



Foreword by
Rt Hon William Hague MP,
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Relations between Turkey and the UK have taken on heightened significance in the past eighteen months. Turkey was one of the first countries that the Prime Minister and I visited after this government came to power, in July 2010. At that time, Prime Ministers Erdoğan and Cameron signed a new and ambitious Strategic Partnership reflecting our many common interests. The visit will help us take forward the agenda that Strategic Partnership set, across our bilateral relations; trade and investment; regional cooperation, stability and security; and intercultural dialogue, education and culture.

I am delighted that a wide range of UK companies are engaged in many aspects of the visit. Turkey has a great story to tell; good demographics, a strong entrepreneurial spirit, and an increasing openness to international partnership and investment. And we want to be part of that story. The State Visit will provide a prestigious platform for forging commercial partnerships between UK and Turkish firms, both for projects in Turkey, and in third countries. Turkey is a major trading partner of the UK. UK-Turkey trade is already worth over US\$ 9 billion a year. The Turkish economy grew by 8.9 per cent in 2010 and Turkey is tipped to be one of the world's top ten economies by 2050. Turkey is a key energy partner for

the EU and as a hub will help provide balance in the EU energy market.

Given Turkey's growing economic and strategic role, this government is also steadfast in its support for Turkey's EU accession. We believe that Turkish accession would be to the wider benefit of the UK and EU, contributing to our prosperity, security, and stability. The UK works closely with other EU Member States, and with the European Commission, to encourage and support progress in Turkey's accession process. As we know from our own experience, the path is not always smooth, but Turkey belongs in the EU.

We will also use the visit to strengthen our defence and security. We aim to advance our shared agenda of supporting peace and stability in countries affected by the Arab Spring. We value Turkey's support to the NATO mission in Libya and the important role that the Turkish Government is playing in the international communities' efforts to urge the Syrian Government to end its violence and to carry out meaningful reforms.

This State Visit signals the highest possible confirmation of the strength of our bilateral relationship. It reciprocates the hospitality shown by Turkey during the Queen's State Visit in 2008. It marks a further deepening co-operation between the UK and Turkey. I look forward to the benefits that our strengthening relationship will bring. **E**