



**Foreword by  
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**T**he State Visit of His Excellency Abdullah Gül is an especially welcome and important event. Turkey and the United Kingdom enjoy close diplomatic, commercial and economic relations, based on strong bonds of friendship and mutual trust. President Gül's State Visit, at the invitation of Her Majesty The Queen, underlines the vitality of this relationship and emphasises Turkey's importance on the world stage. We at FIRST are delighted to publish this official report to mark President Gül's State Visit and extend our special thanks to HE Dr Ünal Çeviköz for all his help and assistance.

The frequency of high level visits between Turkey and the UK already demonstrates the commitment of both Governments to deepen relations in the political, economic and cultural spheres. Her Majesty The Queen visited Turkey in 2008 and President Gül visited the United Kingdom last year to receive the Chatham House Prize. One of David Cameron's first international Visits, on becoming Prime Minister, was to visit Turkey, which reflects his strongly held belief that Turkey is a vital partner to the UK. During this 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 bilateral annual trade volumes reaching US\$ 11.8 billion in 2010 and increasing to US\$ 6.6 billion in the first half of 2011. Turkey is now the seventh largest European economy. The potential is vast – the OECD predicts that Turkey will overtake India as the second fastest growing economy by 2017 and will become the second largest economy in Europe by 2050.

Turkey also occupies a key position in ensuring the energy security of the whole of the European Union. Turkey will be the transit route for the proposed Southern Energy Corridor, bringing Caspian gas and

possibly Iraqi gas to the EU. Turkey and Azerbaijan, signed an MOU to agree to the supply and transit of Azeri gas across Turkey to Europe. Energy is a key component of the strategic partnership and we value the joint work with Turkey on energy which is conducted through the annual UK-Turkey Energy Dialogue.

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 fast growing economy. Turkey's accession will be good for Turkey, good for Europe and good for the region. 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'.

Turkey's skilful diplomacy in recent months has made that position even more important, both in the Western Balkans and the Middle East. Turkey has, for example, been deeply involved in the successful international effort to address the Libyan crisis. At a time of momentous change in the region surrounding Turkey one cannot over-emphasise the central role that Turkey can provide as an example of an Islamic country working within a democratic framework.

The State Visit of President Gül will provide opportunities for private conversations as well as opportunities to analyse Turkey's important global role and to weigh carefully the areas 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 State Visit and the further development of the bilateral relationship. **E**