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European Commission's Joint Research Centre and Turkey sign a new Memorandum of Understanding towards the safer, cleaner and healthier use of food, chemicals and energy

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 05 July 2007 during a Joint Research Centre (JRC) Board of Governors meeting taking place in the city of Wroclaw, Poland. The agreement outlines enhanced cooperation measures between Turkish research organisations represented by TÜBİTAK and the Joint Research Centre.

TÜBİTAK is the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey and is the main body responsible for organising research and development activities at national and international levels.

The Joint Research Centre is a Directorate General of the European Commission providing robust scientific and technical support to policy-making in the areas of food, chemical products and health; environment and sustainability; nuclear safety and security; technology foresight; reference materials and measurements; public security and antifraud.

"EU Research Policy can only realise its full potential when it has the appropriate links with scientific and technical organisations at international, national and regional level" said JRC Director-General, Roland Schenkel. "Turkish organisations are clearly committed to playing their part and we are confident that this Memorandum of Understanding will act as a catalyst for even greater cooperation. We are particularly happy that young Turkish researchers will be given the opportunity to work at our research Institutes".

Prof. Dr. Nüket Yetiş, Acting President of TÜBİTAK added that: *"This agreement will contribute to the better integration of Turkish R&D Institutions within the European Research Area. It will enable Turkish researchers from different disciplines to conduct joint projects and will facilitate staff and information exchange with the JRC. On a broader level, this agreement will support Turkey's participation in EU Research Programmes and will help promote the potential of Turkish research, technology and innovation throughout Europe."*

Aims of the MoU

The goal of the new MoU is to support EU Enlargement objectives by promoting the participation of Turkish organisations and researchers within JRC activities. Concrete measures include, amongst others, hosting up to 20 jointly-selected Turkish grant-holders per year (PhD and Post-Doc) at JRC Institutes. These stays will be funded by TÜBİTAK.

Strategic priority areas outlined in the MoU include:

- Environment and health
- Food and feed safety and quality
- Security
- Energy, including nuclear safety and security

- Agriculture
- Chemicals

Background:

The level of collaboration between the JRC's research Institutes and Turkey's scientific and technical community has progressed significantly in recent years. JRC and Turkish partners currently collaborate in 8 Institutional Networks and 8 Sixth Framework Programme for Research (FP6) projects. In addition, 15 Turkish researchers are working at JRC Institutes and 161 Turkish experts were trained in JRC organised workshops in 2006.

The JRC actively promotes the participation of organisations, researchers and experts from EU Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries. In recent years, the JRC has developed a number of actions aimed at stimulating R&D collaboration. This includes hosting temporary staff at its seven specialised research Institutes located in five EU Member States (Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain), organising tailored workshops and training courses, and hosting in-country information events to reach the broadest possible range of stakeholders.

In 2006, for example, over 4000 experts were trained in 100 JRC-run workshops on the scientific and technical aspects of EU legislation. The JRC also currently employs 251 experts from the 12 new Member States and Candidate Countries.

➤ **Further information:**

- JRC activities: <http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu>
- TÜBİTAK web page: www.tubitak.gov.tr

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