

IP/05/1219

Brussels, 3 October 2005

Declaration of the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso on the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey

“Today is a milestone in the relationship between the European Union and Turkey.

A stable, modern and democratic Turkey is an objective we should support actively in the European Union and in Turkey. This is why we are starting negotiations.

Of course the road towards Turkey’s accession will be long and difficult. Accession, as for every country, is neither guaranteed nor automatic.

The negotiations must be fair and rigorous. On behalf of the European Union I can guarantee this will be the case. Turkey must be treated in the same way as all other candidates. And it must strictly respect the requirements for democracy, human rights and rule of law if it is to join the club.

Europe must learn more about Turkey. And Turkey must win the hearts and minds of European citizens. They are the ones who at the end of the day will decide about Turkey’s membership.

Turkey must be given a fair chance to demonstrate that it is capable of meeting all conditions for accession.

I hope it will; an open dynamic Turkey is in the interest of a European Union capable of assuming fully its responsibilities in the world.”