





Message from
His Excellency
Abdullah Gül,
President of the
Republic of Turkey

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to pay a State Visit to the United Kingdom as the official guest of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. My visit, which comes nearly 150 years after the first ever State Visit by Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz to Britain and indeed to a foreign country, marks a time when our countries enjoy a golden age in bilateral relations. It has only been a year since I last visited London to receive the prestigious Chatham House Prize which signifies the credit given by the British people to Turkey's achievements in recent years and its role in cherishing peace, security, stability and welfare both in its region and beyond.

This State Visit is a testament to our determination to add to the already strong relations and historical friendship between our two nations and will give us the opportunity to renew our commitment to the Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

Turkey and the UK share a long history based on bonds of friendship, mutual trust and alliance. Strong links between our nations date back to the early sixteenth century when William Harborne was appointed to the "Sublime Port" as the first British diplomatic representative in 1583. As for the Ottoman Empire, it is not a mere coincidence that Britain was chosen to host the first ever resident Ottoman Ambassador abroad in 1793.

These deep-rooted historic relations have recently been transformed into a new strategic partnership based on a common vision and shared ideals. Her Majesty the Queen's official visit to Turkey in 2008 reinvigorated the spirit of partnership between our two countries and inspired both governments to increase efforts in exploring ways to boost cooperation in a wide range of areas.

We now have a renewed perspective and increased means and capabilities to carry our relations forward. Despite the global financial crisis, annual trade volume between our countries reached almost US \$12 billion 2010. As for 2011, in the first half of the year trade volume reached US \$6.6 billion. The United Kingdom is Turkey's second largest partner for exports and the tenth largest partner for imports.

The UK is the second largest investor in Turkey. More than 2,300 British firms including major companies have invested more than US \$4 billion in Turkey. This clearly resonates well with the trend of sustained growth of the Turkish economy. Turkey also has a strong and active presence in Britain. Almost half a billion pounds have been invested by Turkish companies in the UK in recent years.

Growing trade and mutual investments create thousands of jobs in both countries. Every year nearly three million British tourists visit Turkey and increasing numbers of Turkish students study in prominent

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His Excellency Abdullah Gül;
Rupert Goodman, Chairman and Founder
of FIRST; and Lord Hurd of Westwell CH CBE,
Chairman of FIRST Advisory Council

British universities. Thousands of Britons have set their homes in Turkey while the presence of Turkish community of some 400,000 people in the UK forms a strong human bond and cultural bridge between the two countries.

Moreover, in an increasingly unstable and unpredictable global environment, the friendship and alliance between Turkey and the UK becomes even more important. That is why we need to expand the already existing synergy between our countries to a global scale.

In this regard, forging a strategic

partnership is the true embodiment of our common ambition to deepen our cooperation in areas of shared interest such as foreign policy, security as well as trade and investment.

For us, the UK is a partner with whom we share the same values and have parallel views on various issues the international community is faced with. For instance, both our countries have a strong interest in continued stability in the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, the South Caucasus region and Afghanistan, as well as finding a comprehensive solution in Cyprus. We share a strong commitment to jointly deal with global challenges such as international terrorism, nuclear proliferation and illegal migration. Helping improve global governance structures and overcoming the global economic recession are also among our common objectives.

We appreciate, in particular, the support given to us by the UK in our quest for full membership to the European Union. The fact that this support is given on a bipartisan basis demonstrates the sound vision the UK has for the future of the EU as opposed to the narrow political considerations of some in the EU blocking our negotiation process.

Turkey is emerging as a significant player on a global scale with its well established democracy, and strong economic performance. As a result, its influence has been increasing which is enhancing its soft power in its



region and beyond.

The role that Turkey has been playing to help the peoples of countries in the Middle East and North Africa in their quest to transform their countries into fully functioning democracies is an example of our constructive power.

Overall, Turkey's historical, geographical and unique social ties with the countries in its region, combined with our value-based approach, provide us with the type of leverage which makes Turkey an indispensable partner to the Euro-Atlantic community.

Turkey also contributes to the resolution of security issues through its membership to NATO and its own initiatives to prevent and resolve conflicts over a wide geographical area. To this end, we have taken mediation initiatives in areas ranging from Lebanon to Bosnia, Iraq to Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan to Iran.

We have also led the way forming initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilizations, the Friends of Mediation and the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, all with a view to addressing and alleviating the root causes of conflicts and extremism.

Turkey has effectively participated in the discussions within the G-20 as part of the efforts to find a way to stabilize the world economy as well. At the recent G-20 Summit, Turkey was designated to chair the G-20 in 2015.

We are pleased to share the same

enthusiasm with the UK on all these issues. We enjoy shared goals in working towards a new international set-up which is conducive to fair and effective global governance, the promotion of free trade and direct investment and helping to establish global peace and security in a way that will open new avenues to support human development.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to extend my appreciation to FIRST Magazine for dedicating a special issue to this State Visit which I believe will provide a fresh impetus to our bilateral relations. **F**

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Rupert Goodman, Chairman and Founder of FIRST; His Excellency Abdullah Gül and Lord Hurd of Westwell CH CBE, Chairman of FIRST Advisory Council

