



TURKISH INDUSTRIALISTS' AND BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION
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Contact: Abdullah Akyuz
(202) 776-7770

TUSIAD, comprised of Turkey's leading CEOs and executives, is an independent, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting public welfare through private enterprise.

TUSIAD: "CYPRUS ISSUE SHOULD NOT HARM TURKEY'S EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS"

November 19, 2001, Washington, DC: The recent developments regarding the Cyprus issue signal a critical turning point for the future of the island. The latest statements by the Turkish political authorities on the subject are worrisome for the Turkish private sector, and might harm Turkey's integration process into the European Union (EU).

The inability to resolve the Cyprus issue has so far damaged Turkey's foreign relations in many respects, most importantly, the EU-Turkey relations. Thus, any formulation of Cyprus policy should take its likely ramifications for the EU membership process into consideration.

The EU policy towards Cyprus ignores the legal basis of the issue and disregards crucial historical facts, which in turn exacerbates the ambiguous situation in the island. The stalemate in Cyprus question serves the interests of Turkey's adversaries within the EU as well as anti-EU groups within Turkey, who aim to exploit the problem to block Turkey's EU membership. The EU, therefore, should adopt a more constructive and balanced approach regarding Cyprus, taking into account all aspects of the problem, and the concerns of the Turkish Cypriots as well as Turkey.

Turkey's national interests call for the attainment of full EU membership as early as possible. While paying utmost attention to protecting the rights of the Turkish Cypriot community, Turkey needs to put forward more concrete, elaborate, and comprehensive policies, and a more effective communication strategy in order to better contribute to the settlement of the Cyprus problem, which is an important factor for its EU accession. The latest agreement between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders on the resumption of negotiations is an encouraging step to this direction.

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TUSIAD-U.S.: 1250 24th Street, N.W., Suite 300 – Washington, D.C. 20037, USA Tel: (202) 776-7770 Fax: (202) 776-7771
TUSIAD: Meşrutiyet Caddesi 74, Tepebaşı – İstanbul 80050, TURKEY Tel: 90 (212) 251-5313 Fax: 90 (212) 249-0913
TUSIAD-EU: 13, Avenue des Gaulois 1040 – Brussels, BELGIUM Tel: 32 (2) 736-4047 Fax: 32 (2) 736-3993
www.tusiad.org