

# MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS OF TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIP TO THE EU

**Turkish people feel European, Turkey is a member of all European organisations and in the process of membership negotiations with the European Union.**

**The challenge for both the EU and Turkey now is to transform Turkey's political, economic, social and cultural potential into assets for Europe's future.**

1. **ECONOMY** : Turkey will contribute to EU's economic power on the global scene. With a population of 72,6 millions, a steadily increasing GDP level (610 billion €), an economic growth average of 4% in the last 5 years despite the economic crisis, a young and entrepreneurial population, an export oriented industrial economy and a rapidly developing information society, Turkey's accession will increase the size and competitiveness of the European internal market.

2. **CONSUMERS** : Adoption by Turkey of the EU legislation and standards is contributing to the competitiveness and the product quality in an enlarged Union.

3. **BUSINESS** : Given the country's qualified labour force, high absorption capacity, tourism potential and location at the crossroads of Eurasian markets and energy networks, EU membership will boost its economy by attracting even more investments. In addition to the existing customs union in industrial goods, the liberalisation of services and public procurement will provide European companies with invaluable opportunities and generate growth and jobs in Europe.

4. **GLOBAL POLITICS** : Turkey's geographical position and connection to the Balkans, the Black Sea, Islamic world, Russia and the Central Asia will grant the EU a greater say in the international arena.

5. **ENERGY** : Turkey as an important link in the East-West energy corridor channelling the Caspian and the Middle Eastern energy to Europe and world markets. Turkey as a future member of the EU would strengthen the EU's energy security with alternative routes for energy supply such as The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Iraq-Ceyhan oil pipelines, Turkmenistan-Turkey-Europe, the Shah Deniz, the Black Sea and Turkey-Greece natural gas pipelines. Moreover, Turkey holds the biggest potential for renewable energies such as hydroelectric, thermal, solar, biomass and wind power reserves among European countries.

6. **CULTURE** : Turkey has always been a cradle of major civilizations. Hittites, Lydians, Lycians, Phrygians, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuk Turks, people from the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, Black Sea and the Ottomans are all part of Turkey's historic and cultural heritage. Troy, Istanbul, Hattusash, Mount Nemrut, Xanthos, Lethoon and Cappadocia among others are registered on the World Heritage List.

7. **MULTICULTURALISM** : Turkey's membership will strengthen EU's multicultural society and democracy. It will be a solid confirmation, refuting 'clash of civilizations' scenario and emphasizing the essence of the EU, as a union built upon and through common values.

8. **WOMEN'S RIGHTS** : Turkey's progress towards EU membership is an important catalyst in empowering women. Turkish women's participation in the work force in banking, engineering, legal and the medical sectors are among the highest in Europe, whereas problems persist in both urban and rural areas. Turkey's EU accession process further improves women's rights in Turkey and generates positive effects on the status of Muslim women in Europe and beyond.

9. **ENVIRONMENT** : Turkey's membership will double the richness of the EU ecosystem. In Europe excepting Turkey, there are 3500 endemic plant species. Turkey alone is home to 3022 endemic plant and 456 bird species. 93% of forests in Turkey are natural old forests (compared to 1% in the rest of Europe).

10. **SECURITY & STABILITY** : As a reliable NATO ally, Turkey's membership will consolidate both the military and the civilian aspects of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. A European Union which includes Turkey will be more efficient in tackling political problems and crises including threats from undemocratic regimes, terrorism, illegal immigration and trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings. Last but not least, Turkey's membership will provide sustainable stability in the Aegean regions and the Balkans.



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