

Distinguished Deputy Ministers,

Mr Ambassador,

Dear Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege for me to be here today and address you on behalf of the Council of Europe.

Turkey is a rapidly modernising country. Within one generation or so, Turkey has changed beyond recognition. It has become a regional economic power and many countries, in the region and beyond, look up to Turkey as a model for democratic reforms.

Against this background, the importance of the political will that Turkey has shown to address issues of corruption cannot be overstated.

Corruption is a common problem in all Council of Europe member states, although it manifests itself in different ways and in varying degrees. Curbing corruption is crucial, because without doing so there is no rule of law, no investor confidence and no sustainable economic growth. First and foremost, it is in the interest of the Turkish people themselves that corruption should be kept in check.

I would like to seize the opportunity to express gratitude to our donor, the European Union. Let me please remind you that the Project on Strengthening Anti-Corruption Policies and Practices in Turkey (TYSAP), which we are launching today, is primarily funded by the European tax payers – by the ordinary people like the ones you see in the streets of Ankara, only in other European cities and localities. They all contributed a small part of their hard-earned income to the project.

This is a token of the sense of solidarity within Europe and amongst the Council of Europe member states. Turkey belongs to Europe and other Europeans want to see Turkey make further progress in the way of democratic reform the Turkish people have chosen for themselves.

Since a decade now, the Council of Europe has been assisting its members in combating corruption. In Turkey, we completed a first project to Consolidate Ethics in the Public Sector (TYEC), which is now followed by a second phase, TYEC-2.

Today, we are launching the TYSAP project to reinforce the capacity of the Prime Minister's Inspection Board. Earlier this morning the Chair of the Board, Mr Yunus Arinci spoke eloquently about the expected outcomes of the project.

What we want to achieve with TYSAP is to assist Turkey in reviewing the legislation on investigation of corruption offenses, the information-sharing system and in developing anti-corruption strategies. We want this project to be instrumental in improving the coordination of investigations on corruption, and in clarifying the roles of the various bodies that were set up to combat corruption. We want to help the inspectors of the Prime Ministry Inspection Board increase their knowledge, their skills and their capacity to do their important job. And we hope that they will be able to further transmit this knowledge to other inspectors.

As mentioned here already, there are nine co-beneficiaries in addition to the main beneficiary, the Prime Minister's Inspection Board. We want to see delivered, among the results of this project, inspection guidelines, reporting standards, and a map of corruption-prone areas. And we are confident that all this work, which will be done together with our Turkish partners, will help achieve the goals that Turkey has set for itself in the context of the fight against corruption.

Last but not least, I am very encouraged to witness the great attention paid to the TYSAP project at the highest political level. We were all strongly encouraged by the message addressed to this launching event by the Prime Minister. We then heard the message from the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. I consider these as tokens of guaranteed success for this project.

Thank you for your attention.