

**"STRENGTHENING THE COORDINATION OF ANTI-CORRUPTION
POLICIES AND PRACTICES"**

EU supported joint project with Council of Europe:

Opening Event – 12 June 2013, Ankara

**Opening Remarks by Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert,
Head of Delegation of the European Union to Turkey**

Distinguished Deputy Minister of Interior,

Dear Officials of the Ministries,

Dear Representative of the Council of Europe

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I am honoured to be here today to launch the EU supported project on “Strengthening the Coordination of Anti-Corruption Policies and Practices in Turkey.” Your presence at this event clearly demonstrates our shared commitment and readiness to address this issue at the highest level.
- The Commissioner for enlargement Stefan Füle had the occasion, a few days ago in Istanbul, to recall to the Prime Minister the commitment of the Member States to the accession of Turkey to the EU, while also underlining that the negotiation process and full implementation of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Turkey are two faces of the same coin.
- This is why today's project – that we are proud to develop together with the Council of Europe and several Ministries – is

in our view so relevant: reinforcing efforts by Turkey to meet the Copenhagen criteria, which includes anti-corruption; involving civil society; upholding the principles of good governance by the administration.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- **To combat Corruption is a challenge in all countries, including within the European Union. It has become a top priority for the European Commission, that will soon publish a scoreboard on the achievements of the Member States to assist them in their fight.**

Corruption is a plague because it erodes public trust in institutions and political systems; it distorts the functioning of markets and competition; it undermines democracy and the rule of law; it can lead to real violations of human rights.

- **Regarding the situation in Turkey, we have taken good note of the Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International and of the public concerns that stemmed from it.**
- **Tackling the issue is notoriously complex. In few countries can we say that efforts are fully successful, given the need for political commitment and decisive changes in practice and mentalities. But the EU has achieved much and is, with this project, ready to share its expertise and to extend its support to Turkey.**
- **Today's project is focusing on the investigation of the offence, as we know that Corruption is one of the most difficult crimes**

to investigate. But there is strong evidence that anti-corruption enforcement - audits, investigations and severe sanctions - can in fact be effective. Sanctions and rules make sense only if detection is made.

- This is why the project will benefit the Prime Ministry Inspection Board to which it will provide technical support, expertise and training in order to develop the capacity of inspectors.
- Other Ministries such as Interior, Finance, Justice and the Treasury are also involved actively in the project.
- Without dwelling on detailed activities that were addressed in particular by the representative of the Council of Europe, I wish to reinforce two important points:
 - firstly, the preparation of a map of "corruption prone areas" will make easier the drafting of specific strategies covering identified risks;
 - secondly, the project will involve many participants from government agencies but also from private sector and civil society; since this project is about trust building, such transparency is indeed essential.
- Effective implementation of any National Anti-Corruption Strategy requires active participation by civil society and the involvement of the media. Countries with a free press tend to have lower levels of corruption since media can more easily disclose corrupt activities. The media have, obviously, to be able – and to feel able – to fulfil their responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- **We welcome the progress made in implementing the Turkish Anti-Corruption Strategy with already a number of legislative proposals for reforms.**
 - **We encourage Turkey to make further progress on party financing and on Parliamentary immunity, both of which are commented upon in our Progress Reports, and to reinforce the independence of the Turkish Court of Accounts.**
- **I am pleased that the EU is already actively supporting reforms in its work with the Council of Ethics for Public Service. Two EU projects will start soon, one focusing on ethics in the judiciary and another involving NGOs and the private sector.**
- **In closing, I wish to acknowledge the commitment of the Turkish government to address these challenges and underline the full support and engagement of the European Union for the further development and implementation of reforms that are part and parcel of the EU accession process.**

I thank you for your attention.