

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0965/04  
by Philip Claeys (NI)  
to the Council

Subject: Statements by government leaders on the possible accession of Turkey to the EU

Over the past few weeks, government leaders and other ministers have made a number of statements about the possible opening of negotiations with a view to the accession of Turkey to the European Union.

According to the 24 February 2004 edition of 'Die Welt', a German newspaper, advisers to the Federal German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, said that the negotiations with Turkey should 'naturally' begin on 1 January 2005 or six months thereafter.

According to the 4 March 2004 edition of 'Le Soir', a Belgian newspaper, Louis Michel, the Belgian Foreign Minister, said on 3 March 2004 in Prague that it was Turkey's destiny to 'come and swell our ranks' and that Turkish accession was 'a foregone conclusion'.

While it is quite normal and highly desirable for senior government figures to express in public their support for, or opposition to, possible Turkish accession, it is, none the less, rather more controversial for them to make statements about the findings of the Commission report and the subsequent Council decision. If they do so, expectations are created on the Turkish side which are not realistic. It also appears that the supporters of Turkish accession are trying to push through a policy based on a fait accompli.

Is the information correct that a decision on the opening of negotiations with Turkey has actually already been taken?

Does the Council deem it desirable for senior government figures from the current Member States to make public statements that anticipate the Council decision, which will not be taken until December, when the Commission report has not yet been finalised, let alone published?

Have agreements been concluded within the Council on compliance with a certain 'obligation to observe secrecy' with regard to the outcome of this entire issue?