

**No: 57, 25 February 2011, Press Release Regarding the Conclusions of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council by Minister Ahmet Davutoglu**

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As is known, in the context of our demarches before the EU Member States and institutions to initiate a process that will lead to a visa-free regime for Turkish citizens, Turkey was requested to fulfill the obligation of signing a Readmission Agreement. The negotiations on the Agreement were concluded at the end of January, with the constructive approaches of Turkey and the EU Commission.

Our position on the Readmission Agreement has been clearly and repeatedly conveyed to our EU counterparts. As expressed in our Ministry's press release of 14 December 2010, the conclusion and initialing of the Readmission Agreement should be carried out in parallel to the initiation of the visa dialogue process between Turkey and the EU Commission towards a visa free regime. This is a gradual process which should be started with visa liberalisation in its first phase and concluded with a visa free regime.

The increasing number of decisions recently taken by the courts in EU member states indeed prove that the existing visa procedures for our citizens has no legal validity.

Since the beginning of the negotiations on the Readmission Agreement, we have, in line with our position outlined above, firmly conveyed to our counterparts on every occasion that we will not sign the Agreement unless our demand on this issue is met.

The Conclusions of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council of 24 February 2011 on this issue is far from fulfilling our expectation. What we anticipate is that the EU Council mandates the EU Commission to start the negotiations with Turkey, in a way that will fully meet our expectation. As long as this expectation is not met, the Readmission Agreement will not be signed, initialled or implemented.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey  
[http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_57\\_25-february-2011\\_press-release-regarding-the-conclusions-of-the-eu-justice-and-home-affairs-council.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_57_25-february-2011_press-release-regarding-the-conclusions-of-the-eu-justice-and-home-affairs-council.en.mfa)