

PRESS RELEASE

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Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Turkey thrives through 119 Grant Projects

Civil society contributes significantly to the process of accession to the European Union both within the Candidate Countries and Member States. Part of this contribution is the way in which Civil Society plays a facilitating role in the establishment of a dialogue for honest and open discussions on the concerns and perceptions of the enlargement process. In line with this, the European Union and Turkey have launched a project for the “Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue between European Union and Turkey”, with the General Secretariat for EU Affairs responsible for its implementation.

What is “Civil Society Dialogue”?

Civil Society Dialogue has become an indispensable concept for the European Union during its period of enlargement. Inclusion of citizens in the process is important as it builds closer ties between societies and helps to inform them about different cultures and political and economic systems. Citizens should, therefore, be better informed about, and prepared for, the consequences of EU enlargement. The most effective method to promote the dialogue is to support and encourage civil society involvement.

The two key overall objectives of the “Promotion of Civil Society Dialogue between European Union and Turkey” project are to ensure a better knowledge and understanding of the EU within Turkey and raising people’s awareness on membership, and to ensure a better knowledge and understanding of Turkey within the EU.

The Opening Conference for the Project “Promotion of Civil Society Dialogue between European Union and Turkey” will be hosted by HE Ali Babacan, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in Ankara on September 9

The “Promotion of Civil Society Dialogue between European Union and Turkey” project provides approximately €20 million to support 119 projects developed by municipalities, professional organizations, universities, and youth initiatives, constituting an essential part of the civil society in Turkey. It is co-financed by the EU.

The Project includes four grant components for towns and municipalities, professional organizations, universities, and youth initiatives for dialogue. Institutions and organizations, entitled to receive a grant, contribute to the development of relationships among a range of partners and to the enhancement of mutual dialogue, by carrying out activities together with partner organizations in the European Union.



AN EC CO-FINANCED PROJECT, IMPLEMENTED BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR EU AFFAIRS (EUSG)

The four grant components target those civil society groups that can potentially improve mutual understanding.

- 1 Towns and Municipalities – 41 Grant Projects – approximately €5 Million
- 2 Professional Organizations – 25 Grant Projects – approximately €3 Million
- 3 Universities – 28 Grant Projects – approximately €9,3 Million
- 4 Youth Initiatives for Dialogue – 25 Grant Projects – approximately €2 Million

The Opening Conference of this project will be held at the Hotel Sheraton, Ankara, with the participation of Secretary General for EU Affairs Mr. Oğuz Demiralp, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Turkey, Mr. Marc Pierini, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief Negotiator Mr. Ali Babacan, on Tuesday September 9th, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Also participating in the Opening will be representatives of the many organizations involved in the grant schemes, from Mucur Municipality to Çanakkale 18 March University, from Bornova Chamber of Auto Mechanics and Artisans to Van Lake Folklore and Tourism Association, and many more. In addition, domestic and foreign experts, senior officials from Turkey and the EU will participate in the Opening Conference.

Highlights of the Grant Projects

- 119 projects are financed through European Union funding totaling 19.3 Million Euros and the amount of grants ranges from 33,218 Euros to 406,662 Euros.
- The projects are implemented in different parts of Turkey. The number of projects that are being implemented in different regions is as follows: 25 in the Marmara Region, 23 in the Aegean Region, 17 in the Mediterranean Region, 40 in the Central Anatolia Region, 10 in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Region and 4 in the Black Sea Region.
- There are 41 Towns and Municipalities, 25 Professional Organizations, 28 Universities and 25 Youth Civil Society Organization projects under the four project components.
- All projects will be implemented in the priority areas of the Accession Partnership Instrument and the National Programme of Turkey.
- The main themes of the projects consist of areas such as Sustainable Rural Development, Environmental Protection, Tourism and Culture, Investment Incentives, Urban Planning, Youth Policies, Lifelong Learning, Institutional Social Responsibility and Health Policies.
- The project is to be implemented between June 2008 – November 2008 and the periods of the grant projects vary between 12 and 18 months.
- All the grant projects have partners from among the member countries of the European Union, including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Rumania, Sweden and the U.K.



- The projects include activities such as sharing of information and experience, study visits, networking, joint research, capacity building, policy and application analyses, seminars and conferences and joint publications.
- A web site has been set up in order to promote the Civil Society Dialogue and to share the related experiences (www.csdproject.net)
- Various communication tools such as news bulletins, articles, posters and brochures will be produced through a media campaign within the scope of the project and these will be shared with all the relevant parties.

Civil Society Dialogue Project Interpretation and Translation Facility

Apart from the support provided for the 119 grant projects, there is an “Interpretation and Translation Facility” which will provide interpretation or translation support for those institutions that have been unable to benefit from the support of the European Union Civil Society Dialogue up until now but want to establish partnerships with the institutions in the European Union within the framework of the Civil Society Dialogue Project. Detailed information can be found on the web site of the project.

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