
Published at: 04-10-2004



Independent Commission on Turkey

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Former Secretary General of Foreign Affairs, Austria

The Independent Commission on Turkey is supported by the British Council and Open Society Institute.

The Independent Commission's work programme did not include issues under review by the European Commission for its forthcoming Progress Report on Turkey.

This report presents the findings of the Independent Commission on Turkey, which are the personal views of its members.

The report, entitled "Turkey in Europe: More than a promise?", was presented in Brussels on 6 September by the Independent Commission on Turkey. It aims to focus on the facts that surround Turkey's EU membership bid and looks at the associated opportunities and challenges. However, according to the panel's chairman, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, the report does not seek to "compete" with the Europ

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ean Commission's scheduled early October progress report and recommendation on Turkey. Instead, Ahtisaari said that the Independent Commission wanted to provide information and to address the key issues in Turkey's accession process.

In its conclusions, the report states that:

- accession negotiations should begin as soon as Turkey were to meet the Copenhagen political criteria
- further delay would damage the EU's credibility
- any objections in principle against Turkey's EU accession should have been raised during the earlier key stages of Ankara's application process
- the eventual opening of accession negotiations with Turkey will present an opportunity for both sides to address the most urgent problems, in particular with regard to the economic criteria and the acquis
- Turkey's accession would strengthen the EU's capabilities as foreign policy actor in key regions
- migration pressure from Turkey can be projected to be relatively low and could be of benefit to the European Community
- the EU must treat Turkey with all due respect, fairness and consideration

The Independent Commission on Turkey brings together former heads of state, foreign ministers and European commissioners. The panel was established in March 2004, and its work was supported by the British Council and the Open Society Institute. In a series of presentations later this week, the panel will outline its findings in Berlin, the Hague, London, Barcelona, Vienna, Paris and Rome.

Full text of the report in English [TurkeyInEurope_EN.pdf](#) (159.99 Kb)

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