

PRESS RELEASE

EU and Turkish Chambers tighten links **Economic co-operation EU-Turkey should be enhanced,** **Chambers say**

EUROCHAMBRES “Turkish Chamber Development Programme” (TCDP-part 2), which aims to support the internationalisation of Turkish enterprises through partnerships between EU and Turkish Chambers, concluded today with an appeal by Chambers for a close economic cooperation between the EU and Turkey.

Speaking at a conference in Izmir, Turkey, in presence of Ali Babacan, State Minister and Chief Negotiator for Turkey, EUROCHAMBRES Deputy President Georgios Kassimatis said: *“The programme has been highly successful and contributed to EU-Turkey business relations in a practical and useful way. Economic co-operation between the EU and Turkey is of mutual benefit for both countries and has become even more important in view of the accession talks which will start on 3 October – no matter what the result will be.”*

Since its launch in 2002, TCDP – which is co-financed by the European Commission under its Civil Society Development programme – has created 15 twinning-projects between Turkish and European Chambers, introducing new services for Turkish enterprises mainly in the following fields:

- **Internationalisation:** e.g. creation of an “East Mediterranean Foreign Trade Centre” to foster the level of internationalisation of local and regional companies - Chambers of Adana and Sheffield;
- **Local development:** e.g. enhanced participation of SMEs in tourism activities - Chambers of Antalya and Barcelona;
- **Quality management:** e.g. launch of the “Turkish Chambers Quality Project” to improve the performance of Turkish Chambers and establish a trademark – Union of Turkish Chambers and Union of British Chambers of Commerce.

Furthermore, TCDP has awarded 7 scholarships for EUROCHAMBRES high level training programme for senior executive Chamber managers at European level.

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EUROCHAMBRES has member organisations in 44 countries representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers

Chambers welcome the launch of Civil Society Dialogue

EUROCHAMBRES welcomed the Communication by the Commission launching a Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Turkey as part of the general Negotiating Framework.

Mr Kassimatis said: *“The French and Dutch referenda have shown how important a timely and open dialogue with citizens is – and what can happen if this dialogue fails or starts too late. Therefore, Chambers highly welcome the EU’s initiative’s to improve mutual understanding and to encourage debate about enlargement in Turkey and the EU.*

“The Chamber network offers the Commission its full support for this dialogue. Chambers can play a major role in this respect due to their regional focus and as representatives of the business society towards national and local authorities – and we are willing to do so.”

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