

## Recent reports

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- The informal economy in Turkey and the EU (2010)
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- Cooperation between the EU and Turkey on research and development (2009)
- Energy supply policies in the context of EU-Turkey relations (2009)
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The reports on the different topics as well as the joint declarations of the JCC are available on the EESC's website:

[www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.european-enlargement-turkey-jcc-meetings](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.european-enlargement-turkey-jcc-meetings)

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Published by: "Visits and Publications" Unit  
EESC-2013-49-EN

[www.eesc.europa.eu](http://www.eesc.europa.eu)

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QE-30-13-642-EN-C  
ISBN 978-92-830-2131-5



doi:10.2864/49269

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# The EESC and Turkey



**European Economic and Social Committee**

**External Relations (REX)**

At the Helsinki European Council of December 1999 Turkey was officially recognised as a candidate country on an equal footing with other candidate countries. This marked the beginning of a pre-accession strategy for Turkey, designed to stimulate and support its reform process through financial assistance and other forms of cooperation. On 3 October 2005 the accession negotiations were officially launched.

## The EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)

On 16 November 1995 the EESC decided to create a EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) based on the mandate given to it by the Ankara Agreement, where it is stated that «The Council of Association shall take all appropriate steps to promote the necessary cooperation and contacts between the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and other organs of the EU on the one hand and the Turkish Parliament and the corresponding organs in Turkey on the other».

The JCC has since then functioned as an instrument promoting **interaction between the economic and social actors of organised civil society in the EU and Turkey** even during periods when the relations at political level between Turkey and the EU have been difficult.

The EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee is composed of members from the EESC and members representing organised civil society in Turkey. The members are selected on an equal basis from three groups of civil society

organisations: employer organisations, trade unions and various interest groups, like consumer organisations, farmer organisations, academia, NGOs etc.

They meet twice a year (once in an EU member state and once in Turkey) to discuss different topics of mutual interest and relevance for civil society. **The main purpose is to ensure the involvement of organized civil society in the accession negotiation process.** The JCC members follow up the different chapters opened, analyse the economic and social consequences of the implementation of the EU acquis, meet with EU and Turkish authorities and make recommendations.

## The JCC: Promoter of the Civil Society Dialogue

Another mission of the JCC is to foster public debate **and awareness in Turkey about EU membership rights and obligations and to facilitate the process of institution-building and the consolidation of civil society organisations there.** The JCC is also a platform to enable the EU representatives to familiarise themselves with the social structures and the economic and social impact of the reforms in Turkey.

In the framework of its meetings, **the JCC therefore also organises public hearings on different topics in order to include a wide range of opinions in its recommendations.**

The role of the JCC is also to enable Turkish representatives to become acquainted with the process of consultation taking place within the EU and more generally with the dialogue between social and civil partners in the EU.

## The JCC: Common work and achievements

During the year, reports on different topics are elaborated and presented jointly by the EESC and Turkish JCC members. A wide range of topics have been treated such as the cooperation between the EU and Turkey on research and development, the informal economy, youth employment, Trade Union rights in Turkey, women's rights, consumer and health policies, etc.

**Some topics are recurrent on the agenda like trade union rights and women's role in society.** The joint report on trade union rights in Turkey endorsed by the JCC in 2008 made a comprehensive review of the situation and pointed out the shortcomings of the legislation. This report contributed to the assessment of the European Commission on this issue and pushed further the political debate in Turkey. On Women's rights and role in the EU and Turkey, a preliminary joint report was drafted for the September 2010 meeting of the JCC. It paved the way for further work to be carried out on this matter in the future.

**During each meeting a joint declaration is elaborated** in order to underline the views of civil society on crucial economic and social issues. **This declaration is sent to the authorities in Turkey and in the EU.** Representatives from the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, the Committee of the Regions and Turkish authorities are also invited to the meetings in order to keep them informed about the work of the JCC.