



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 20.08.2021  
C(2021) 6233 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the Joint Communication to the European Council on the state of play of EU-Turkey political, economic and trade relations {JOIN(2021) 8}. The Commission is pleased that the Senát underlines the importance of a good mutual relationship between the EU and Turkey as set out in the Communication.*

*As highlighted by the European Council at its meeting on 24 June 2021, the EU maintains a strategic interest in a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Turkey. To this respect, the EU welcomed the de-escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean, which needs to be sustained, and remains ready to engage with Turkey in a phased, proportionate and reversible manner to enhance cooperation in a number of areas of common interest, as the Senát points out in its Opinion. This is subject to the established conditionalities set out in the March 2021 European Council and in previous European Council conclusions.*

*In line with this framework, the Commission took note of the start of work at technical level towards a mandate for the modernisation of the EU-Turkey Customs Union, which should go hand in hand with addressing current difficulties in the implementation of the Customs Union, ensuring its effective application to all Member States. The EU also noted the preparatory work for high-level dialogues with Turkey on issues of mutual interest, such as migration, public health, climate, counterterrorism and regional issues.*

*The continuation of financing for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and other parts of the region, within the context of the EU's overall migration policy remains an aspect of paramount importance in the EU approach.*

*Against this background, and as mentioned in the Opinion, rule of law and fundamental rights in Turkey remain a key concern for the EU. Recent developments such as the*

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*targeting of political parties, human rights defenders and media, represent major setbacks and run counter to Turkey's obligations to respect democracy, the rule of law and women's rights. Dialogue on such issues is an integral part of the EU-Turkey relationship.*

*Finally, in line with the shared interest of the EU and Turkey in regional peace and stability, the EU continues to expect Turkey and all actors to contribute positively to the resolution of regional crises.*

*The Commission appreciates the ongoing support of the Senát to work on the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between the EU and Turkey and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Senát in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Janusz Wojciechowski  
Member of the Commission*