European External Action Service (EEAS)

Visit to Turkey: EU to step up engagement

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High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini, together with Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides, will pay an official visit to Turkey on 8 and 9 December.

"The visit to Turkey next week, together with Commissioners Hahn and Stylianides is a strong indication of the strategic importance of the EU-Turkey relationship and our desire to step up engagement in view of shared interests and common challenges" said HR/VP Federica Mogherini ahead of the visit.

The High Representative and Commissioners will hold meetings with the President of the Republic of Turkey, the Prime Minister and other Ministers as well as with representatives of the opposition, the business community and civil society. On 9 December, the High Representative and Commissioner Stylianides will also travel to Gaziantep and Kilis, where they will visit a refugee camp and pay tribute to Turkey for its important role in sheltering refugees from the crises in Syria and Iraq.

"I reiterate Europe's solidarity with Turkey, most notably the host communities who are generously hosting more than 1 million refugees from Syria and Iraq. Europe's commitment to the victims of these crises remains unwavering. I am going there to assess the needs on the ground with my own eyes and to make sure that our humanitarian assistance continues to bring relief and hope in the most efficient way possible," added Commissioner Stylianides.

This joint visit, early in the mandate of the new European Commission, demonstrates the importance of Turkey for the European Union as a candidate country negotiating accession to the European Union and as a key partner and neighbour considering its strategic location and dynamic economy. It is also a clear sign of our willingness and determination to step up engagement across the whole range of the EU-Turkey relationship to fully reflect the strategic importance of our relations. In this context, and in particular as regards our integration, common neighbourhood and ongoing crises in the region, the EU is determined to step up its assistance to support Turkey in its commendable efforts in sheltering such high numbers of refugees.

Commissioner Hahn assured: "We are committed to moving forward EU-Turkey relations and keeping the accession negotiations on track. However, further reforms are needed to provide

solid ground for progress. To achieve this, we need to have an even closer and deeper relationship with Turkey."

For more information:

EU-Turkey relations

EU-Turkey (Enlargement)

Factsheet: Refugee crisis in Turkey and EU support

Factsheet: EU humanitarian aid for the victims of the Syrian crisis

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