

Recommendation 12

Article 5 and throughout the document as appropriate

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Statutes	Translator's note: The proposal is to change the German term 'Geschäftsordnung' ('Rules of Procedure') used in this point to 'Statuten' ('Statutes'). The English-language version already uses the word 'statutes' so the amendment does not apply.

Reason

The basic principles underpinning the grouping should be laid down in statutes. Rules of procedure, on the other hand, regulate internal workings. There is nothing therefore to stop the EGTC having rules of procedure as well as statutes.

Brussels, 18 November 2004.

The President
of the Committee of the Regions
Peter STRAUB

**RESOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS OF 18 NOVEMBER 2004 ON THE
OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR TURKEY'S ACCESSION TO THE EU**

(2005/C 71/12)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Having regard to the Communication entitled *Recommendation of the European Commission on Turkey's progress towards accession*, presented by the European Commission on 6 October 2004 (COM(2004) 656 final);
 - Having regard to the *2004 Regular Report on Turkey's progress towards accession* (SEC(2004) 1201);
 - Having regard to the Declaration of Ankara adopted by the CoR RELEX Commission and the Union of Municipalities in Turkey (UTM) on 11 October 2004;
 - Having regard to Committee of the Regions' *External Relations Strategy* as adopted at its extraordinary Bureau meeting in The Hague on 21 October 2004;
- 1) **welcomes** the application of Turkey on equal terms with the applications of other European countries;
 - 2) **intends** to present its views regarding Turkey's accession, from a local and regional perspective, at appropriate opportunities in the future; and urges the European Commission to consult the Committee on future regular reports;
 - 3) **recognises** that the reform efforts made by the Turkish authorities during the last years have helped Turkey to seek to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, facilitating a decision towards the opening of negotiations for Turkey's accession to the EU;
 - 4) **encourages** the Turkish government to press ahead with its challenging reforms in order to achieve their full implementation as soon as possible in an irreversible and sustainable manner;
 - 5) **welcomes** the decentralisation efforts undertaken in Turkey, which should be in accordance with the principles of the Charter of Local Self-Government, as well as the passing of the Local Administration Reform Law in 2004 which recognises the existence of local administration as the smallest organisational unit and expects its proper implementation as well as similar efforts concerning the regional level;

- 6) **expects** that the package on the reform of the public administration - including in particular a Framework Law on Public Sector Reform, a Law on Special Provincial Administration, as well as a Law on Municipalities and Metropolitan Municipalities - be rapidly adopted after proper consultation of local and regional authorities' organisations and civil society and verification of its constitutional compliance; **stresses** the need to provide the relevant local authorities with the necessary financial and human resources to fully implement the reforms, to pay special attention to the economic and social development of Turkey's less-favoured regions and to provide for a legal framework on regional development policy;
- 7) **underlines** that successful implementation of these reforms would underpin Turkey's future EU accession efforts and therefore **strongly supports** the view of the European Commission that an impact analysis, an implementation plan and a budgetary and fiscal framework are needed;
- 8) **welcomes** the three-pillar strategy proposed by the European Commission and commits itself to become an active actor in third pillar dedicated to the strengthening of political, cultural, social and religious dialogue bringing people closer together; therefore **recommends** further deepening the dialogue between the CoR and the Turkish local authorities, building on the CoR's past experience with previous candidate countries, which will guarantee respect for local democracy and the implementation of regional decentralisation; on the basis of the European Council decision on Turkey, the CoR expects the Turkish government, the Council of Ministers and the Association Council to propose the establishment of a Joint Consultative Committee between Turkish local and regional authorities and the CoR;
- 9) **strongly encourages** Turkey to take the necessary steps in order to dissipate the pending concerns underlined in the European Commission's recommendation, and in particular those referring to: the respect of human rights and the exercise of fundamental freedoms; the zero tolerance of torture and ill-treatment; the full enjoyment of rights and freedoms by all minorities; respect for all religions (especially the question of the equal legal status for all churches); zero tolerance of discrimination and violence against women; respect of ILO standards concerning child labour;
- 10) **calls** on the Turkish government to provide determined support to a renewed effort, under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General, for reaching a solution on the Cyprus problem, consistent with the United Nations resolutions, the *acquis communautaire* and European values and principles;
- 11) **acknowledges** the particular challenges as identified in the European Commission's Communication arising from Turkey's membership perspective with regard to the future application of the Common Agriculture Policy, of the cohesion policy and of the free movement of workers;
- 12) **stresses** the general objective of the European Union to advance further towards a political Union of common values and **underlines** in particular the urgent need to create the necessary financial and institutional, economic preconditions to successfully prepare the Union for further enlargement;
- 13) **draws attention** to the European Commission's conclusion whereby it states that it 'will recommend the suspension of the negotiations in the case of a serious and persistent breach of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on which the Union is founded' and **underlines** the Commission's view that Turkey's accession negotiations is an 'open-ended process whose outcome cannot be guaranteed beforehand';
- 14) **instructs** its President to forward this resolution, in view of the European Council meeting in Brussels on 17 December, to the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Turkish Parliament and Government.

Brussels, 18 November 2004

The President
of the Committee of the Regions
Peter STRAUB
