diplomacy (ie the Foreign Office, think-tanks, universities, cultural entities, and business and trade associations). One step could be setting up a joint public-private sector facility to fund targeted research projects and events to promote UK-Turkey relations.

To what extent is Turkey a helpful partner for the Government's foreign and security policy, in the Middle East and North Africa, the South Caucasus, Central Asia or the Western Balkans? To what extent is Turkey such a partner for the UK in NATO?

5. The UK government cooperates very closely, both bilaterally and through NATO, with Turkey on the Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia, South Caucasus and Western Balkans.

6. Libya is a good illustration of how the UK, as opposed to France, drew Turkey very early on into the military campaign, giving added legitimacy to this policy.

7. Turkey's geostrategic position at the crossroads between Europe and Asia and proximity to 70% of global energy supplies offers the UK significant opportunities for a stronger footprint in some of world's most vital and volatile regions.

8. However, the UK should be realistic in appreciating the circumscriptions of Turkey's influence in its surrounding regions. Turkey is an important but not the leading player in any of those regions. Russia and China are pre-eminent in Central Asia; Russia in the South Caucasus; Israel and Iran in the Middle East and North Africa; and the EU in the Western Balkans.

9. Crucially, Turkey's economy limits foreign policy ambitions, including its over-dependency on Russian and Iranian hydrocarbon supplies. Similarly, its fractious relations with neighbouring Armenia, Cyprus, EU, Greece, Iran, Israel and Syria confine the scope of Turkish foreign policy.

10. Turkey's dispute with Cyprus, for instance, hampers the deployment of NATO assets in EU-led peace-keeping and security operations and Turkey's participation in European defence cooperation.

11. Turkey's unresolved Kurdish issue seems to restrain Turkey's relations with Iraq.

Recommendations

12. The UK should maintain, if not strengthen, policy coordination with Turkey towards the Middle East and North Africa, South Caucasus, Central Asia and Western Balkans. Nevertheless, the UK should be realistic in its expectations of such engagement with Turkey.

13. In particular, it should take into account that Turkey is an important but not leading player in those regions. Additionally, Turkish foreign policy is constrained by the unresolved Kurdish issue; challenging relations with Armenia, Cyprus, EU, Greece, Iran, Israel and Syria; domestic economic capabilities; and over-dependency on Russian and Iranian hydrocarbon supplies.

To what extent do Turkey and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) function as models for other Muslim countries and organisations in a way that is helpful for UK Government policy, particularly in the context of the "Arab Spring"? How should Turkey's role in this respect affect UK Government policy towards it?

14. Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is an inspiration to Islamist-rooted parties in the Middle East and North Africa on active engagement in electoral politics and on promoting open markets, foreign investment and free trade.

15. Turkey itself is not a necessarily the most appropriate model for other Muslim countries and organisations imbued with ethnic and sectarian diversity for the reasons below:

- (i) *Distinctive history*—Republican founder Mustafa Ataturk and the pro-Western military, motivated Turkey to emulate, albeit incompletely, European political and economic institutions, and social conventions. Arab militaries do not seem to share a similar European orientation.
- (ii) *Highly centralised, unitary state*—This is best encapsulated by the first three articles of the Turkish constitution defining the country as an "indivisible entity."
- (iii) *Exclusive national identity*—This is, again, best encapsulated by the first three articles of the Turkish constitution defining the country as a "Turkish Republic" with "Turkish" as the only official language.
- (iv) *Majoritarian culture*—Turkey suffers from intense political and social polarisation undermining prospects for societal consensus on key political, economic and social issues.
- (v) *Restrictive election system*—Turkey applies the D'Hondt method with an excessively high 10% threshold thereby excluding smaller parties from parliamentary representation.
- (vi) *Underdeveloped civil society*—Turkey is marked by limited social capital and deep conservatism restricting the potential robustness of democratic politics and independent social action.
- (vii) *Gender inequality*—Turkey is ranked number 101 out of 109 and 124 out of 126 countries in terms of gender empowerment by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Economic Forum respectively.
- (viii) *Kurdish issue*—Persistence of the Kurdish problem suggests that the nation-building process in Turkey is far from complete.
- (ix) *European Convention on Human Rights*—The European Court on Human Rights has assumed a critical role in promoting human and minority rights in Turkey. Such a judicial body does not exist in the Middle East and North Africa or in other parts of the world.

Recommendations

16. The UK government should view the governing AKP as a positive benchmark for Islamist-rooted parties in the Middle East and North Africa.

17. But, it should be cautious in projecting Turkey itself as a model for Muslim countries and organisations imbued with ethnic and sectarian diversity due to: (i) a distinctive history, (ii) a highly centralised, unitary state, (iii) an exclusive national identity, (iv) a majoritarian culture, (v) a restrictive election system, (vi) an underdeveloped civil society, (vii) gender inequality, (viii) the Kurdish issue and (ix) the European Convention on Human Rights.

Should the UK Government be concerned about trends in the quality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Turkey, including the rights of ethnic and religious minorities (including the Kurds) and freedom of expression?

18. Human rights and the rule of law are core values for the quality of democracy in Turkey.

19. Ronald Inglehart—a political scientist at the University of Michigan and Director of the highly-acclaimed World Values Survey—and Pippa Norris—a Harvard University lecturer—found in 2003 that “Muslims and their Western counterparts want democracy, yet they are worlds apart when it comes to attitudes toward divorce, abortion, gender equality, and gay rights—which may not bode well for democracy’s future in the Middle East.”

20. In a related finding, Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel—Professor for Political Culture Research at Leuphana University—noted in 2009 that societies stressing gender equality and human rights tend to be the most effective democracies. By contrast, conservative societies tend to be less robust democracies.

21. Similarly, Yilmaz Esmer—a well-respected Professor at Istanbul-based Bahcesehir University and Director of the World Values Survey in Turkey—confirmed these findings in a recent interview: “What they [Inglehart and Norris] are saying is that what differentiates Islamic values from non-Islamic values is not democratic values etc. There is no difference. The basic difference according to them is gender and sexuality.”

22. Professor Esmer found that inter-generational values in Turkey have been stable and durable over the last 20 years. His findings are shared by other leading academics in this field, notably Ali Carkoglu and Ersin Kalaycioglu—Professors at Istanbul-based Sabanci University.

23. Turkey’s position on human rights and gender equality is measured by reputable global agencies. According to the Reporters without Borders’ “International Press Index” 2010, Turkey is ranked 138 out of 178 countries for press freedom, lower than Algeria, Egypt, Iraq and Qatar, and 39 positions below the level for 2006.

24. US-based Pew Research’s survey on religious restrictions ranked Turkey as 19 and 24 out of 198 countries and territories respectively in terms of the “highest levels” of government restrictions and social hostilities involving religion.

25. In addition, the United Nations Development Agency and the World Economic Forum ranked Turkey as number 101 out of 109 and 124 out of 126 countries in terms of gender empowerment respectively. At 23%, its Female Labour Force Participation Rate—the proportion of working-age women in employment—is less than half the OECD average of 58%.

26. Turkey’s Kurdish issue is the key litmus test of Turkish democracy. On that score, there is evidence that political and economic frustrations may be fuelling ethnic antagonism between Turks and Kurds. Konda Research, a Turkish polling company, revealed in a June 2011 survey that 57.6% of ethnic Turks said they would not marry a Kurd, while 47.4% said they did not want a Kurdish neighbour. In comparison, 26.4% of Kurds said they would not marry a Turk, while 22.1% said they did not want a Turkish neighbour.

27. Arguably, the Kurdish issue, if prolonged, could follow the path of the so-called “Arab Spring” by spiralling into a mass popular mobilisation. This development may accentuate tensions between Turks and Kurds and affect as well as get affected by regional developments in Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Recommendations

28. The UK government should pay close attention to the evolution of human rights’ and gender equality standards in Turkey. Based on authoritative research, these values lie at the core of the quality of democracy in Turkey. In the absence of major changes in those values, Turkish democracy may not fulfil its full potential.

29. Turkey’s Kurdish issue is a major litmus test of the maturity of Turkish politics, which, if not resolved, could follow the path of the so-called “Arab Spring”. This issue could spiral into a mass popular mobilisation and can affect as well as get affected by regional developments in Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Is the Government correct to continue to support Turkey's membership of the EU? If so, what should the Government do to reinvigorate Turkey's EU accession process—for example, with respect to other EU Member States and EU policies, or the issue of Cyprus, as well as Turkey itself? Does Turkey still want to join the EU?

30. Turkey's EU accession process is essentially comatose. Neither the EU nor Turkey is enthusiastic to reenergise EU membership. Turkish public support of EU accession has dropped precipitously from around 70–75% in 2004–2005 to around 40–50% in 2010–2011. Accession barely registers in the political discourse in Turkey.

31. There seems to be a fragile EU consensus not to push the Turkey's European perspective in light of adamant opposition of France and Germany, the Euro zone crisis and lagging economic growth rates across the EU.

32. Turkey has commenced negotiations on 13 “chapters” or policy areas that it needs to adopt ahead of accession. Of the 35 chapters, only one is closed, 17 are blocked and a mere three chapters are eligible for opening. No chapter has been opened since June 2010.

33. Turkey's Muslim identity lies at the heart of European hostility. In a 2009 opinion poll by Istanbul-based Bosphorus University conducted in France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK, 39% of respondents agreed that Turkey is “a Muslim country [...] incompatible with the common Christian roots” of Europe. Only 20% of respondents cited culture and religion as a prerequisite for EU accession when Turkey's name was omitted.

34. Cultural differences are also intensifying European doubts of Turkey's democratic credentials. TEPAV, a Turkish think-tank, found in a 2007 poll that around 50% of Europeans prioritised liberties and democracy as conditions for further enlargement. Mentioning Turkey's name raised that level to 85%.

35. EU leaders and their public seem convinced that Turkey's Muslim background is incompatible with European norms. Just 31% of the European public and 62% of European political elites accept that Europe and Turkey share common values, a 2011 German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends survey reveals. It also found that a mere 21% and 51% respectively are enthusiastic about Turkey joining the EU.

36. Complicating Turkey's EU accession is the unresolved Cyprus conflict. It is safe to assume that the current reunification talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots are at a standstill and at present look heading to a breakdown.

37. Both the Greek and Turkish sides have adopted increasingly strident rhetoric and hardline positions that do not bode well for future progress in the Cyprus reunification talks.

38. The confluence of the positive drivers for a solution in 2004—the prospective launch of Turkey's EU accession negotiations, Cypriot EU membership, UN support, and US and EU backing—no longer exist today. Ultimately, the failure of the peace settlement proposed by the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan can be seen in retrospect as the last major opportunity to resolve the perennial Cyprus conflict.

39. The Cyprus issue is undermining effective EU-NATO coordination at a time of instability in the Middle East and North Africa. Turkey (in NATO but not the EU) objects to Cypriot (in the EU but not in NATO) participation in EU-NATO meetings and in NATO's “Partnership for Peace” initiative. In retaliation, Cyprus vetoes administrative arrangements between the European Defence Agency and Turkey. In addition, Turkey complicates European access to NATO military assets for peace-keeping operations under the laborious 2003 “Berlin Plus” arrangements.

40. Turkey is currently dealing with individual or a group of EU countries on an issue-by-issue basis rather than with the EU collectively. This can be seen vividly on the questions of Libya and Syria, where Turkey is coordinating closely with Berlin, London and Paris, as opposed to with Brussels.

41. The UK government is successfully accommodating the decline of the Turkey's accession process. London and Ankara are cooperating closely on a bilateral basis and should continue to do so.

42. The UK should avoid publicly or privately supporting Turkey's EU perspective unless more favourable circumstances emerge, such as more Turkey-friendly leaderships in France and Germany.

43. There is nothing more that the UK can do in the short-term to re-mobilise the moribund EU-Turkey relationship and to encourage a settlement in Cyprus.

Recommendation

44. Turkey's EU membership is at a standstill driven by fears of its Muslim identity. Prospects for a Cyprus settlement in the near future look dim. The UK should continue to successfully accommodate the fallout of the EU accession process by engaging bilaterally with Turkey.

45. The UK should avoid publicly or privately supporting Turkey's EU perspective unless more favourable circumstances emerge, such as more Turkey-friendly political leaderships in France and Germany.

How important is Turkey to UK and EU energy security? How compatible are UK and EU, and Turkish, energy interests? How should Turkey's energy role affect UK Government policy towards the country?

46. Turkey is strategically located close to 70% of global supplies of oil and gas in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. Pipelines criss-crossing Turkish territory can be part of an EU and British strategy to energy diversification.

47. There are three competing pipeline projects to transport Azerbaijani and, perhaps Turkmen and Iraqi gas via Turkish territory to European consumers in 2017: the ambitious 31 billion cubic metre Nabucco pipeline; Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI) and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP).

48. Nabucco seems to be the leading proposition at the moment, though which pipeline project is ultimately selected remains to be seen.

49. Turkey has plans to transform its Mediterranean port of Ceyhan into an energy hub encompassing gas storage facilities, LNG terminal, oil refinery and a petrochemicals plant.

50. So far, Turkey's energy ambitions have significantly outpaced actual implementation, suggestive that prospects of Turkey's contribution to UK and EU energy security may be real but limited.

51. Turkey appears to be becoming more dependent on Russian energy supplies. It concluded an agreement with the Russian state-controlled Atomstroyexport to build a nuclear power plant on the Mediterranean coast of Akkuyu starting in 2013.

52. Atomstroyexport will wholly own and pay the full cost of construction, which is estimated at around US \$ 20 billion. It will be able to transfer up to 49% of its share in the Akkuyu venture to another party.

53. Turkish regulation of the energy sector seems to be shifting away from the EU model. According to an underreported legislative change on 24 August 2011, the Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EMRA)—the equivalent of UK's OFGEM—is no longer an independent body. Turkey's energy minister is responsible for supervising the EMRA.

54. Whether such a major change in the legal status of the EMRA indicates a movement from a transparent, market-based approach in the energy sector to more opacity and state intervention remains to be seen.

Recommendations

55. Turkey's geostrategic position offers opportunities for strengthening UK and EU energy security underpinned by Nabucco, ITGI or TAP.

56. Notwithstanding these opportunities, the EU and UK should prudently assess Turkey's contributions to energy security. So far, Turkey's ambitions as a regional energy hub have lagged implementation.

57. Both the UK and EU should examine carefully whether the recent abolition of the EMRA's autonomy portends a movement from an EU-style transparent, market-based approach in the energy sector to more opacity and state intervention.

5 September 2011

Written evidence from Professor Clement Dodd

Prof.em.Clement Dodd was formerly professorial fellow in politics, with special reference to Turkey, in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

I. A brief account of recent developments and problems in Turkish politics and society.

II. Suggestions for UK Government policies on:

- (1) The issue of democracy, including the Kurdish problem.
- (2) Turkey's potential membership of the European Union, including the Cyprus problem.
- (3) Turkey's political system as a model for Muslim states in the Middle East.

I. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TURKEY

Elections

The Justice and Development Party Government has retained office, which it first gained in 2002. The recent June 2011 elections underline its continuing popularity. As voting studies show, this is in large part due to its successful management of the economy. However, despite garnering more votes, it has lost seats, from 341 to 327 in the 550 member Assembly. This is important because, while all parties want a new constitution, the government party did not obtain the 367 seats that would have allowed it to make and adopt a new constitution unilaterally. With just 330 seats it could alone have framed a constitution on its own, but in that case would have had to have the result confirmed by referendum. The result is generally accepted as good news for democracy and particularly for the major opposition party the Republican People's Party, which under its new

more dynamic leaders, Kemal Kılıçdarolu, gained 23 more seats. An important change is the election of 35 (now amended to 36) Kurdish members, who avoided the 10% barrier by standing as independents.

The Military

Politically the Government has in recent years made changes of considerable political significance that are little short of revolutionary. With EU approval it has drastically diminished the important influence of the military in politics, particularly in greatly weakening its position in the National Security Council. In other administrative and judicial ways the Government has taken powers to exert more control over the military.

In 2007, the military opposed the election to the presidency of the Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, on the grounds that with his election the principle of secularism was at stake. The point was made in a provocative memorandum on the General Staff website written, as later emerged, by the Chief of the General Staff, General Büyükanıt. The military was reasserting its role as the staunch defender of secularism and insisted that it had to be a party to the debate on the presidency, so politically important an office. Nevertheless after much legal wrangling, the Assembly went on to elect Gül as President. Constitutional changes were then later accepted by referendum that included the election of the President in future by popular vote, which would almost certainly result in the election of a Muslim. For the secular opposition the presidency was the bastion of secularism, and should never be in religious hands.

Also in 2007 the Government opened an investigation into alleged plots to overthrow the government by armed force. This Ergenekon enquiry, as it has been called, resulted by 2010 in the arrest and questioning of 270 persons, including 116 former military officers and 6 journalists. Those charged are accused of trying to overthrow the government and of instigating armed riots. Trials are still awaited.

The Government is also apparently considering bringing to trial the now long-retired leader of the 1980 military intervention, General Evren, who was very popular at the time. In defence of the military it is often pointed out that when they have intervened in politics they have never sought to hold on to power. In 1980 it was the rise of political extremism, and the serious ensuing violence, that prompted the military to intervene. They then had a Constituent Assembly draft a new constitution intended not to abolish democracy, but to make it more disciplined, and thus more limited. It was massively approved by a referendum, in which voting was compulsory.

The Judiciary

The Government has also taken measures that have seriously changed the alleged political culture of the judiciary, which it has regarded as a part of the Atatürkist statist and dogmatic secularist establishment, the other two being the Republican People's Party and the military. The Justice and Development Party believed that this Atatürkist establishment was a brake on the development of democracy, and that through its pronounced secularism undermined the freedom of religion.

In 2007 the Constitutional Court frustrated the Government's intention to allow women university students to wear headscarves and in 2008 considered closing down the Justice and Development Party, failing to do so by only a very narrow majority.

Partly in response, in 2010, the Government drafted amendments to the size, and mode of appointment, of members of both the Constitutional Court and the High Council of Prosecutors and Judges. In this latter case, following EU advice, membership was enlarged to allow a wider selection of the judiciary to be represented. In effect this reduced the influence of its Atatürkist component. However, contrary to EU advice, the Minister of Justice remained in the chair.

As to the Constitutional Court, its membership was also enlarged, from 11 to 17 members, of whom the President would appoint 14 from among candidates nominated by other bodies, the other three to be appointed by the National Assembly. The Republican People's Party claimed that, since the President was henceforth to be chosen by popular vote, the person elected would probably be markedly Muslim, with the alleged result that appointees to the Constitutional Court would be sympathetic to the Justice and Development Party, despite the latter's claim to be a conservative, not a religious party. In European states the appointment of constitutional courts is more widely based.

These changes were approved by referendum, 58% for, 42% against, on a 77% turnout. The Government hailed the result as a victory for democracy. Other changes in the referendum reflected EU influence, including the creation of an Ombudsman, and the removal of legal obstacles to gender discrimination. There is also provision for dismissed military officers to appeal to the civil courts, and for military officers to be tried in civilian courts, save for purely military offences. Also civil servants are now allowed to join unions, but not to strike.

The Media

The EU's 2010 Progress Report stated that "overall, open and free debate has continued and expanded" whilst noting that the high number of prosecutions of journalists and pressure on the media undermined freedom of the press. "Turkish law" it was asserted, "does not sufficiently guarantee freedom of expression". It is clear

that the Government does not take criticism easily, including satire and caricature. The fear of arrest and trial naturally encourages self-censorship. There are six major multi-media companies, but the largest, by far, the Doan Media Group, which in 2009 was very heavily fined for its alleged tax irregularities. The Dogan Media Group has denied the allegations, saying that the aim of the fine was to silence a media group known to hold critical views of the government.

Nature of the Justice and Development Party regime

The party insists that it is not Islamic, but conservative and democratic. In the conservative tradition it is against attempts to organize, or reorganize, societies by reference to “utopian” political theories. Political institutions should reflect the nature of society, including its religious values. It does not, however, deny human rights, in which field there has been significant progress. It generally supports democratic freedoms, though in practice is sensitive about some forms of criticism. Its critics often claim that it is inclined to the authoritarianism that was a feature of Ottoman government and has resurfaced in Turkish governments since then.

It cannot but be in the interest of the Justice and Development Party that in recent years the religious orders (*tarikats*) have become very active in promoting religious beliefs and practices, and that the widespread educational organization, the Gülen Movement, should continue to be influential. This organization widely promotes, through its schools and educational activities, a generally moderate, but quite intense, version of Islam, drawing mainly from the work of Said Nursi, an Islamist intellectual writing in early republican times, but ignored by Atatürk, for whom Islam was a dead hand on progress towards a modern Western society.

The party encourages entrepreneurial economic activity in a free market, whilst aware that gross inequalities of income can disrupt society. The Government’s emphasis on religion reflects the recent rise from the small towns, and from the suburbs of the larger ones, of a new generation of very successful Muslim businessmen, the “Anatolian Tigers”. They differ from the earlier, and very successful, industrial and business elite represented in the large holding companies, whose leadership is generally more western in outlook. The Anatolian Tigers’ emergence from, and continuing care for, traditional Muslim society is being seen as a way to make the inevitable income inequalities of a burgeoning market economy more widely acceptable than is often the case. These new, mainly Islamic, businessmen are also inclined to contribute to the state’s often limited, provision of welfare services, like health care and education. A result of these activities is said to be a new gradual but steady Islamicization of society, a process not unaccompanied by social pressure to conform.

The Kurdish problem

This is Turkey’s major domestic concern. The Kurds form about 15% of the population, but the numbers are very difficult to determine and are open to question. The Government seeks to reduce the impact of the problem by stressing the common Islamic identity of Kurds and Turks, and now allows the use of Kurdish in the media, which include a Kurdish television channel. These and similar concessions to a Kurdish identity are often seen by Turkish nationalists as encouragement to the Kurds to ask for more. Opposition is still led by the Kurdish/nationalist PKK, which wants secession, autonomy, or a federal solution. A major Turkish concern is that the emergence of any degree of autonomy for the Kurds will encourage their union with the Kurds in Iraq and Iran. Hence the Government is making every effort to try to ensure that the Kurds in Iraq remain part of Iraq. In recent years there have been renewed violent clashes between the Turkish army and rebel Kurds, who are often based in Iraq. To help control them American and Iraqi forces are now to be strengthened in that area. The Kurds now have 36 members of parliament and in the recent elections the Government party did well in some Kurdish areas.

II. UK GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Quality of democracy

We all regrettably have now to realise, of course, that the UK, with its faltering economy, its massive debt and political scandals (well reported in Turkey) finds it less able to recommend itself as a model for modern democracy. The British system is anyway quite different from the Turkish, which in its formation was influenced by the French model.

It is probably better for the UK to promote the cause of democracy in Turkey by concentrating on support of EU efforts to improve political and human rights, including freedom of the press and inquiry into the Ergenekon investigations. British input, via the EU, should, however, always take into account the fact that reforms advanced by the EU may have unexpected consequences in a society only partly Western in character, as they have done in the past. Also, in this regard, it has to be remembered that Turkish society is generally not sympathetic to excessive liberalism, and to libertarianism.

Turkey has not abandoned its aim of EU membership, despite the decline in enthusiasm for the EU in the government, and among the people generally. In this regard it is as well to remember that the pro-EU Republican People’s Party is regaining strength and popularity under its new leader, who is attempting to rid the party of its old Atatürkist mentality. To this end he is developing relations with the business world, and is recruiting new blood into the party. Moreover, a very large part of society is still very secularist and supports

the Republican People's Party and EU membership. Many Turks are deeply worried that society is becoming more Islamic and will not easily continue to accept it.

The Kurdish Problem

The major internal problem at present is that posed by the Kurds. Advocating more freedoms to the Kurds is a tempting way to proceed, but, as mentioned above, Turkish nationalists argue, that this only encourages them to ask for more, and eventually for independence. So British policy may need to be somewhat muted in this area whilst generally supporting the development of human and political rights. There is very little support in Turkey or Kurdish independence. Even although a Kurdish "identity" is now generally admitted to exist. Atatürk's overthrow of the Treaty of Sèvres, which envisaged autonomy for a Kurdish state, is still generally regarded to have been a great and necessary achievement.

In my view, encouragement of further integration of Kurds into government is probably the best way forward if it can be achieved, and in this respect the present stress on a common Turkish/Kurdish Muslim identity is undoubtedly helpful. It is a positive development that there are now 36 Kurdish members of the National Assembly, and also that the Government party has won some seats in Kurdish areas. In this regard, the more that Kurds can acquire influential positions in Turkish politics and government so much the better. Such persons should, however, be those who still have a standing in Kurdish society, not Turkicized Kurds. The problem could possibly be on the way to solution if, a Kurdish Lloyd-George, say, became prime minister or president.

EU Membership and Cyprus

In order to encourage Turkey to continue to pursue EU membership, a slow and uphill struggle now, it is important in the meantime for every effort to be made to solve the Cyprus problem. The Greek Cypriots, recognized as sovereign over Cyprus, have now effectively brought EU/Turkish accession negotiations almost to a standstill by using their veto powers. They expect Turkey to recognize their authority over all Cyprus, which Turkey refuses to do, since it regards the Republic of Cyprus as illegal. The present negotiations for a federation may well not succeed. If they do not, then new ways forward must surely be examined and actively pursued.

The Taiwan-type solution, allowing the Turkey/Cyprus EU Customs Agreement to be implemented, would theoretically avoid the problem of recognition. Turkey has suggested this, provided that the international embargoes of the Turkish Cypriot state are lifted, but the Greek Cypriots do not accept it: they believe that it presages recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. They have therefore taken pains in Brussels to stop the direct trade regulation that the EU proposed for the Turkish Cypriots. The Taiwan-type solution would enable the Turkish Cypriots to develop their own economy and reduce, or remove, their reliance of Turkish financial support.

If attempts to create a federation, or a Taiwan-type solution, fail, arguably the only way forward would seem to be to look for a two-state solution. This is unacceptable to the Greek Cypriot government at present, but there are real advantages for the Greek Cypriots in such a solution. For instance, they would probably get a better deal on territory and property lost in 1974 than they would under a federation because a two-state solution is what the Turkish Cypriot government and the people, really want. In this event the Turkish Cypriots would probably quite readily accept some 25 to 30% of the island as theirs instead of the third they now hold. Also the Greek Cypriots would be greatly relieved that an internationally recognized Turkish Cypriot state could not claim that it needed Turkish troops to defend it; the Greek Cypriots greatly resent and fear the presence of Turkish troops in Northern Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots could also benefit from the water that Turkey has promised to pump to Northern Cyprus.

Also, if the present status quo persists, the North will almost certainly continue to become more and more Turkish, and may well eventually become, more or less, part of Turkey. If both the Greek and the Turkish Cypriot states were members of the EU, the resolution of other problems stemming from the present partition of the island would surely be greatly eased, especially as ordinary Greek and Turkish Cypriots have a good deal in common.

The problem, and a difficult one, is how to persuade the Greek Cypriots that a two-state solution would be in their best interests and by far, better, in fact, than a probably troublesome federation. Under the surface of popular politics in the South there is now some perceptible support for the two-state solution. Shipping and other business interests would greatly benefit from a resumption of trade with Turkey that implementation of the EU-Turkey Customs agreement would allow.

There would therefore seem to be a need for a new, and very carefully managed, persistent British policy along these lines, developed in consultation with other states involved. The Greek Cypriots cannot be forced into such a solution. They always make it clear that under such circumstances they would claim, in the International Court of Justice, that the 1960 treaties had been breached, included in which is the Treaty of Establishment authorizing the creation of the British base areas. The Greek Cypriot political elites would have to be actively persuaded that a two-state solution is in the best interests. Of the Greek Cypriots.

Turkey as a model for possible new Muslim states in the Middle East

It is tempting to see Turkey is a model to be adopted. It would be possible in Egypt, say, or even Libya, to establish a government that respected religion since basic Islamic institutions exist there that could theoretically become, or foster the creation of, religious political parties. This sort of development could result in moderate, but also in radical, Islamist regimes. Moreover, the Copts in Egypt, and the Christians in Syria, would hardly welcome either of these developments. Also, the current demand for democracy seems to be a desire for liberal and democratic regimes along Western liberal, not religious, lines,

Another, and very fundamental, objection to the adoption of the Turkish model is that there are no political parties, or many other developed independent social or economic organizations already in existence in these countries to take a lead in mobilizing and representing the populace. Forms of democratization that occurred in the former Soviet world could possibly provide more relevant models. The subject needs careful thought.

6 September 2011

Annex**SUMMARY OF THE 12 JUNE 2011 TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS**

Abb.	Party			Results			
	Name	Leader	Votes	%	pp swing	MPs	MP swing
AK Parti	Justice and Development Party	Recep Tayyip Erdoan	21,399,082	49.83	▲3.25	327	-14
CHP	Republican People's Party	Kemal Kılıçdarolu	11,155,972	25.98	▲5.10	135	+23
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party	Devlet Bahçeli	5,585,513	13.01	▼1.30	53	-18
—	Independent*	—	2,819,917	6.57	▲1.33	35	+8
SP	Felicity Party	Mustafa Kamalak	543,454	1.27	▼1.07	0	±0
HAS Parti	People's Voice Party	Numan Kurtulmuş	329,723	0.77		0	
BBP	Great Union Party	Yalçın Topçu	323,251	0.75		0	
DP	Democratic Party	Namık Kemal Zeybek	279,480	0.65	▼4.77	0	±0
HEPAR	Rights and Equality Party	Osman Pamukolu	124,415	0.29		0	
DSP	Democratic Left Party	Masum Türker	108,089	0.25		0	
DYP	True Path Party	Çetin Özaçıkgöz	64,607	0.15		0	
TKP	Communist Party of Turkey	Erkan Baş	64,006	0.15	▼0.08	0	±0
MP	Nation Party	Aykut Edibali	60,716	0.14		0	
MMP	Nationalist and Conservative Party	Ahmet Reyiz Yılmaz	36,188	0.08		0	
EMEP	Labour Party	Selma Gürkan	32,128	0.07	▼0.00	0	±0
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party	Cem Tokar	15,222	0.04	▼0.06	0	±0
	Total		42,941,763	100.0	0	550	0
	<i>Invalid/Blank</i>		973,185	1.84	—	—	—
	<i>Turnout</i>		43,914,948	83.16	—	—	—

Source: "Election Results of 12 June 2011". Supreme Electoral Board. 12 June 2011. <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/index.html>.

*The BDP nominated 61 candidates as independents of which 35 members were elected.

Written evidence from the Turkish Area Study Group (TASG)**1. SUMMARY**

- UK-Turkey relations and Turkey's regional role must be considered with a long historical perspective and in a geographical context.
- Anglo-Turkish economic, cultural and political relations have a very long history.
- Turkey's location is not only geo-politically important but is also culturally and economically significant.
- Turkish studies should be promoted in British universities.

2. THE TURKISH AREA STUDY GROUP (TASG)

The Turkish Area Study Group brings together, and provides a forum for, people interested in and keen to know about Turkish life, history, language and culture. It organises symposia and lectures, supports publications

(such as Brian Beeley (ed.), *Turkish Transformation: New Century, New Challenges*, Huntingdon: Eothen Press, 2002), and produces the twice-yearly *Turkish Area Studies Review*.

3. COMMENTS

As TASG is a non-political society, it does not take collective positions on current political issues. The main purpose of this submission is to argue that UK-Turkey relations can only be properly understood through a long historical perspective and in the context of an informed awareness of Turkey's geographical location.

3.1 *Historical Perspective*

"Turkey" is the name often used by historians for the Ottoman Empire (1300–1922) as well as the Republic of Turkey (founded in 1923). The Republic occupies a much smaller area than did the Empire, even after the substantial contraction undergone by the Empire in the last century of its history. The Turkish Republic was created in Anatolia (Asia Minor) out of the ruins of the Empire in a War of National Liberation (1919–22) fought against the occupying Entente Powers in general, but particularly against Greece. As the direct descendent of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic enjoys or suffers all the advantages and disadvantages that the imperial heritage brings with it in terms of relations with the other successor states in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa.

Britain's relations with Turkey have a long history. Formal diplomatic relations were established with the appointment of an English ambassador to the "Sublime Porte" (as the Ottoman government was known) in 1583. In 1793 London received one of the first permanent Turkish embassies established abroad. Diplomatic relations have been maintained ever since, with some brief exceptions, notably during the First World War. As a result, the two foreign ministries have a long experience of each other, and relations have generally been cordial. Since the Second World War the two countries have often worked together to achieve shared goals. Indeed, since that period Turkey has been very much part of the Western and European worlds, being a member of the Council of Europe, NATO, the OECD and the OSCE, and having an association agreement with the European Union going right back to 1963. In 1960 Turkey and the UK, together with Greece, were responsible for drawing up the constitutional arrangements for the independent Republic of Cyprus, for which they all three became guarantors.

Anglo-Turkish commercial and cultural relations predate the establishment of the first English consulates at Istanbul and Izmir in the 16th and 17th centuries. Starting in the Middle Ages with the import of spices and luxury goods, such as "Turkey carpets", trade between Britain and Turkey expanded over time, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries. Anatolia became an important source of raw materials (eg cotton), foodstuffs (eg sultanas and dried figs) and tobacco. In the 19th century it became a significant market for British manufactures. Trade links have remained strong to the present day (see below).

Cultural contacts have also been strong since Ottoman times. For example, Turkish tiles adorned British houses in the 19th century, while turbans, feathered aigrettes and "harem pants" have moved in and out of (mostly female) fashion in Britain since the 18th century. The habit of coffee drinking was imported to Britain from the Ottoman lands in the 17th century. "Turkish delight" (an English name for the Turkish *lokum*) became a much-prized delicacy in upper-class British society in the 19th century. As the number of Britons holidaying in Turkey has soared in recent years (reaching 1.8 million in 2010), Turkish cuisine has become much appreciated in the UK, as the number of Turkish restaurants testifies. In the opposite direction, English male dress style influenced the type of Western-inspired clothing imposed upon the Ottoman bureaucracy and widely adopted by the Ottoman upper classes during the 19th century. Much later, under the Republic, the Turkish school of ballet was founded by Dame Ninette de Valois, creator of the British Royal Ballet, who exerted a great influence on the development of this art form in Turkey.

The Europeanization of many aspects of Turkish social and political life has been in progress since the 18th century, but was significantly accelerated and strengthened under Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Republic. In a series of radical reforms carried out in the 1920s and 1930s, the new Turkish state was established as the first secular republic in the Islamic world. Islamic law was totally excluded from the legal and judicial system of the state, which was constructed on European models. The Latin alphabet was adopted instead of the Arabic one, the Western weekend replaced Friday as the weekly holiday, and all Turkish citizens were obliged to register family surnames as in the West. One of the most important aspects of the reforms was the emphasis on the equality of men and women. Polygamy was outlawed, and women achieved equal rights with men in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance and education. Turkish women won the vote, and the right to be elected to parliament, even before their counterparts in France. After the Second World War the Turkish political system was opened up to multi-party competition, and this has continued, despite some interruptions (military interventions in 1960–61, 1971–73, 1980–83) down to the present day. Although there are still some serious question marks about certain aspects of democracy in Turkey, the position of the military has been substantially "normalized" in recent years, and the possibility of another military coup is now rated as virtually nil. Turkey is incomparably more democratic in its culture than any other Middle Eastern country apart from Israel.

British scholars have taught, and continue to teach, at leading universities in Turkey, and there have been substantial British contributions to the study of Turkish language, culture, history and politics. Notable figures

in recent times include Godfrey Goodwin (architecture), Geoffrey Lewis (language), Colin Imber and Caroline Finkel (history), Clement Dodd, William Hale and Philip Robins (politics and foreign relations), and Paul Stirling and David Shanklin (anthropology). The British Institute at Ankara (established 1947), has made important contributions to Turkish studies, especially in archaeology. It has also facilitated and financed visits of Turkish scholars to Britain. Turkish scholars are currently employed in several British universities; the election of Professor evket Pamuk to the newly established Chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies at the European Institute of the LSE is a particularly distinguished example. The Ottoman archives in Istanbul are a major resource for the study of European, as well as Middle Eastern history. They have become highly accessible in recent years, and regularly attract British scholars and research students.

3.2 *Geographical Context*

Turkey sits at the centre of a web of cultural, economic and political networks which cover Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa. The historic links with Central Asia are often overlooked in Britain. The ties are both historical and cultural. Turkish is one of a related group of languages (including also, among others, Uzbek, Kazakh and Uighur) that are spoken over a wide area of Asia, embracing parts of Russia and China and five of the former Soviet Republics. Turkic languages are thus similar in global reach to Spanish. In myth and historical fact the Turks' ancestral home was in Central Asia, and they migrated westwards from there. The ties with the historic homelands have been revived from time to time, notably following the break-up of the Soviet Union. Many young people from Central Asia now come to Turkey to study, with support from the Turkish government.

Turkey's location, between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean and at the junction of Europe and Asia, means that it is crossed by major east/west and north/south routes and that its ports (Istanbul, Izmir, Mersin, Iskenderun) have regional significance. The historic overland trade routes now carry not only smuggled narcotics from Afghanistan, but also TIR trucks and containers destined for Iran, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, as well as the south Caucasian republics. Gas and oil pipelines cross Turkey carrying fuel to Europe from Azerbaijan and Central Asia. Free trade zones have been established at Mersin and Iskenderun. The Straits (Dardanelles, Bosphorus) at either end of the Sea of Marmara, linking the Black Sea and the Aegean, have not only been of great strategic significance down the ages, but are also of considerable importance for trade between the Black Sea states and the wider world. The two Bosphorus bridges, the first built by British engineers in 1970–73, serve international trade, as well as facilitating movement within the greater Istanbul area. The massive project announced by the Turkish Prime Minister this year for an "Istanbul Canal" would, if it materializes, divert heavy sea traffic away from the Bosphorus, with possible safety and conservation benefits for this historic waterway.

Turkey has a fine history of providing a safe haven for refugees from adjacent areas. The most notable example was the welcome accorded to the Jews expelled from Spain at the end of the 15th century. (It has also been estimated that through the direct action of Turkish diplomats during World War II about 15,000 French and 100,000 Eastern European Jews were saved from the Holocaust.) In the 19th and early 20th centuries refugees to Turkey included large numbers of Muslims from former Ottoman provinces in Europe and from newly Russianized areas of Central Asia and the Caucasus, with the result that the ancestors of many citizens of the Turkish Republic originated from outside its borders. The country is a classic example of a melting pot, with all the dynamism associated with such a society. In more recent times, large numbers of short-term refugees have arrived from northern Iraq and Syria.

The headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers rise in Eastern Turkey. Control of the water, and its increased use for irrigation and electricity generation within Turkey itself, have caused friction with countries to the south, particularly with Syria. However, Turkey has expressed its willingness to agree management strategies with its neighbours. The availability of considerable amounts of fresh water near the south coast of Turkey has given rise to plans for exporting water to Cyprus and Israel. At a time when scarcity of water is seen as one of the major problems and potential sources of future conflict in the Middle East, the relative richness of Turkey in this respect will inevitably acquire increasing importance.

The Turkish tourist industry has expanded spectacularly in recent years. Nearly 30 million tourists now visit Turkey every year, and Britain ranks third (after Germany and Russia) in terms of the countries from which they come. While its Mediterranean beaches appeal to the mass market attracted primarily by "sun, sand and sea", many visitors are also drawn by the unique skyline of the Ottoman capital on the Bosphorus, by the "fairy chimneys" of Cappadocia and the staggeringly varied archaeological and architectural heritage of the country as a whole. The constant interplay between east and west, which visitors to Turkey find so fascinating, is masterfully explored at the literary level in the novels of the Turkish Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk, which are highly appreciated in Britain and around the world.

A wide variety of raw materials, a large population (some 78 million) and an educated work force, largely urbanized, have provided the base for Turkey's emergence as a significant manufacturing country, with industries ranging from textiles and steel production to advanced engineering. Its economic and export profile has been totally transformed since the introduction of a free-market regime in the 1980s. Turkey is now involved in economic activities all over the globe. Its exports now consist predominantly of manufactured goods (textiles and clothing, automotive products, white goods, chemicals, etc), and Britain is among the leading purchasers of these exports. With a current annual growth rate of 8.8%, the dynamism of the Turkish

economy is in stark contrast to the economic stagnation in Europe, and there is clearly great scope for increasing British exports to Turkey.

As far as the political aspects of Turkey's international relations are concerned, the last few years have seen a remarkable transformation in the country's aspirations to play an active, autonomous, peace-broking and leadership role, not only at the regional but also at the global level. This assertive new stance, symbolized by a dramatic extension of the network of Turkish diplomatic missions to cover virtually all countries of the world, is particularly linked to the innovative thinking of Professor Ahmet Davutolu, who after several years as a chief adviser to the Turkish government on foreign relations, became Foreign Minister in 2009. The cultural reflection of this development can be seen in the ambitious plans to open "Yunus Emre" centres to promote Turkish culture, on the model of the British Council or Goethe Institutes, in many major cities of the world. (The Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centre in London, opened in 2010, is the first in Western Europe.)

Turkey's new activism within its region (the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus) has not always won it the plaudits of the West. Its independent stance over the Iran nuclear power issue and its current hard line towards Israel are clear examples of this. On the other hand, its often low-profile efforts to mediate disputes and conflicts in the Balkans and the Middle East have been positively appreciated. Turkey's new foreign policy activism has been variously described by commentators as "neo-Ottomanism" or interpreted as a reaction to the overt reluctance of major European powers, notably France and Germany, to admit Turkey to the European Union. TASG believes that Britain should welcome the new international self-confidence of Turkey, which is a reflection of its success in achieving the strong modern statehood envisaged for it by Atatürk. The UK, with its over four centuries of diplomatic relations with Turkey, its well-established tradition of Turkish studies, and its recent record of being, among the major European powers, the staunchest supporter of Turkey's full integration into Europe, is ideally placed to seek new avenues of cooperation with Turkey, and to facilitate closer understanding between Turkey and the West. Such efforts, however, must be underpinned by continuing support for Turkish studies in the educational system.

3.3 *Turkish studies in the UK*

Despite the manifest economic and political importance of Turkey, appreciation of its role in the world has been compromised in recent years by the serious contraction of Turkish studies in British universities. In the 1960s and 70s Cambridge, Edinburgh, Durham, SOAS, Oxford and Manchester all offered degree courses in which Turkish studies were the main or joint-main subject. Abolition of posts at some of these universities left SOAS, Oxford and Manchester as the only institutions continuing to offer such degree programmes from the 1980s onwards. Since 2003 SOAS and Oxford have both lost posts and are struggling to maintain their level of coverage, while at Manchester the situation is even worse: the loss of two further posts there in 2011 has brought Turkish studies in the north of Britain to a sudden end. The problems underlying this situation include the difficulty of studying a non-Indo-European language like Turkish and therefore the need for extra resources; the small number of students attracted to the study of other cultures in an educational system which is increasingly national rather than international in outlook; and the freedom of universities to end programmes once ear-marked funding has ended, in total disregard for national priorities as expressed in the Scarborough, Hayter and Parker reports.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

TASG would like to make the following recommendations to the Committee:

- 4.1 Turkey is a country with which Britain has a long history of constructive diplomatic, economic and cultural relations. It is a country that is now of rising power and importance in its region and on the global scene, and which is exerting an increasingly independent influence in international affairs. It is vital that the UK should devote energy and attention to maintaining contact with Turkey and seeking to understand the country, its people and its culture as deeply as possible, with a view to maximal cooperation on international issues and an increase in bilateral trade.
- 4.2 A deeper understanding of the country by politicians and the British public at large could be promoted by the encouragement of Turkish studies in schools and universities. There is a wealth of accessible scholarship on Ottoman and modern Turkish history in English that would make its incorporation into secondary school curricula very straightforward.
- 4.3 The Committee should promote a debate at Chatham House as part of their evidence-taking.
- 4.4 Consideration should be given to promoting the development of "twinning" relationships between British and Turkish towns on the model of the relationships that already exist between the UK and France, Germany etc. As the great majority of Turks resident in the UK live in London, this development may best be initiated between London boroughs and municipalities of Istanbul (links between the two ends of the European continent).

- 4.5 The Committee should note the following important collection of articles on the history of UK-Turkish relations: W. Hale and A.I. Baş (eds.), *Four Centuries of Turco-British Relations* (Beverly: Eothen Press, 1984).

22 September 2011

Written evidence from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

I am writing to draw your attention to the recent vicious attacks made by Turkey and Iran on Kurdish villages in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. These illegal and unwarranted attacks have killed many innocent civilians, They are seriously threatening the security and stability of Iraq in general and the Kurdistan Region in particular. These include the most recent attack that killed at least seven civilians in the Gara region.

Iranian artillery and Turkish jets are indiscriminately shelling and bombing Kurdish villages with total disregard and disrespect for the sovereignty of Iraq. This is a clear breach of international law, norms and acceptable behaviour. As a result many Kurdish families, mostly farmers, have been internally displaced in an otherwise stable and prosperous region of Iraq.

As you know the recent unrest that is sweeping the Middle East has naturally led to greater instability in the region. Since Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq has been a constant target for a prolonged campaign by radical terrorist organisations to destabilise and derail democracy in this country. Thousands of innocent civilians have become victims of these terrorist activities. Any further complications in an already volatile and difficult situation by outside regional powers is unacceptable.

More distressing, however, is that these brutal and unwarranted acts committed by both Turkey and Iran against an ally of yours is being greeted with total silence—no clear response or condemnation by the United Kingdom and the outside world has been demonstrated. It seems ironic and contradictory that you are vocal opponents of the brutality of the Libyan and Syrian regimes' suppression of their peoples, yet sitting idly when Kurdish villagers are being massacred by the Turkish and Iranian regimes.

We would find it incomprehensible and unjustified if the United Kingdom's government characterises acts of such brutality and violence perpetrated by outside regional powers, openly breaching Iraqi airspace and sovereignty, as an internal domestic matter.

It has been proven throughout contemporary history that these issues cannot be solved by violence and the killing of innocent civilians. We sincerely hope that the United Kingdom government takes these unlawful actions very seriously and we anticipate eagerly a clear diplomatic response from your government to the international community condemning Turkey and Iran.

We await your prompt response on this urgent matter of immediate importance.

26 August 2011

Further written evidence from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

STATISTICS ON TURKISH AND IRANIAN ATTACKS ON THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

Following our recent telephone conversation, please find attached a detailed table illustrating the intensity of the recent attacks of both neighbouring countries, Turkey and Iran, on Kurdish villages in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. These illegal and unwarranted attacks have killed many innocent civilians, and are seriously threatening the security and stability of Iraq in general, and the Kurdistan Region in particular.

Iranian artillery and Turkish jets are indiscriminately shelling and bombing Kurdish villages on a daily basis, with total disregard and disrespect for the sovereignty of Iraq. These bombardments have continued until today however the table only shows data up until 25 September. This is a clear breach of international law, norms and acceptable behaviour which should not be dismissed by the international community. We ask that the United Kingdom's permanent seat at the Security Council be used to condemn and halt this aggression.

Your prompt action is absolutely necessary.

30 September 2011

TURKISH AND IRANIAN ATTACKS ON KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ BORDERS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type of Attack</i>	<i>Country Responsible</i>	<i>Village Name</i>	<i>Damage Inflicted</i>
16 July 2011	Shelling	Iran	Qandil area: Nokan, Nawzang, Zale, Shene, Bedalan, Zewka, Aliarash, Tangi Sleman, Gorgiozha, Swesna and Sarkhan	Evacuation and injuring one citizen
16 July 2011	Shelling	Iran	Qandil area: Kurdo Mountain in the Choman District in Kania Rash	Killing 700 heads of livestock
24 July 2011	Shelling	Iran	Qandil area: Soney vicinity	Injuring two Peshmargas by the name of Yaqub Aziz Pirof and Birayim Haji Awla
24 July 2011	Shelling	Iran	Sedakan area: Kelashin and Barbizin	Killing one citizen, injuring four citizens, displacing all inhabitants of the Sedakan District and two houses hit by shells
25 July 2011	Shelling	Iran	Sedakan area	Killing three citizens, injuring twelve others. The three killed are from the Surchi Tribe by the names of Haji Lawa, Haji Fro and Haji Hassan
25 July 2011	Shelling	Iran	Sedakan area	Substantial damage to livestock
28 July 2011	Shelling	Iran	Sedakan area	Killing one child and injuring four citizens
17 August 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Badian area: Ginka and Sarziri villages in the Barwari Bala district and Nirwarekan, Gurazhar and Gali Rawshaway in the Matin district.	Material damage
17 August 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: Khinera, Shakew, Lolan and Khwakurk in the Rubi and Harban district	Material damage
17 August 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Qandil area: Bazgay Kozina, Lewzha, Zargali, Saruchaway Bokriskan, Gali Badran, Merga and Parswela opposite Endiza village	Kwekha Qadir's house hit—situated between Kozina, Zargali and the national grid
18 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Badian area: Shiladiza Mountain situated north of Shiladiza town	Material damage
18 September 2011	Shelling	Turkey	Badian area: Matinaw and Haftanin	Fire
18 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: Shakew and Lolan	Fire
18 September 2011	Shelling	Turkey and Iran	Sedakan area: Khakurk, Khinera and Lolan	Displacing inhabitants
18 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Qandil area: Kozina village and its surrounding areas	Material damage
19 August 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Qandil area: Kurtak, Kani Janga, Kozina and Saruwchaway Bokriskan	Destroying major road
20 August 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: Girda Gozina, Khakurk, Khinera and Avashin	Cutting off electricity supplies from the national grid
21 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Qandil area: Kurtak, Doli Balayan and Zargali	Displacement
21 August 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Qandil area: Kurtak, Doli Balayan and Zargali	Killing seven members of one family

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type of Attack</i>	<i>Country Responsible</i>	<i>Village Name</i>	<i>Damage Inflicted</i>
2 September 2011	Shelling	Iran	Qandil area: the villages of Zewka, Aliyarash, Sarkhan, Suneq and Gora Shirin Bedakan	Displacement and fire
3 September 2011	Shooting	Iran	Haji Omaran area: near the Haji Omaran border crossing in the Sivara Valley	Killing a shepherd by the name of Firman Hassan Jiwan Pirdawood
4 September 2011	Shelling and Bombing	Iran and Turkey	Sedakan area: the villages of Khiwakurk, Herit Plains and Barazgir Plains	Evacuation
4 September 2011	Shelling	Iran	Sedakan area: Sineen Heights	Injuring two citizens by the names of Zahir Qader Mikael and Sahang Majeed Mikael
5 September 2011	Shelling and Bombing	Iran and Turkey	Sedakan area: Letan village	Killing a citizen by the name of Hameen Sidiq Pirot 32 years old
6 September 2011	Shelling and Bombing	Iran and Turkey	Sedakan area: Nawdarokan	Injuring two teenagers
6 September 2011	Shelling and Bombing	Iran and Turkey	Sedakan area: Letan village	Destroying a citizens house by the name of Shakir Hassan Balor
6 September 2011	Shelling and Bombing	Iran and Turkey	Sedakan area: the villages of Berkim, Darawi, Basakan, Sheikh Rash, Letan, Kort, Bardazin Heights and the Heights of Horna and Birashin	Evacuation
7 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Qandil area: Kurtak area in the Sangasar District and a cave in Birady village	Displacement
8 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Qandil area: south of Sarshekhani village in the Balayan Valley and Swara Square south of Sheikh Aish village in the Qandil foothills	Displacement
8 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: Bisagha Gorge in Begufa, Lolan, Khinera and Sinakan Gorge	Vineyards and orchards destroyed by fire
11 September 2011	Shelling	Turkey	Haftanin area in the Batufa District	Vineyards and orchards destroyed by fire
12 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Tatsil area in the Mergasar District	Vineyards and orchards destroyed by fire
13 September 2011	Shelling	Iran	Qandil area: Sarkan village in the Balayan District	Evacuation and injuring a citizen by the name of Mustafa Ahmed
14 September 2011	Shelling	Iran	Qandil area: Koyla village	Evacuation
14 September 2011	Shelling	Iran	Qandil area: Mawnan village in the Balayan District	Evacuation
14 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: Berkim village and Bardizin village	Material damage
18 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Badinan area: the villages of Nizdor and Kesta in the Batufa District	Material damage
20 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: Khakurk and Khinera	Evacuation
21 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: Hawrazi Zekhan in the heights south of Suradey village	Evacuation
24 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Badinan area: Pirbila in the Zakho District	Material damage and evacuation

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type of Attack</i>	<i>Country Responsible</i>	<i>Village Name</i>	<i>Damage Inflicted</i>
24 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: the valleys of Khwakurk, Bekhma and Lolan	Material Damage
25 September 2011	Bombing	Turkey	Sedakan area: the valleys of Khwakurk, Bekhma and Lolan	Material Damage

Written evidence from the European Citizen Action Service

SUMMARY

1. ECAS is a European association which aims to strengthen the voice of civil society organisations and citizens with the European Union. In this submission, we do not attempt to answer all questions, but concentrate on those which are within our competence and on which we have evidence. The evidence is based on our experience as the main European association covering all aspects of free movement of people within the EU. More specifically, a joint project with IKV, the Economic Development Foundation in Turkey: “The Visa Hotline Project,” revealed the attitudes of citizens, the media and politicians towards visa restrictions.

There is deep resentment in Turkey about visa restrictions and it is one of the reasons why there is an evident drift away from Europe. The sense of unfairness is caused by queue jumping by the Western Balkan countries which have achieved visa facilitation in January 2008 and liberalisation towards the EU less than three years later: In Turkey, this is perceived as unjust and discriminatory and could turn into a nationalistic reflex and even reactive anti-Europeanism, which would deeply hurt relations. This resentment was reinforced by the Soysal judgement of the European Court of Justice in February 2009. The judgment was widely reported and discussed in the media. The case appeared to hold out the hope that visas would be abolished as against the spirit of European law and the protocols agreed between the oldest associate and the EU. The EU member states pointed more to the letter of the judgement and its limited scope applying only to certain categories of service providers. Against this background, ECAS and IKV launched the visa hotline, the results of which are presented here. The hotline was more of a complaints and protest line than a help line.

2. With a deep crisis in the Eurozone and impasse in the negotiations for Turkish membership of the EU, there is a case for examining the scope to strengthen UK-Turkey relations. That is why we welcome this inquiry. This is not only an issue of government-to-government relations over economic policy and foreign policy. It should also be about bottom-up approaches and people-to-people contracts. In this respect, lifting visa restrictions would have an enormous psychological impact and it seen as one of the next logical steps by reformers both in EU and Turkish circles. To improve the human rights record of Turkey and encourage further the more open style of debate over contentious issues of minorities and the relationship of the state to religion, which were hitherto taboo issues, all reformers argue for a policy of engagement for which a greater freedom of movement between Turkey and Europe should be an important first step. The UK should take the lead in a policy to reverse the current situation of impasse and the tendency of Turkey to turn away from its European vocation by lifting visa restrictions.

INTRODUCTION TO ECAS

3. ECAS is an international non-profit association, independent of governments, commercial interests and the EU. Our aims are: to strengthen the voice of civil society and citizens with the EU, by our own efforts and Institutional reforms bridge the gap between the EU and the citizen, and achieve a better balance in lobbying in Brussels which is dominated by the business lobby.

A current priority is building a European civil society house, part of which should include one day one day an office for Turkish civil society in Brussels.

4. In the area of free movement of persons, ECAS started with hotlines on visible and hidden barriers in 1993 and then the Schengen, agreement. These initiatives encouraged the European Commission to inform and advise European citizens by launching its own services now called Europe Direct. In this context, ECAS runs for the Commission (DG internal market) Your Europe Advice, consisting of a multi-lingual team of 60 legal advisors answering some 12,000 questions per year. It is regrettable that some 2.7 million Turkish people resident in the EU are largely untouched and untargeted by these services, a point the Committee might take up. Currently, ECAS is going further by setting up a one-stop shop and problems solving service covering all the ways available for citizens to group together and raise issues with the EU: complaints, access to EU documents, petitions requests to the European ombudsman and citizens' initiatives (the new signature collection right whereby over 1 million citizens from a minimum seven member states can from 1 April 2012 request the Commission to propose a European law).

5. Apart from its role as a European citizens' advice service, ECAS has also accumulated experience of policies in intra-EU migration in other ways:

- The association's Director, Tony Venables, was a member of a high-level panel in 1995 on free movement of persons which recommended legislative and other measures to the Commission;
- The process of enlargement in 2004 to the EU new member states and in 2007 to Bulgaria and Romania and its impact on free movement of people has been a focus on the association's work. ECAS has been a protagonist in the debate, including in the UK, with its series of reports and recommendations under the title “Who's afraid of EU enlargement?”;
- ECAS has also raised the issue of who is responsible for the EU's vulnerable migrants and has run a number of projects with organisations such as the Barka foundation and Citizens Advice in the UK. A regular forum of citizens' advice services is convened.

6. Apart from focusing on intra-EU migration and enlargement, ECAS has also expressed concerns that free movement of people should not lead to a fortress Europe at the external borders. Therefore when the EU and Western Balkan countries (with the exception of Kosovo) signed visa facilitation agreements in January 2008, with its partners in Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia, ECAS undertook interviews in front of consulates and organised a hotline on the same days across the region the results of which were presented to a conference in Brussels. The reports suggested that although visa facilitation essentially reduces the visa fee from 60 to 35 euro and the time to process requests to 10 days this is not perceived as real progress by ordinary people. People still had to travel to the nearest consulate (a problem of course more acute for many Turks) and the reduction in time and money is offset by other delays and costs (such as those of using intermediaries) which fall outside the scope of such agreements. Furthermore even by consulates within the Schengen zone visa applicants were not treated equally, member states retaining their freedom to add their own requirements for documents. There was also little evidence of more issuing of long-term multiple-entry visas. The hotline certainly helped encourage the speeding up of visa liberalisation and can be considered a success. The process was carefully watched by IKV which joined forces with ECAS to spread the hotline from the Western Balkans to Turkey.

7. The investigation of the problems of visa applications was not carried out in the same way as in the Western Balkans, but was adapted to Turkey's situation. The full results and report are being sent separately to the Committee staff. The hotline was preceded by a study compiled on the basis of over 1,000 replies to a questionnaire from universities and chambers of commerce in all parts of Turkey. When the hotline was launched at the end of 2009 the issue of visas was already in the public domain as a result of the Soysal judgement. Whereas the refusal rate for visas is on average 10% from Turkey to the EU, almost half of over 1,000 detailed complaints to the hotline were about refusals, often unjustified. "Enough is enough" was the clear message. The UK emerges as one of the EU countries about which there are most complaints.

8. To some extent the frustrations explained in the report are the same as those which can face any visa applicant: the attitude of consulate officials, the numbers of documents required including very personal information which would normally be against data protection laws, lack of explanation for delays and refusals as well as the time and costs involved in being kept waiting or paying for an intermediary. The frustrations are though expressed more forcibly because they appear to contradict the EU-Turkey relations. There is an inherent contradiction in the UK and the EU imposing visas on a population with which in many respects it already has more than a special relationship because of the long history of gradual integration of Turkey into the single market and its status as an applicant for EU membership. The paradoxes are apparent in the testimony of individuals complaining to the hotline:

- For the business community, the paradox is that Turkey is to a large extent part of the EU internal market in which goods and services can flow freely, but not the people that produce them. "Visa is used as a trade barrier." There is the problem of having to ask the corresponding European company or client in the EU to send a letter of invitation, of maybe failing to get to a meeting in time or missing a trade fair. Turkish businesses consider that they are not treated on equal terms to their EU counterparts and also incur high internal costs arranging for visas.
- For students, Erasmus and other university exchange programmes financed from the EU budget have been an enormous success and encouragement. The EU is also investing in other people-to-people exchanges among researchers, young people and civil society activists. These schemes are important to encourage a young generation to share European values, counteract human rights abuses and bring their country closer to Europe: they succeed, but not to their full potential. There are several complaints for example of students missing the beginning of the academic year because of delays in acquiring a visa or meeting the costs. As one contributor to the hotline put it "while a European researcher freely conducts research all around Europe, we still bang into the visa wall." It is this wall we wish the Committee to address.
- For family and friends of Turkish workers working largely in Germany in the EU, there is an equally apparent sense of double standards. On the one hand, they have to go through the process of obtaining a visa for family reunion events. On the other hand, their relatives working in the EU enjoy in reality economic and social rights to equal treatment equivalent with the exception of political rights, to those of European citizens living or working abroad in the EU. A report from IKV and ECAS on the rights of Turkish workers in the EU has also been sent to the Committee staff.

9. The complaints received by the hotline cover the following areas which are described in detail in the report:

- (a) Rejection of the visa application, no disclosure of the rejection grounds, unsatisfactory grounds;
- (b) The quantity/nature of the requires documentation for visa application;
- (c) Visa application fee (visa fee/fee of the intermediary agency and other fees and commissions);
- (d) Attitude of the consular personnel/the physical environment of the consulates;
- (e) Complaints about financial/moral costs;
- (f) Complaints concerning the discrepancies between visa demanded and visa issued;
- (g) General complaints about the visa;
- (h) Problems faced during family reunions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

10. There is now, partly as a result of the hotline, a sense that the visa issue is firmly on the political agenda in the relationship between the UK, the EU and Turkey. This means that it is always referred to in EU-Turkey bilateral meetings and statements by Commissioners and in conferences such as that of the European movement in February 2010 in Istanbul. The practical consequences still though have to follow since there is only vague reference to “dialogue on visas” and the EU-Turkey readmission agreement appears in turn close to adoption or firmly blocked.

At a meeting of the European movement in Istanbul in February 2011, ECAS and IKV presented the results of the hotline and the case for visa liberalisation:

- Turkey is trying to do its homework by drafting a comprehensive migration law, setting up new migration and asylum units and taking important steps towards establishing a functioning asylum system and migration management. However, the reluctance of the EU to take any concrete steps leads to questions about EU’s credibility and erodes the power of its policy of conditionality.
- Turkey has displayed a very constructive attitude towards the finalization of the text of the Readmission Agreement. Due to Member States’ obstructions in not giving the Commission the mandate to start visa facilitation, the Agreement could not be initialled and the blockage still continues today.
- Also, looking at the neighbouring countries, first Western Balkans were granted the right of visa-free travel and now after paving the way for Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, the Commission announced starting of visa facilitation talks with Armenia and Azerbaijan. When it comes to Turkey, no step is taken. That brings into mind questions about the coherence of EU policy and whether the EU by ostracizing Turkey in the region is not creating new dividing lines.

Member states and the EU have developed sound policies to ensure that increased freedom of movement stemming from visa liberalisation is conditional on progress to increase rather than decrease security through biometric passports and agreed standards for border controls. Nothing would do more to support the Government’s efforts to strengthen UK-Turkey relations than a commitment to initiate progress towards visa liberalisation.

30 September 2011

Written evidence from the Economic Development Foundation (IKV)

SUMMARY

- The IKV is a non-profit, non-governmental research institution founded in 1965. Its main area of research concerns the European Union and Turkey’s relations with the EU. It is the oldest and most specialized research institution in Turkey that is devoted to the further progress of the country’s relations with the EU. The IKV conducts research, publish research findings and informative booklets, organizes seminar and conferences on the EU and Turkey-EU relations.
- Turkey has been negotiating for accession to the EU since 2005. The euphoria and optimism that existed in 2004 when the EU announced its decision to start accession negotiations is no longer pertinent. The reform process is stalled, and hope and optimism is mostly replaced by disappointment and indifference.
- The remarks made by the heads of government of two leading states in the EU, France and Germany, damage the process further since they unreservedly express their views against Turkey’s eventual membership.
- At this point, it would be apt to emphasize the role of the UK in Turkey’s EU accession process. In his visit to Turkey, prime minister Cameron expressed his support to Turkey’s accession to the EU. However, the UK should be more vocal in supporting Turkey in the EU and this support should not be a mere discursive one but should be reflected in the UK’s active role in finding solution to problems such as the recent imbroglio with Greek Cyprus over gas exploration.
- The high level of public support for EU membership has also declined considerably. According to a recent survey, while 54.7% of the respondents support Turkey’s membership to the EU, only 37.3% believe that the country will actually become a member (Turkey Political-social Trends Survey 2011).
- Another important point worth mentioning is that ironically while Turkey’s value as a model country has increased as a result of the EU membership process in the eyes of especially Islamic Middle Eastern countries undergoing a democratic transition or striving to come out of authoritarian rule, Turkey has started to become more and more estranged from the EU. This estrangement may be discerned with regard to the slowdown of reforms needed to proceed along the membership process, the incriminating discourse of political leaders in Turkey against the EU, the overall identification of Turkey as a Middle Eastern country more than a European one, and its international orientation towards the East.

- Some good-will gestures on the part of the EU could have made a remarkable difference such as easing of the Schengen visa requirement or proposing some facilitation of decision-making mechanisms within the customs union.
- Turkish foreign policy is adapting itself to the changing global and regional circumstances in a world where USA leadership became more controversial in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion and where the EU excludes Turkey from its plans for the near future.
- Turkey's changing foreign policy orientation towards non-European regions and closer relations with Muslim countries may reinforce the EU dimension. Turkey cannot stay indifferent to the dynamic and fast-changing regions lying to its east and south. A policy of constructive engagement implemented with due care for consistency and compatibility with EU values would reinforce Turkey's role as an international actor and contribute to its integration to the EU.
- A credible EU dimension would contribute to Turkey's unique international standing and bring consistency, prioritization and credibility to its foreign policy initiatives. All in all, the future of the EU process would serve to determine the main framework and nature of Turkey's involvement in other regions.
- The UK should be leading efforts in the EU to get over the obstacles blocking progress in the accession process and to lift the atmosphere of mutual distrust and aloofness in the relations. The UK's role in the Cyprus issue is critical due to its historical and strategic involvement in the region.
- The UK should also be more active in supporting concrete steps in the EU towards bringing Turkey closer and bringing about an atmosphere of trust and cooperation such as lifting of the visa barrier in accordance with the Association Agreement of 1963 and the Additional Protocol of 1971, strengthening the joint decision-making mechanism within the Association Council for an effective working of the EU-Turkey customs union, and lifting the barriers blocking progress in the accession negotiations.

WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (IKV)

1. The Economic Development Foundation has been conducting its activities with the aim of informing the public and Turkish business sector about the European Union (EU) and Turkey's relations with the EU since 1965. Having been established by the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and Istanbul Chamber of Industry, the Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization specialized in the field of European affairs. It may appropriately be defined as a specialized research-oriented organization aiming to contribute to Turkey's integration to the European Union. The IKV is supported by various sectoral and professional associations, its founders and trustees, among which the Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges of Turkey features prominently. IKV closely monitors developments in the EU by way of research and publications. In addition, it aims to reach out to a wide audience and especially the business world by way of seminars, conferences, panels and educational programs in the field of the EU and EU-Turkey relations. It engages in cooperation and conducts joint activities with civil society organizations, public institutions, and chambers and stock exchanges in various cities of Turkey.

2. IKV aims to inform the public about developments in the EU, keep the EU membership process on the agenda of public opinion, and provide information to the business world by way of its weekly e-bulletin, monthly IKV Magazine, as well as various reports, booklets, and briefing notes. IKV extended the scope of its activities since the start of accession negotiations to the EU with a view to providing support to the accession process, informing the public and the business sector about the technicalities and effects of ongoing relations with the EU, customs union and accession and to make possible the input and participation of the business sector to the negotiations.

3. IKV also conducts initiatives at the level of the EU institutions and EU Member States. Its Brussels Representation was established in 1984. IKV continues to engage in high-level contacts with EU functionaries and organize seminars, conferences and meetings. It implements a number of projects and activities targeting EU institutions and EU Member States and peoples with the aim of developing Turkey's relations with the EU, counteracting information gaps and misunderstandings, communicating Turkey, and providing for public support to Turkey's EU membership.

4. Having reached its 46th year, IKV continues to support Turkey's EU membership with the aim of Turkey's modernization and development, and puts forward ideas to solve the multifaceted problems emerging in this process. It conducts its activities with the aim of informing the public and engendering civil society's and business sector's participation in the progress of Turkey's relations with the EU.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

5. Turkey has been negotiating for accession to the EU since 2005. The euphoria and optimism that existed in 2004 when the EU announced its decision to start accession negotiations is no longer pertinent. The reform process is stalled, and hope and optimism is mostly replaced by disappointment and indifference. The European Council decided not to open 8 chapters of the "acquis" and not to provisionally close any chapters as a reaction to Turkey's declaration about its non-recognition of the "Republic of Cyprus" and declining to open its ports and airports to Southern Cypriot ships and aircraft. Moreover, France and Cyprus continue to block the opening

of 10 other chapters of the “*acquis*”. The remarks made by the heads of government of two leading states in the EU, France and Germany, damage the process further since they unreservedly express their views against Turkey’s eventual membership. At this point, it would be apt to emphasize the role of the UK in Turkey’s EU accession process. In his visit to Turkey, prime minister Cameron expressed his support to Turkey’s accession to the EU. However, the UK should be more vocal in supporting Turkey in the EU and this support should not be a mere discursive one but should be reflected in the UK’s active role in finding solution to problems such as the recent imbroglio with Greek Cyprus over gas exploration.

6. The high level of public support for EU membership has also declined considerably. According to a recent survey, while 54.7% of the respondents support Turkey’s membership to the EU, only 37.3% believe that the country will actually become a member (Turkey Political-social Trends Survey 2011). This reluctance and decline in enthusiasm on Turkey’s part may be explained as a repercussion of EU policies towards Turkey as well as internal crises with regard to the political system in Turkey and Turkey’s increasing activism in its region.

7. While negotiations have been proceeding at the technical level albeit at a slow pace, some serious setbacks prevent progress towards their finalization. The latest chapter to be opened to negotiations on 30 June 2010 was the chapter on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy. All in all thirteen chapters of the *acquis* have been opened to negotiations with the EU out of a total of 35 chapters and only one chapter—science and research—has been provisionally closed. At the moment, three more chapters may be opened based on Turkey’s fulfillment of the opening benchmarks and the European Council’s unanimous approval. The remaining eighteen chapters cannot be opened or provisionally closed to negotiations due to the decision of the European Council not to open eight chapters of the *acquis*, as a reaction against Turkey’s declining to open its ports and airports to ships and planes from the Greek side of Cyprus and the vetoes by France and Cyprus in the Council not to open 10 other chapters.

8. Just at the time when integration to the EU seemed more probable than ever, the membership perspective grew dim due to various reasons. The situation is perplexing at the best that a candidate country that started the negotiation process no longer has a clear and conceivable prospect of membership in the near to medium term. The reasons are quite intricate and manifold. They stem from both technical and political difficulties related with the Cyprus issue and the pace of reforms in Turkey to fulfill the opening of benchmarks in the accession negotiations and also deeper obstacles linked with the faltering of political will on the part of some major Member States such as France and Germany. More generally, waning public support for enlargement in the EU and especially opposition to Turkey’s membership hinder a swift accession process. Lack of public enthusiasm for Turkey’s accession may be explained by referring to cultural reasons and predispositions among the people as well as the effects of the political discourse and campaigns of right-wing political parties, not limited to the extreme right but also encompassing center-right parties in several Member States.

9. The issue of the opening of Turkish ports and airports to Cypriot ships and air carriers seems to be one of the main obstacles blocking progress in the negotiations. It is not the only one however. Other related factors such as the change in the positions of France and Germany and the effects of recent crises in the EU acted as a further brake mechanism hindering a fast-track accession.

10. Another important point worth mentioning is that ironically while Turkey’s value as a model country has increased as a result of the EU membership process in the eyes of especially Islamic Middle Eastern countries undergoing a democratic transition or striving to come out of authoritarian rule, Turkey has started to become more and more estranged from the EU. This estrangement may be discerned with regard to the slowdown of reforms needed to proceed along the membership process, the incriminating discourse of political leaders in Turkey against the EU, the overall identification of Turkey as a Middle Eastern country more than a European one, and its international orientation towards the East.

11. In a nutshell, as the reward of membership grew less credible, the expectations for adopting the EU *acquis* and aligning towards the EU also lost their urgency in the eyes of Turkish decision makers. At this point, it would be apt to emphasize that some good-will gestures on the part of the EU could have made a remarkable difference such as easing of the Schengen visa requirement or proposing some facilitation of decision-making mechanisms within the customs union.²⁴ As the EU lifts visas with Western Balkan countries and envisages visa facilitation with countries such as Georgia without a membership perspective, it refuses to grant visa-free entry to Turkish nationals despite the fact that Turkey is a candidate country for EU membership and already possesses legal rights with regard to freedom of movement which were bestowed on it by the 1963 Association Agreement and 1973 Additional Protocol.²⁵ What is more, the EU continues to bring issues of concern on the table such as the readmission agreement for illegal immigration the negotiations of which are about to be completed. This is an important issue for the EU and EU contributes to a further deterioration of EU support in Turkey by keeping the accession process at hold while trying to gain ground in such issues without engaging in a concomitant progress in Turkey’s accession.

²⁴ Turkey is in a customs union with the EU since 1.1.1996. Since it is not yet a Member State of the EU, it cannot participate in the decision-making of the EU’s trade policies while the joint decision-making that ought to take place within the Turkey-EU Association Council does not work effectively.

²⁵ Article 41(1) of the Additional Protocol was a standstill clause that forbade the parties to bring any new restrictive measures to the freedom of movement with respect to the provision of services. Thus the visa requirement which was enacted by several Member States such as Germany after the entry into force of the Protocol in 1973 was contrary to the legal provisions which formed part of EU law.

12. While relations with the EU have entered a cooling phase since 2005 and especially 2006, Turkish foreign policy has been displaying signs of a major transformation in the meantime. Turkish foreign policy has been under increasing scrutiny in recent years due to a rising activism in terms of foreign policy initiatives, an expansion of the scope of foreign policy, an assertiveness in the discourse employed, a noticeable autonomy especially from Western foreign policy stances, an opening to non-European regions such as the Middle East, emphasis on trade, economy and culture as instruments of soft power rather than hard power instruments or use of coercive diplomacy.

13. This overall change is sometimes linked with the identity and worldview of policy-makers and is denoted with the term, neo-Ottomanism. Although an increasing appreciation of Turkey's Ottoman heritage and a growing interest towards regions that formerly formed parts of the Ottoman Empire may be discerned in Turkey especially since the 1990's, the use of the term neo-Ottoman may be flawed. It may be more apt to argue that Turkish foreign policy is adapting itself to the changing global and regional circumstances in a world where USA leadership became more controversial in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion and where the EU excludes Turkey from its plans for the near future.

14. It should be borne in mind that Ankara tried to justify its amicable relations with Syria, Hamas and Iran which were cited as proving Turkey's slide away from the West and the EU with the argument that it is in fact acting in line with EU norms by forming relations with the democratically-elected Hamas, and engaging to bring peace to the region with its efforts at international mediation. In a way, Ankara utilized its EU links as a facilitator in pursuing relations with the actors isolated from the international society and enhancing its prestige and soft power in the region.

15. Turkey's changing foreign policy orientation towards non-European regions and closer relations with Muslim countries may reinforce the EU dimension. Turkey cannot stay indifferent to the dynamic and fast-changing regions lying to its east and south. A policy of constructive engagement implemented with due care for consistency and compatibility with EU values would reinforce Turkey's role as an international actor and contribute to its integration to the EU. However, a policy which is pragmatic and reactive and that fails to find the right balance between the pursuit of norms and interests in foreign policy, would create the danger of Turkey's becoming increasingly isolated from the EU and more and more enmeshed in regional problems with no fast and easy solutions as seen in the case of the mediation attempts in Lebanon and the recent demonstrations and movement for reform in Tunisia and Egypt. A credible EU dimension would contribute to Turkey's unique international standing and bring consistency, prioritization and credibility to its foreign policy initiatives. All in all, the future of the EU process would serve to determine the main framework and nature of Turkey's involvement in other regions.

16. It may be contended that the EU policy towards Turkey shifted from an inclusionary and provident approach between 1999 and 2005 to an exclusionary and short-sighted one after 2005. While the politics of conditionality worked effectively between 1999 and 2004, the EU's leverage on and ability to trigger Turkey's reform process began to decline especially after 2006. The EU from then on placed more emphasis on sanctions and setbacks in its approach to Turkey—sticks more than carrots—and implemented a more confrontational style rather than a conciliatory one.

17. Thus the EU implements a policy of inherent contradictions towards Turkey, a policy which is mostly determined by anxieties and concerns about the effects of Turkey's membership on the EU, be it at the institutional, budgetary or policy level. While on the one hand, it makes sure that Turkey's accession takes place over a longer period of time, if it happens at all, it, on the other hand, counts on the transformative power of the accession process. However, EU's leverage would decline substantially in the case of a lengthened accession process without clear commitments and reduced credibility.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

18. The reshaping of the world in recent years seems to create a divergence between the EU and Turkey both with regard to the accession process and the two parties' international standing. However, it should be kept in mind that the EU membership perspective is still a significant strategic goal for Turkey both for its internal democratization and stabilization and its international orientation. In the same way, Turkey's membership to the EU would bring substantial benefits to the EU project by contributing to the EU's relevance for the global system.

19. The obstacles preventing progress in the relations can be overcome if political will and determination could be accumulated in both sides. That condition would depend on the internal developments in the EU with regard to an exit from the crisis and reevaluation of the enlargement strategy, and on Turkey's own orientation towards a modern and democratic system within the European region, as well as related developments in the world and adjacent regions.

20. As for the UK's role, it continues to be critical in bringing Turkey closer to the final goal of EU membership. The UK's continuing support to Turkey's accession to the EU, not only at a discursive level but also at a practical level, remains vital. The UK should be leading efforts in the EU to get over the obstacles blocking progress in the accession process and to lift the atmosphere of mutual distrust and aloofness in the relations. The UK's role in the Cyprus issue is critical due to its historical and strategic involvement in the region. It may be supportive of the successful conclusion of the current negotiation process between the Turkish

and Greek Cypriots and be more active in shaping the EU's approach to the issue by taking steps to end the international isolation of the Turkish Cypriots, and motivating the Greek Cypriots to take a more emphatic approach to the situation of Turkey as an acceding country to the EU. The UK should also be more active in supporting concrete steps in the EU towards bringing Turkey closer and bringing about an atmosphere of trust and cooperation such as lifting of the visa barrier in accordance with the Association Agreement of 1963 and the Additional Protocol of 1970, strengthening the joint decision-making mechanism within the Association Council for an effective working of the EU-Turkey customs union, and lifting the barriers blocking progress in the accession negotiations.

30 September 2011

Written evidence from the British Council

1. CONTEXT

Turkey is a country of young people, highly diverse and growing in prosperity, self-confidence and influence. About 31 million of a total population of 71 million is under 25 and this young population is technologically connected and globally networked. Recent studies suggest that there is mistrust of the motives of Western European powers, including the UK, among the Turkish population in general, including young people.

The British Council is playing a significant role, alongside other UK agencies, in building deeper engagement and relationships between the UK and Turkey, in particular with these young people. The engagement of young people in Turkey with the UK will build trust. This will bring significant benefits to the UK economy and security in the longer term.

The British Council is playing a key role in positioning the UK as the partner of choice for the Turkish people and government in education, the teaching of English and the development of the arts and creative sectors.

2. THE ROLE OF THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN UK-TURKEY RELATIONS

The British Council has been working in Turkey continuously since 1940, with offices in Ankara and Istanbul, and outreach across the country. This year we will engage with 20 million people through our exhibitions, festivals, digital, publications and broadcast, and will build face to face relationships with more than 400,000.

Through our programmes we provide direct benefit to UK by building trust and understanding in a country:

- whose regional influence will help create a stable democratic neighbourhood;
- which is a security partner for energy, climate, migration, international peace-keeping; and
- which is a trade and investment partner offering strong emerging market opportunities to UK business sectors in the fields of energy and renewables, ICT, education and skills, and creative industries.

Turkey sees the UK as a country from which it can learn, and we partner with government, civil society, multinational agencies, education and corporate sectors.

We provide opportunities for young people at three levels:

- national policy makers and opinion formers through policy dialogue on issues that matter to young people;
- key influencers by building capacity of teachers, public officials, civil society and creative entrepreneurs; and
- large numbers of aspiring young people with whom we engage, primarily online, by creating opportunities for skills development and open dialogue.

The budget for our Turkey operation stands at £3.1 million this financial year, with a further £1.8 million forecast to be earned through exam services. We are increasing our impact, despite a small reduction in grant funding, achieving this by a rigorous focus on reducing overhead and increasing efficiency. We are additionally working increasingly in partnership or through co-funding models. For example, last year we earned £1.1 million, primarily for EU co-funded work on the "My City" arts project within the EU's Cultural Bridges programme for Turkey.

3. PROGRAMME RESPONSE

3.1 English

- We are working to improve the teaching and learning of English in Turkey, and are the most influential foreign partner in this area. We have ambitious plans to widen our reach to cover all teachers and learners of English in the country.

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- Turkish teachers of English are at the core of our English work and we will be engaging all 37,000 state school teachers of English with an offer that meets the needs of teachers at different stages of their careers different levels of proficiency, allows for long term engagement, provides value for money.
 - We will reach all 14 million English language learners in the country from primary through to tertiary level. The vast majority of learners will engage digitally through our free language improvement websites, mobile phone downloads and online competitions. Over the last six months our online audience rose to over a quarter of a million learners, and when we run our annual televised schools competition on a London 2012 Olympics theme in March we expect to exceed last year's record of 7,000 entries from schools across Turkey.
 - There is a growing interest amongst policy makers in reforming English language education and we position the UK as the main solution provider. We partner with Turkish Government Ministries including Education, EU and Foreign Affairs, and the Yunus Emre Institute and are providing access to English language learning for Governors and Deputies in Turkey's 81 provincial administrations.
 - Leveraging benefit from Turkey's regional role, our annual Teacher Training Summer School brought together teacher trainers from 15 countries to work on shared professional development objectives. This is a unique opportunity for teachers—key influencers for the next generation—to find common ground amid post-conflict tensions.
 - Our provision of examinations on behalf of UK exam boards responds to the growing demand for international qualifications. Volume of IELTS exams trebled to 20,000 examinations last year and Cambridge examinations for young learners of English doubling to a record 14,000 examinations.
 - As we seek to re-enter the teaching market in Turkey, the deepest engagement will be with students in British Council's Teaching Centres which give us visibility on the ground, a resource for wider work in English and the ability to demonstrate best practice.

3.2 Arts and Creative Industries

- The arts provide a particularly stable and long term channel of engagement between UK and Turkey. The Turkish authorities, business leaders and intelligentsia are increasingly aware that a country's cultural life has a powerful impact on how it is perceived, and of the wider political significance of international cultural exchange.
- Our work reaches audiences across the country, particularly those located far from metropolitan centres, as in eastern Turkey. It engages with the issue of freedom and plurality of expression, which remains sensitive in Turkey despite significant progress during the last decade.
- Our highly-acclaimed "My City" arts project, 75% funded by the EU, directly engaged with over one million people in six cities across Turkey and reached millions more across Turkey, Europe and central Asia through broadcast on national TV of a six part documentary about "My City".
- The Istanbul Biennial is an arts event of global significance which drew audiences this year of over 6,000 arts critics, curators and museum directors from around the world and over 120,000 exhibition visitors. By managing a strong British presence we promote UK as a global leader in the contemporary arts, stimulating cultural exchange and recognition of the value of doing business with the UK's creative industries.
- Turkey's literature is one of its greatest contemporary cultural assets and the announcement by the London Book Fair that Turkey is its Market Focus in 2013 provides an unparalleled opportunity for us to build a cultural partnership programme that promotes greater understanding of UK in Turkey and of Turkey in UK.
- Istanbul is steadily reclaiming its place as the major trading hub for a vast area encompassing the Balkans, the eastern Mediterranean and central and western Asia. The British Council's work helps to ensure that the Turkish creative sector looks to UK as a natural partner. This month there is an encounter of over 40 cultural leaders from European, Arab, South Caucasian and central Asian countries in Istanbul, launching our prestigious Cultural Leadership programme in partnership with the Open Society Foundation, Ford Foundation and HIVOS.

3.3 Education and Skills

- We build profile and connections for the UK through helping to meet the voracious demand for higher education in Turkey. We do this by creating more links between UK and Turkey HE sectors, including those that lead to increased recruitment of Turkish students to the UK. We are also developing policy dialogues to support reforms taking place in Turkey's education system, thereby positioning the UK as a key source of advice and expertise.
- We are increasing partnerships between Turkey and UK in Higher Education: there are now 70. 55 UK universities are now active in Turkey—up from 35 three years ago.
- We train large numbers of educational agents each year in Turkey to help them recruit students on behalf of UK universities.

- The Turkish Ministry of Education has asked us to provide specialist consultancy and other services from the UK to embed the use of ICT in schools in support of the recently launched investment programme valued at an estimated £1 billion.
- We have been working closely with UKTI and the FCO's Science and Innovation Network as well as a range of Turkish partners on 10 new initiatives in Higher Education, the first of which is the Knowledge Partnership. The initiative was launched during visit of the Business Secretary to Turkey in September. We will increase the number of research-based partnerships between Turkey and UK by 10% over the next two years.
- The British Council will establish a series of exchanges and partnerships across Industry and Higher Education, focusing on energy, health and ICT sectors across UK and Turkey. As these explore new innovations, UKTI will pick up and develop key innovations that can be taken to trade and commercial partnership.

3.4 Society

- We work with a range of European and Turkish partners in providing platforms for diverse and open debate, especially for young people to voice their opinions and explore those held by others. This work creates better dialogue and understanding about Turkey's EU accession bid, the building of trust through dialogue and the strengthening of civil society. These are all key means of building greater trust and understanding between the UK and Turkey
- We are running a country-wide series of debates on Turkish identity within Europe. The project will have involved well over 11,000 students in over 20 cities in Turkey by the end of 2012, and with a further 50,000 engaging in a digital competition around perceptions and realities of a journey through Europe. As part of this, a poll of university students which we commissioned showed:
 - 54.5% would like Turkey to be a member of the EU;
 - 57% support the statement "Turkey is a part of Europe";
 - strong assertion at 78% that "Islam has made a contribution to today's European values and culture";
 - by contrast only 36% identify themselves as "European"; and
 - and only 35% believe Turkey will become an EU member.
- Results suggest that the appetite for EU membership is greater than is commonly believed. However, the much lower percentage who believe that Turkish membership will become a reality appears to indicate growing fatigue and disbelief regarding Turkey's accession among a sample of young people who might be expected to exhibit positive attitudes towards the future.
- In support of the EU-related reform process, we support diversity and social inclusion agendas in Turkey. For example we helped facilitate the establishment of Turkey's first Social Entrepreneurship Academy based on UK concept and practice.
- We will engage over 115,000 primary school teachers, students, community leaders and volunteers in the official 2012 London Olympics international legacy programme—International Inspiration. We deliver the project in partnership with the Turkish Ministries of Education, Youth and Sport and the Turkish National Olympic Committees. The project is based on an "Active Schools Model" focusing on sports, physical activity, and play.

21 October 2011

Written evidence from TheCityUK

SUMMARY

- TheCityUK believes prospects for increased trade with Turkey are significant.
- UK well regarded in the financial and related professional services sector.
- Turkey offers challenges and opportunities.
- Potential to support 3rd country trade and help with international investment.
- HMG support also needed on obstacles to trade.
- HMG should continue regular high level Ministerial and senior contact.

THECITYUK

1. TheCityUK is a membership body representing the UK's financial and related professional services. TheCityUK Board and Advisory Council include the most senior individuals from across the industry. We have a global export focus with a commitment to help UK based firms grow their business.

2. TheCityUK Overseas Promotion Committee (OPC) has four core areas of focus:

- To promote the UK's financial and professional services as the international "Gold Standard".

- To identify high growth markets for financial and professional services.
- To promote UK financial and professional services in targeted overseas markets.
- To grow revenue for the UK from the international earnings of the UK's financial and related professional services sector in overseas markets.

3. TheCityUK has established a number of geographical working groups for our priority markets: Brazil, India, China, Russia and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. These groups meet on a regular basis to exchange views and share best practice on how to strengthen business relationships between these countries and the UK. A recent review of TheCityUK OPC review recommended *that greater focus be given to Turkey and that Turkey should become a priority market.*

4. TheCityUK therefore welcomes the Select Committee's decision to enquire into UK/Turkey relations and wishes to submit views which relate to the first bullet point on the enquiry's list, namely UK/Turkey trade. TheCityUK and its members agree that the UK economy stands the best chance of recovery from its current economic difficulties if UK business does more to increase and develop stronger trading links with rapidly growing economies. Turkey is one such country.

WHY AND HOW WAS TURKEY SELECTED?

5. The Review of the Overseas Promotion Committee was completed in September 2011. The research for the selection of Priority and Second Tier markets had four distinct strands. These were:

- A focused study by an independent consultancy to identify key drivers of growth.
- A review of existing industry research.
- A questionnaire to all members.
- In-depth interviews with key stakeholders.

6. Turkey emerged from the OPC review as a market with very strong growth prospects. This conclusion was also borne out by other recent studies. KPMG "High Growth Markets"; Citi "3G"; Goldman Sachs "Next 11" UKTI "High Growth and Emerging Markets".

7. In addition TheCityUK members indicated Turkey was their top priority market for establishing a new Working Group. TheCityUK Board endorsed the review recommendation to establish a Turkey Working Group and plans are under way to launch the group in the coming months.

THE TURKISH MARKET

8. Turkey is the second largest market in Europe (after Germany) with a population of 73 million and is the world's 16th largest economy. Turkey enjoyed a GDP growth of 8.9% in 2010. Although in 2009 it was one of the top 10 fastest shrinking economies it recovered quickly and the following year was in the top 10 fastest growing. Turkey attracted foreign direct investment of US \$9.3 billion in 2010. In the period January–July 2011 Turkey has attracted FDI totalling \$9.1 billion. The Turkish Minister of Economy commented recently that financial services, energy and manufacturing sectors are the top three recipients of foreign capital in 2011. The Select Committee will have access to other material with statistics outlining Turkey's economic success and growth and its ability to withstand the international crisis of 2008.

9. Following the crisis in financial markets in 2008 Turkey suffered a sharp liquidity squeeze in the latter months of that year. However, no Turkish financial institutions collapsed or needed rescue and no emergency package was required for the sector. Having gone through its own deep crisis in 2001 the Turkish banking has strengthened regulation and internal control systems, good capital adequacy and more controlled risk-taking, these strengths have helped it weather the current global economic downturn.

10. TheCityUK and its practitioners see the size of the and scale of the Turkish economy, the dynamism of its private sector and its plans for growth in inward and outward investment as offering significant opportunities for developing trade and investment growth between the UK and Turkey. Turkey's growing business with its neighbours also offers opportunities. A recent report on Foreign Commercial activity in Iraq estimated that Turkish investments, contracts and exports to Iraq were \$14.8 billion in 2010.

LINKS WITH THE UK

11. Turkey/UK political and business links are strong. However we cannot afford to be complacent. Turkey is a significant political and economic player in the region and other countries are keen to do business with the fastest growing economy in OECD countries.

12. In recent years Turkey has been a regular destination for visiting Lord Mayors and accompanying business delegations. The Lord Mayor last visited in January 2011 and plans are underway for the Lord Mayor to visit in January 2012. The Lord Mayor will host a banquet for the President of Turkey during the State Visit in November 2011. His visit to Turkey in January 2012 will provide an opportunity to follow up and build on the outcomes of the President's visit.

13. The Lord Mayor's visits are an effective way of demonstrating to Turkey our continued aim to maintain contacts and establish awareness across the Turkish political, financial and wider business community of the services the UK has to offer in the financial, legal and professional area. Lord Mayors have called on Ministers, senior officials, Bankers, Industry leaders and other high level figures to demonstrate the UK's desire to work with Turkish institutions to increase bilateral trade and investment. Regular visits have enabled the full agenda of subsectors represented by TheCityUK to be included. Practitioners have found that access afforded by such visits to be invaluable in building up business relationships with Turkey. Turkey is a sophisticated market where building relationships is important and this takes time and commitment.

UK TRADE AND INVESTMENT AND THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

14. TheCityUK was delighted that UK Trade & Investment selected Turkey as a priority market. There are good links between TheCityUK (and its practitioners) and the UKTI teams in Turkey and London. There are regular visits, exchanges of views and two way contacts to identify how best UKTI can support UK based companies in this sector.

15. TheCityUK welcomes the increased focus by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on commercial and economic diplomacy. We have been working closely with the FCO's Commercial and Economic Diplomacy Department to raise awareness of how business and government can work together including regular meetings and speaking at their regular Commercial Diplomacy Awareness Workshops.

16. In October 2011 HM Ambassador to Turkey met with TheCityUK members to brief them about the current political and economic situation in Turkey and how he and his team in Turkey welcomed the opportunity to develop stronger links with the UK financial sector and support them in their efforts. HM Consul General and Director of Trade and Investment at Istanbul will also meet with TheCityUK members later this month during a visit to London. We welcome such interaction with senior members of staff and UKTI team in country. We acknowledge the government's plans to increase resources in Turkey in recognition of the increased political, economic and trade relationship.

17. TheCityUK recognises the regular Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meetings as an important annual event to maintain contacts at Ministerial level. *We believe that financial and related professional services should be included on the JETCO agenda given that some barriers to trade remain.* Related to JETCO we welcome the increased focus of the CEO Forum and their efforts to raise awareness of the opportunities for increased bilateral trade and investment. Practitioners are not so naive to believe these meetings alone will generate business opportunities but the meetings do provide an atmosphere and environment where bilateral business prospects and contacts can be extended and built upon.

THECITYUK AND TURKEY

18. TheCityUK and predecessor organisations have had on-going dealings with Turkey over a number of years including organising seminars, roundtables and formal training sessions for Turkish officials and private sector organisations. TheCityUK recently attended and spoke at a major conference in Istanbul about the development of Istanbul as a Financial Centre (IFC). The Turkish authorities have ambitious plans to develop Istanbul as a regional and thereafter a global financial centre. TheCityUK met with Turkish officials to hear about their plans and how we can co-operate with them and the Turkish private sector as partners in this exciting project. We are co-ordinating an inward visit of the IFC-Istanbul Infrastructure Committee in January 2012 to look at City infrastructure. This project will be a key area of focus in the new Turkey working group. We are also working with the British Consulate General in Istanbul on a project related to the Turkish plans for the IFC.

19. The Turkish insurance sector offers opportunities as at present it lags significantly behind Europe in terms of market size and share of GDP. Per capita premium rose from \$64 in 2004 to \$105 in 2009. (OECD average \$2,808). Foreign penetration of the market is low. Traditional causes of low premiums (per head) have been low per capita income and high inflation. However, a growing middle class, increasing income and reduced inflation should allow substantial growth of the Turkish insurance market and offer opportunities to new entrants.

20. Relating to Public Private Partnerships, Turkey has mostly used the Build Operate Transfer (BOT) model and this is regulated by the Concessions Law of 1910, which provides only a broad legal framework. A new PPP law is required but this has been bogged down in the parliamentary process. Discussions have been taking place for nearly a decade between UK representatives of British legal, financial and professional services firms with the Turkish authorities regarding assisting them in building a PPP programme. This work has been led principally by International Financial Services, London now TheCityUK. The Turkish side acknowledge the primacy of the UK in this area. Recent progress has seen the establishment of a PPP unit and the first Turkish projects (hospitals and roads) coming to market which have attracted keen interest from UK companies. Many more projects, in a variety of sectors, are in the pipeline. The Turkish market is appealing not just because of this potential pipeline but because of its size, growth and the strength of Turkish contractors who are critical to the operation of a successful PPP programme.

UK LEGAL SERVICES—BARRIERS TO TRADE

21. There are a number of UK based law firms operating in Turkey. Legal practice by foreign lawyers is permitted in Turkey, but under strict and onerous conditions. Disproportionate restrictions are still applicable. Turkish lawyers working for a foreign law firm cannot offer advice on Turkish law and lose their rights of audience, and that integrated partnerships between Turkish and foreign law firms are not possible. Foreign law firms are therefore unable to offer an integrated full service by offering legal advice on English, international as well as Turkish law. Advertising by law firms is totally prohibited. TheCityUK would welcome further liberalisation of the Turkish legal services market while recognising this will take time given the strength of the domestic lobby. *HMG should continue to raise this barrier to trade during appropriate discussions.*

UK VISA ISSUES

22. Feedback from TheCityUK members is that their Turkish business counterparts often complain on how difficult it is to obtain a visa for the UK. This may be a matter of perception over reality, but the Committee may wish to investigate further and recommend accordingly.

ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PROMOTING UK INTERESTS

23. TheCityUK understands that business with Turkey is helped by high-level engagement between political leaders. The Secretary of State in a speech last year acknowledged that the economic power and economic opportunities are shifting to the countries of the East and South; to the emerging powers of Brazil, India, China and other parts of Asia. We were particularly pleased therefore that Turkey was included as one of the key countries and markets for increased focus by the British Government. TheCityUK welcomes the continued strong public support by HMG for Turkey's accession to the EU.

RECOMMENDATIONS

24. This paper acknowledges the continued growth of UK-Turkey trade and investment. The private sector will continue to develop its own ways to increase its links with Turkey. However the UK is best served when government and the private sector can work together and we would welcome more consultation over HMG's plans to increase their links with Turkey and what role the private sector might play in that. We recommend that consideration should be given by UKTI to include financial and related professional services on the JETCO agenda. We also recommend that barriers to professional services should continue to be raised by HMG during relevant discussions and that consideration is given as to whether the UK has an appropriate visa regime to enable business to grow.

21 October 2011

Written evidence from the CBI

1. The CBI is the UK's leading business organisation, speaking for some 240,000 businesses that together employ around a third of the private sector workforce. With offices across the UK as well as representation in Brussels, Washington, Beijing and Delhi the CBI communicates the British business voice around the world.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE UK-TURKEY ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP

2. The CBI recognises Turkey as an important and dynamic economic partner of the UK, and believes there is much scope to strengthen the trade and investment relationship. We therefore welcome the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by Prime Ministers Cameron and Erdogan in 2010, to increase co-operation on trade and investment, energy, defence and security amongst other areas. We also support the creation of a bilateral CEO Forum for Turkey and the establishment of a UK-Turkey Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) to tackle barriers to trade and resolve trade disputes between UK companies and their Turkish counterparts.

3. The CBI has designated Turkey as a priority market for increasing UK exports and for attracting inward investment into the UK economy. In 2010 the Turkish economy grew by 8.9% and its economy is expected to grow by 11.5% this year. Turkey's rate of growth, along with its strong, stable, democratic institutions, young and rapidly growing population and expanding middle class, present a significant opportunity for UK business. There is scope for stronger economic ties and greater collaboration in many sectors including infrastructure, engineering and construction; aerospace and defence; energy; information and communication technology; creative industries; and financial and other professional services such as legal and insurance services.

4. For example, Turkey is home to the world's second largest construction industry, providing opportunity for the UK to share its expertise in areas such as planning, design, technical, management and advisory services, and public private partnerships. In addition, the UK is well-placed to help Istanbul as it seeks to become a regional financial centre. With its experience as a global financial centre, London could offer valuable guidance and assistance, improve capital markets in Turkey and also benefit from Turkey's reach in the region.

5. Energy is another key sector for collaboration, with Turkey strategically positioned geographically, in close proximity of over 70% of global oil and gas reserves. It has an increasingly important role to play as a

production terminal, and an energy corridor between the major oil and natural gas producing countries in the Middle East. It is estimated that Turkey will need \$120 billion in private sector energy investments by 2020. Opportunities exist for UK expertise to be applied in a number of related areas, including power generation and transportation, construction, privatisation, renewable energy investment and energy efficiency technologies.

6. In addition, Turkey offers great opportunities a gateway for the UK to access markets of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Caucasus and the Central Asian Republics. Turkish companies are major players in the region. One in four of the largest companies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are Turkish and 65% of industrial exports from the MENA region originate from Turkey. Turkish contractors are among the biggest players in the Middle East, North Africa and former Soviet states, and have worked with UK companies on projects such as the construction of new airports in Central Asia, the metro system in Dubai, and roads and pipelines in Saudi Arabia. Turkish businesses are keen to promote trilateral business with the UK in these markets, for example through joint ventures and partnership working, in a number of sectors.

7. The growth opportunities in Turkey and the surrounding regions are there for large, medium and small-sized companies. Linking with larger companies enables smaller enterprises to enter new markets, for example by forming partnerships or through supply chains, either in the UK or Turkey. This can provide the valuable support and assistance medium and small-sized firms need to establish a presence overseas, and begin to realise their international growth potential.

IMPROVING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN TURKEY AND THE UK

8. For companies to make the most of these opportunities, continued market liberalisation is essential. The CBI supports the extension of the EU-Turkey Customs Union as an important tool to help unlock the trading potential between the UK and Turkey and advocate the removal of all remaining trade barriers that run contrary to the existing Customs Union. Despite the existing Customs Union being in force for more than 15-years, several barriers to UK-Turkey trade remain, impacting on a range of sectors.

9. The CBI believes that at a time of continued global uncertainty, when the benefits of enhanced trade links are most obvious, both sides should renew their efforts to deliver an improved deal. The extension of the internal market into a fast growing emerging economy, such as Turkey, would present CBI members with significant opportunities. However, as with any agreement, the CBI stresses the importance not only of a deal being signed but a deal being effectively enacted.

10. Since the existing Customs Union came into force on 31 December 1995, UK exports to Turkey have increased. ONS data shows that between 1999 and 2009 UK exports of goods and services to Turkey increased from £1.6 billion to £3.2 billion. However, in the same period UK imports of goods and services from Turkey increased from £1.7 billion to £5.9 billion. Whilst excited by the opportunities that Turkey present, CBI members are arguably affected by the limited scope of the existing Customs Union and poor implementation of some areas of the agreement. CBI therefore supports “extending and deepening” the Customs Union, in particular to include services and public procurement.

11. The CBI calls for government support in calling on Turkey to remove all remaining trade barriers that run contrary to the existing Customs Union in particular:

- *Turkey’s conformity assessment requirement for goods in free circulation* places an unnecessary burden and cost on UK import-export firms. Since 1 January 2009 Turkish importers have been required to declare the origin of imported goods which have originated outside the EU but which are in free circulation in the EU market.
- *Turkey’s discriminatory treatment of imported alcohol*. In 2009 Turkey set out plans to eliminate discriminatory taxes on imported spirits. Although welcomed, in 2010 Turkey increased excise duties on all spirits by 10% and 30%, widening the gap in absolute terms between taxation of imported and domestic produced spirits. Discrimination also continues to exist in excise duty payment terms.
- *Turkey’s unwillingness to provide legal certainty on data exclusivity and certification* procedure is limiting the export potential of UK pharmaceuticals. Since 2005, Turkey has maintained a de facto moratorium on pending generic applications. Although this moratorium is welcomed by the UK pharmaceuticals sector, in the intervening five-years Turkey has still not provided legal certainty through domestic regulation on data exclusivity.
- *Weak IPR regime risks undermining fledgling business-business relationships*. According to the provisions of the existing Customs Union, Turkey shall secure a level of protection equivalent to that existing in the EU as regards protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property rights. Although some good progress has been made, there are still serious concerns, with the length of proceedings and deficient enforcement identified as particular weaknesses.

12. The CBI supports moves to strengthen the impartiality and efficiency of the Turkish legal system and to streamline bureaucracy. We therefore welcome Turkey’s new Commercial Code which will harmonise Turkish commercial regulations with those of the EU. We look forward to its full implementation in 2012. However, further efficiencies are needed. For example, dispute resolution is slow, with the average case taking between 12 and 18 months, and the decisions are often inconsistent. In addition, while opening a business can take as little as a day, the procedures for closing a business are bureaucratic—the World Bank’s 2011 Doing Business

Report ranks Turkey 115th of 183 economies for closing a business. In addition, action is needed to reduce the size of the grey economy, and to further tackle corruption at all levels.

13. In addition, improvements to Turkey's public procurement would help attract more international investment and involvement in projects. Lowering thresholds and financial limits to EC levels, and streamlining tendering procedures so they are more straightforward and less costly would enable more companies to bid for contracts. Ensuring there is a level playing field for Turkish companies and foreign enterprises operating in Turkey, for example in relation to labour relations and environmental standards, and improving review procedures for complaints regarding government contracts would also assist.

14. The government's reform of the work permit system must not be allowed to hamper efforts to increase economic ties with Turkey. Specifically, the government should be aware of the risk of a perception problem around the cap, whereby the UK is seen as unwelcoming location for business leading to companies adopting a more negative position toward the UK than the system requires. In addition, businesses in Turkey report a reluctance to apply for a visa, due to a belief that the process for applying for a visa is laborious and time consuming.

CONCLUSION

15. There is great potential to strengthen UK-Turkey trade and investment ties, and Turkey will be an increasingly important market for UK business, helping drive economic recovery in the UK. Changes to policy and practice in both countries will help provide an environment that is more conducive to harnessing the many opportunities that exist. Government and business in the UK and Turkey must continue to seek to make the most of these opportunities, and facilitate business to business links to build commercial relations. This will help the UK government achieve its goal of doubling trade with Turkey over the next five years, and build on its trade and investment relations with an important high-growth partner.

24 October 2011

Written evidence from the BBC World Service

BBC WORLD SERVICE IN TURKEY

1. BBC World Service ceased its radio broadcasts in Turkish in March 2011. TV viewing in urban Turkey is high with almost 100% of Turks watching it on a daily basis, whilst radio has lost in its relative importance, declining as a platform to below 30% listening daily in urban Turkey. Internet penetration in Turkey has grown, and now 45% of the population has access to it.

2. The BBC's Turkish Service has already reoriented its output to reflect these media changes by entering into TV and online partnerships. It introduced a TV service with partners NTV in 2008. This has made a strong impact with at least 1,700,000 weekly viewers. BBC Turkish's online offer has recently had great success thanks to extended partnerships reaching 500,000 weekly unique users (462,000 in Turkey) on average in October 2011. In addition, BBC Turkish facebook has 14 thousand followers and twitter has nearly 156 thousand followers. The service will now focus on these growth platforms—TV and online, and has piloted a business programme, which it is planning to add to its TV schedule.

9 November 2011

Written evidence from the National Federation of Cypriots in the UK

Further to the Foreign Affairs Committee's call for submissions to the above inquiry, the National Federation of Cypriots in the UK is delighted to submit the following views, in line with the specific questions set out.

The National Federation of Cypriots in the UK is the representative body and the acknowledged voice of the largest and most significant community of Cypriots outside of the island itself. It is an umbrella organisation representing the Cypriot community associations and groups across the United Kingdom and, as such, it leads and co-ordinates the activities of more than 300,000 Britons of Cypriot origin. The Federation was founded immediately after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and is headquartered in North London. The organisation's website can be found at www.cypriotfederation.org.uk.

RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S INQUIRY

"How should the Government's efforts to strengthen UK-Turkey relations be assessed, especially with respect to the economic and commercial spheres?"

The UK's relations with Turkey must—by virtue of the UK's legal obligations—be framed within the context of Turkey's continued illegal occupation of Cyprus.

The Treaty of Guarantee of 1959 bestows the United Kingdom with responsibilities as a Guarantor Power. Yet, in 1974, Turkey—a fellow signatory—invaded the northern part of Cyprus and the UK failed to act appropriately. Since the invasion:

- Turkey continues to illegally colonise the occupied area in order to deliberately change the island’s demography.
- stolen properties are exploited by the unlawful regime in the occupied north, with no effective redress or compensation for their rightful owners.
- cultural and religious sites in the occupied area continue to be deliberately desecrated and destroyed.
- Turkey refuses to investigate the fate of hundreds of Cypriot men, women and children who disappeared without trace during its military invasion of the island.
- Turkey persistently disregards numerous UN resolutions and the decisions of international courts in relation to Cyprus with impunity.

In regard to the Committee’s reference to specific context of commercial and economic contexts, these should only be considered *after* the facts on Turkey’s occupation of Cyprus are fully taken into account.

“Should the UK Government be concerned about trends in the quality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Turkey, including the rights of ethnic and religious minorities (including the Kurds) and freedom of expression?”

The question would more constructively be “how can the UK Government best use its influence to bring about an end to persecution and repression of its own people and those in Cyprus”.

The examples of the Cypriots, Kurds and other repressed groups (including the press) should not be taken in isolation of each other. Alone, each example is a severe blemish on Turkey’s reputation and enough to warrant action from the international community: together they represent a litany of abuse that cannot be ignored and justify immediate sanctions.

Over the past two decades, the UK has cited the principles of justice and human rights to stand up to the repression of peoples around the world, often using military intervention. The geo-strategic significance of Turkey, bestowed upon it by a fortune of geography alone, should not make it immune to the same judgments.

Turkey has for many years made clear its strong and clear objective of gaining EU membership and it has been equally clear to Turkey that its human rights record must drastically improve if it is to realise that aim.

The only conclusion one can therefore reach is that even the very strong attractions and benefits of EU entry are not enough to make Turkey overcome its institutionalised abuse of human rights and that tougher measures must be taken to ensure that Turkey drags itself into the 21st century.

“Is the Government correct to continue to support Turkey’s membership of the EU? If so, what should the Government do to reinvigorate Turkey’s EU accession process—for example, with respect to other EU Member States and EU policies, or the issue of Cyprus, as well as Turkey itself? Does Turkey still want to join the EU?”

Any EU member state that supports Turkey’s membership application without reservation is at odds with the central tenets of the Union’s founding principles, as set out in the Treaty of Rome. The National Federation of Cypriots agrees with the position of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and many other EU countries: that Turkey’s application for membership should be supported but only on the obvious and immovable conditions that Turkey first accords with the principles, laws and treaties of the EU.

The current situation has Turkey applying for membership of an organisation the territory of a component of which (ie the Republic of Cyprus), it partly militarily occupies! If an explanation is required to answer why such an application should be treated with utmost caution, then the whole foundations of the EU, largely established on the grounds that it would promote peace and justice in Europe, are at question.

Prior to Cyprus’s accession to the EU, Turkey attempted to hold Cyprus to ransom: the EU rightly acted in the spirit of international law, recognizing the integrity of the Republic of Cyprus over the whole of the island. There is no reason why that position should change and therefore it would be irreconcilable, as well as hypocritical, to welcome Turkey into the EU fold without its unconditional and permanent withdrawal of troops from Cyprus and the conclusion of a resolution to the division of the island.

Successive Turkish administrations have continuously sustained breaches of international law and have acted counter to and in contravention of United Nations resolutions in relation to Cyprus. It follows that Turkey cannot be accepted into the EU unless it changes its positions on Cyprus which are untenable in international law and under the UN Charter. To do so would be to advocate and condone violence and gross negligence of internationally established human rights conventions and norms.

The UK should therefore pursue support from EU colleagues to use EU accession to encourage Turkey to respect human rights and international law. By adopting such an approach, the UK would safeguard its own reputation as an honest broker and upholder of social justice and the values of international law.

“How important is Turkey to UK and EU energy security? How compatible are UK and EU, and Turkish, energy interests? How should Turkey’s energy role affect UK Government policy towards the country?”

Through no other means than fortunate positioning on the map, Turkey’s is in a strong geographical position when looking at the delivery of energy resources to Europe. However, with security of energy supply an ever more important issue for developed economies in an often volatile global political climate, the obvious direction for the UK is to diversify its sources of energy, not to become more reliant upon its existing channels of supply.

Therefore, while Turkey has a role to play in securing supply lines, the UK should be looking to emerging sources of energy and ensuring that their mining is undertaken safely and securely. An obvious future alternative would be to secure supplies resourced in the territory of a fellow EU and Commonwealth member: Cyprus.

The findings of recent explorative drilling and surveys at sea by Cypriot vessels within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Cyprus are not yet conclusive but would provide more security of supply to some extent.

However, even these legitimate explorations led to Turkey’s true colours being revealed. The exploration’s ships were threatened by Turkish gunboats even though there is no doubt that they took place within Cyprus’s Exclusive Economic Zone in full compliance with international law and the law of the sea. There is no credible justification for such actions, which go only to demonstrate Turkey’s bullying approach in the region.

The Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said earlier this month that Britain supports: “the right to develop such a zone and to enjoy the resources of it. We welcome the statement by President Christofias that measures will be taken to make sure that the proceeds of it can be shared by all Cypriots in the future. We think that this is the right way to approach the matter. And, of course, we will urge on any countries concerned, a moderate and sensible course of action”.

The National Federation of Cypriots fully endorses Mr Hague’s words and hopes that HMG work within the spirit of his statement.

30 November 2011

Further written evidence from the Scotch Whiskey Association

Thank you for your email of 30 November which provided the opportunity for us to provide additional information with regard to trading conditions for Scotch Whisky in Turkey.

We were most grateful that the Committee raised our concerns during the recent visit to the market—this was extremely helpful. While we note that Turkish officials indicated some of our concerns had already been resolved, it is difficult to see how this conclusion was reached. Indeed, on the main issues of concern set out in our August submission, the situation on one (taxation) has become far worse; on another (market access) there are reports of planned changes that could make already difficult trading conditions harder still.

When Turkish officials reported that trading conditions had improved, we suspect they were referring to the valuation dispute (paragraph 5.3 of our 30 August submission) which was resolved in spring 2011. The removal of this area of concern was of considerable importance to the major producers. However, the other trade barriers affecting Scotch Whisky imports in 2008, ie when negotiations to settle the valuation dispute began, and which had already adversely affected trade for many years, were still in place after settlement in May/June this year.

There are, in essence, two main issues, mainly excise tax discrimination and market access barriers, and these affect all imported Scotch Whisky and other UK/EU spirits. If the 1995 EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement (CUA) had been implemented in Turkey the way it was intended, our sector would enjoy barrier-free access to Turkey. Unfortunately, we have faced substantial import permit and related obstacles to trade since 1996 and excise tax discrimination since 2003.

1. TAXATION

In the tax chapter of Turkey’s EU accession negotiations, the Commission introduced a “benchmark” requiring Turkey to agree an “Action Plan” for the removal of tax discrimination against Scotch Whisky and other imported spirits. This was approved in 2009 and a timetable for the gradual harmonisation of excise taxes on domestic and imported spirits was fixed. Although the Action Plan laid down the rates of tax that should apply at each step in the harmonisation process, Turkey breached this agreement in both 2009 and 2010 by increasing all the rates unilaterally. It did so again in October 2011 when excise taxes on spirits rose by a further 23%.

The rate on Scotch Whisky in Turkey is now higher than in any EU Member State except Sweden and the level of discrimination is greater than before the 2009 Action Plan was agreed. Despite being urged repeatedly by the Commission to come back into line with the Action Plan, Turkey has declined to do so.

Under the Action Plan, the difference in excise tax (plus VAT) paid on a bottle of Scotch Whisky and a bottle of raki (Turkey's national spirit) should be €3.59 (it was €5.64 in 2008). The reality, however, is that the three successive increases have widened the gap to €5.72 per bottle. The next stage of the Action Plan is in April 2012, at which point the difference is due to fall to around €1.34. Recent discussions with the European Commission, national delegations and others suggest, however, that while Turkey is working on a Decree to implement the next stage, this will not respect the rates agreed in 2009.

Thus there has been further deterioration in the excise tax treatment of Scotch Whisky since our initial submission. We very much hope the Committee, and indeed HM Government, will urge Turkey to come back into line with its Action Plan commitments at the earliest opportunity.

2. MARKET ACCESS

While all the concerns mentioned in our August submission remain in place, there are reports the Agriculture Ministry is working on a series of Decrees to amend the import regime, possibly from the start of 2012. We have heard that the control certificate (import permit) might be abolished. Although this appears superficially appealing, there are also reports of a number of new measures which might take its place:

- introduction of an approval requirement for goods already en route to the market;
- revision of existing requirement for imported goods (ie those permitted to land) to be analysed and sampled before being allowed to clear Customs;
- possible introduction of a new control certificate, but administered by Turkey's Tobacco and Alcohol Board rather than the Agriculture Ministry; and
- possible facility for the proposed new controls to be avoided (or reduced) if producers allow Turkish inspection teams to visit production plants in the country of origin.

While precise details of how the above measures, assuming some or all take effect, will impact on trade cannot yet be determined, importers are nonetheless greatly concerned that each of the possible new controls could create serious logistical and financial difficulties. Turkey does not have a culture of consulting business before the introduction of new rules, and nor is it normal for such measures to be subject to transition periods. Importers' experience is that measures are often introduced at short notice and cause considerable trade disruption.

We therefore hope the Committee can urge Turkey that, whatever amendments to the import regime are under consideration, they should be subject to a meaningful consultation process, a transition period which provides traders with adequate time to adjust to the new regime and, above all, that they lead to genuine liberalisation of trade, as foreseen under the Customs Union Agreement.

On a more general point, at a time when the UK is Turkey's most dependable ally within the EU, it is all the harder to understand why, thus far, there has been so little goodwill from Turkey to address the longstanding concerns facing Scotch Whisky and other UK/EU spirits. The trade barriers impact far more on UK economic interests than those of any other EU country.

We hope this additional information will be useful for the Committee's inquiry. Of course, please do not hesitate to get in touch again if you should require any additional written information or clarification with regard to any aspect.

I hope you will not mind that as I am currently overseas on business, including in relation to the trade barriers in Turkey, I have asked a colleague to sign this letter on my behalf.

7 December 2011

Further written evidence from the British Council

BRITISH COUNCIL STAFF IN TURKEY, MARCH 2012

<i>Staff numbers</i>	<i>Ankara</i>	<i>Istanbul</i>	<i>All of Turkey</i>
UK appointed	2	6 ²⁶	8
Locally engaged	20	25	45
Total	22	31	53

12 March 2012

²⁶ Includes four UK appointed staff who work in regional roles supporting the Wider Europe region.

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