



Introduction by
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The Visit of His Excellency Abdullah Gül is an important and welcome event. The relationship between Turkey and the United Kingdom is based on strong bonds of allegiance, friendship and mutual trust and President Gül's visit underlines the importance of this relationship. We at FIRST are delighted to publish this official report.

We congratulate the President on receiving the prestigious Chatham House Prize.

One of David Cameron's first international visits, on becoming Prime Minister, was to Turkey which reflects his strongly held belief that Turkey is a vital partner of the UK in the economic, political, diplomatic and security spheres. Over four hundred years ago England's first diplomatic representative arrived in Istanbul bearing gifts from Queen Elizabeth and seeking trade opportunities. Four centuries later the Prime Minister visited Turkey for similar reasons.

During this recent visit a strategic partnership with Turkey was launched committing both nations to strengthening bilateral relations and increasing trade and investment. The business opportunities in Turkey are significant with 11 per cent growth in 2010. Turkish entrepreneurs in Europe manage some €40 billion of business with 500,000 employees. As I saw for myself last month, Turkey receives an ever increasing flow of tourists from Britain and the scope here is tremendous.

Turkey is also an influential player in the Western Balkans and the Middle East and is therefore an important NATO ally and a key partner in foreign affairs and security matters. Turkey is also playing an important role in Afghanistan – working alongside European allies.

Both the UK and Turkey have committed to pursuing stronger defence links, tackling all forms of terrorism and organised crime – particularly drug trafficking and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. There is also a commitment to resolve regional conflicts and promote stability, particularly in the Middle East, Afghanistan, the Western Balkans, Central Asia, the South

Caucasus and the sub-continent. Turkey and the UK share a vision of peace based on respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Central to the strategic partnership between the UK and Turkey is the government's conviction that Turkey deserves an important role in European politics and is supporting Turkey's application for EU membership. This support recognises Turkey's geopolitical significance, its vast population and growing economy. Turkey will continue to make progress on meeting EU standards in the process towards membership and the EU will benefit from further strengthening economic, security and cultural ties with Turkey. As William Hague, the Foreign Secretary, said recently "Turkey is a vital NATO ally, a strategic partner for the UK, and Europe's largest emerging economy and we value Turkey's unique character as a place where East and West meet together."

In receiving the Chatham House Prize, President Gül is recognised for being a significant figure for reconciliation and moderation within Turkey and internationally. He has worked to deepen Turkey's traditional ties with the Middle East, to mediate between the fractious groups in Iraq and to bring together the Afghan and Pakistani leaders in a spirit of cooperation. He has also made significant efforts to reunify the divided island of Cyprus and has played a leading role, along with his Armenian counterpart, in initiating a process of reconciliation with Armenia. President Gül is also recognised for being an unwavering proponent of anchoring Turkey in the EU. Under his leadership, Turkey is consolidating civilian democratic rule and overseeing a process of extensive political and legal reform.

The visit of President Gül, will provide opportunities for private conversations as well as the opportunities to analyse Turkey's important global role and to weigh carefully the opportunities for further co-operation. We at FIRST are delighted to have been asked to produce this official publication and hope that it contributes, in a small way, to the success of the visit and the further development of the bilateral relationship.

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