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Brussels Forum

TURKEY, "ZERO PROBLEMS," AND THE EU

Mr. Craig Kennedy: We are really pleased for, I think, the sixth year in a row to have a first rate session on Turkey. We've asked Katinka Barysch (technical) look forward to a very, very lively and interesting discussion. So come on out panel and we'll get this underway. Katinka, welcome.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Thank you very much. This is, in many ways, an extraordinary panel. Not only because of the individuals who are sitting there, but also because most of them know each other extremely well. So what this is is not so much a panel, but it's one episode in an ongoing conversation. We also started that conversation yesterday at a very interesting lunch session. And I know that there's a lot of people in this audience who are a part of this conversation.

That gives me great hope that we can get stuck right in. I'm Katinka Barysch. I have a particular

pleasure moderating this session. One of the things that works exceedingly well at this conference is the air conditioning so if I lose my voice halfway through, it's because I was sitting in the first row yesterday and got a bit chilled.

A couple of years ago, a lot of people in Europe would have seen Turkey, perhaps, primarily as a country wanting to join the European Union. It is now very clear that Turkey is a strong and independent forum policy (inaudible) in its own right.

The upheaval in the Northern Africa and the Middle East has made it clear, one more time and very clearly, how important Turkey is for all our foreign policy aims. And it is also exposed the rifts that we in Europe or some of the countries in Europe have with Turkey.

Now, before I get stuck into the concrete cooperation that we have or should have in Libya, perhaps in Syria, perhaps in a couple of months in the

place such as Azerbaijan, I'd like you to help me set the scene a little bit.

Egemen Bagis, you are Turkey's Europe Minister and Chief Negotiator. As such, you've been running a big part of Turkish foreign policy for over two years now. At the moment, the accession process is not exactly zero problems. The reforms in Turkey have slowed and there's some backsliding in some areas. But also more than half of the policy area said you have to negotiate a block by the EU and some of its member states. Now, some people say that this blockage is the reason that Turkey is turning its attention from the West to the East. Is that so?

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: That has a part. But Turkey is not turning from West to East. Turkey, for centuries, has been viewed as a bridge, a bridge between East and West, between Europe and Asia, Christianity and Islam energy resources and consumers. What's happening in Turkey is, right now, all four legs of the bridge are being strengthened, the Eastern, the

Western, the Northern and the Southern leg. Turkey is the only country that started the EU negotiations the same year that it assumed the secretary generalship of the organization of Islamic Conference.

As the most Eastern part of the West and most Western part of the East, Turkey has responsibilities, historical responsibilities, geographical responsibilities and Turkey is trying to fulfill that for peace. The European Union, after all, is a peace project. We don't see EU as an economic project or a merely political project, but this it is the grandest peace project of the history of mankind. If it could help the Brits, the French, the Germans, the Dutch, the Belgium, all of the European nations, not to fight again, then Turkey can help turns this peace project of the continent to become a global peace project.

And I think that's where Turkey's most important contribution to European Union would be. If that was not the case, we would not have waited for 45 years just to get a date to accession negotiations from 1959

to 2004. And since 2004, we have opened only 13 chapters. There are 20 chapters remaining, right, Michael? And 17 of them are politically blocked. No country had to go through such a situation where they were forced to deal with the difficult issues. But all the other chapters were blocked.

I personally see the EU as Turkey's dietician. We all know in this room that in order to lead a healthy life, we have to watch what we eat and we need to exercise regularly. But it takes a good dietician to tell us what to do, what to eat in the morning, how much exercise to conduct. EU has helped 27 countries become more fit, more dynamic, better democracy with more attention to human rights and free market economy and so forth. And Turkey is resolute. It is determined to implement that dietician's prescription. The dietician himself could be overweight, could have a few clogged arteries, could be moody these days, but that doesn't make the prescription bad. The prescription is

still the best around and we're determined to implement it.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Robert Wexler, you sat in the U.S. Congress for well over a decade and shared the House Sub-Committee on Europe. So you're very actively involved in this part of the world. You're also a known friend of Turkey. You now are the President of the Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace. Now, at one point in time, Turkey was very active in trying to mediate the various conflicts in this region, not only between Israel and Syria, but perhaps also between Iran and the West and within certain countries.

Today, we're looking at a very different situation where Turkey's relationship with Israel is in tatters. It's policy is -- vis-à-vis, Iran, doesn't really chime with we are doing. You yourself have criticized Turkey for its no vote in the U.N. Security Council. It's a fissile question, but have we lost Turkey?

Mr. Robert Wexler: No. And Egemen couldn't have been more clear in describing what Turkey's vision for

herself is. And if you listen to him and you listen to Prime Minister Erdogan or to President Gul, clearly they articulate a vision that is very much anchored in the West. Now, in certain ways, I think all of us--and I say this only with respect, we could probably do the debate a lot of good if we actually stop asking the same question. Which, in the United States at least, it's either, is Turkey moving to the East or who lost Turkey? That's not the question.

The question, it seems to me, given the gravity of the challenges facing the United States and Turkey, Europe and Turkey, how, from an American perspective, do we take advantage of this extraordinary relationship and use it, employ it in a way so that we match America's and Turkey's common interests to the new found challenges? And I also would beg to differ a little bit on the predicate in terms of Turkey's a problem on Iran.

Yes, most Americans, myself included, were disappointed with respect to Turkey's vote regarding

the sanction program in Iran. But let's also be honest. For America, we didn't lose any economic vitality by employing sanctions with respect to Iran. Now, I disagree with Turkey's vote, but their equation was entirely different than ours. Now, I think, the great challenge, quite frankly, for Turkey will be-- particularly when we look at things or events in Bahrain, for instance. Turkey's not going to be comfortable, I don't think, with this new role. But the reality is, one of the roles that Turkey is likely to play in the emerging Middle East is a great counter to Iran.

Now, the way America defines that counter to Iran is probably very different than the way Turkey will do it. But, to me, the challenges--the wise men and women in the room will say, okay, what assets does America bring to this equation? What assets does Europe bring to this equation? And Turkey happens to bring some very special assets to this equation. How do we match them together so as to thwart Iran's nuclear program and to

stop their meddling into a whole lot of others places in the Middle East that will be adverse to American interests, as well they will be adverse to Turkey's interests?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Thank you for that honesty and the constructive outlook. I'd like to pass that question onto Ruprecht Polenz. You chair the foreign affairs committee of the German Bundestag. You're also a leading member of Angela Merkel's Christian Democrat Party where your views on Turkey, let's say, are not exactly mainstream. You've recently published a book with a title, "Turkey Belongs Inside the EU Because It's Better For Both Sides." Does this assessment extend to foreign policy and in what way?

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: In the coalition which the Christian Democrats have with the Liberals, we have exactly the same wording, which were the basis for the negotiations between Turkey and the European Union. The German government is in favor of negotiating with Turkey, with a goal of Turkish/EU membership. We are

not sure if the negotiations are successful so they are open with regard to the outcome. But if they fail, we want to see Turkey as close as possible to the European Union.

And with regard to foreign policy, for instance, I would say the zero problem policy is in accordance with the requests of the European Union because in all the cases of new member states, we didn't want to import conflicts with new members into the European Union. So generally speaking, there should not be any suspicion if Turkey is trying to enhance relationships within its neighborhood. And they were successful to some extent even with Greece. They started with Armenia and then Azerbaijan went in so it came to a standstill.

But to make one point where I'm really concerned, I'm concerned why this zero problem policy, Egemen, does not include Cyprus. I don't see any efforts from the Turkish side, at the moment, to come to a zero problems policy with Cyprus. And Cyprus is the stumbling stone in the further negotiations because many of the blocked chapters are exactly blocked due to

the unsolved problem with the anchor of protocol. Turkey has signed it, but not ratified it. So I really do hope that your government prioritizes its national interest in a way you are arguing here. And at the moment, I'm a little bit afraid that they don't prioritize it exactly this way because the Cyprus issue is, in some extent, ranking higher than the interest joining the European Union. I cannot understand this. Maybe you can elaborate a little bit on it.

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: I would love to.

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: Okay.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Would you just like to solve the Cyprus problem before we move onto Michael Leigh?

The Hon. Egemen Bağış: Sure. Actually, we started solving the Cyprus problem back in 2003 in January. We asked Secretary General Kofi Annan to start a new round of talks. I remember--and that was when my Prime Minister, who was the chairman of the ruling party at that time, Secretary General Annan's first response was, "Mr. Chairman, I've tried that three times and I have failed three times. I sure don't want to fail for the fourth time."

That's when Turkey made the very strategic move and Turkey's leader said, "I promise you, Turkey and Turkish Cypriots would always be a step ahead." And that led to opening Turkey's doors to Greek Cypriots, who were not allowed into Turkey for a period of 40 years before. We asked the Turkish Cypriots to do the same. By now, almost all Greek Cypriots have been to the north and all Turkish Cypriots have been to the south, which shows that these guys can get along.

And then there was this (inaudible) plan where Turkey offered to give the Secretary General to fill in the blanks on issues that he could not agree. The plan was voted--predominantly Turkish Cypriots voted in favor. The Greek Cypriots voted by a three-quarter ratio against the plan.

And then, we asked consecutive Turkish Cypriot presidents to continue dialog. (Inaudible) have always been trying to resolve. But what I'm trying to explain is, we tried very hard to have a zero-problem policy on Cyprus.

But there's an issue. Michael knows very well there's an EU counsel decision dated two days after

that referenda on April 26, 2004, where member countries, including Rupert's country, voted unanimously to put an end to isolation of Northern Cyprus, which means trading with Northern Cyprus, just like the whole world trades with Taiwan without having diplomatic recognition.

By now, out of 27 member countries, only one has implemented that decision. Citizens of only one member state can travel freely to Northern Cyprus. One EU member state has direct trade with Northern Cyprus, import and export. But that single state is preventing the others from having the same privilege.

The Greek Cypriots are the only state in the European Union that has direct trade and direct travel with Northern Cyprus, but they're not allowing the others to have the same privilege. Last time I checked, that's what's called hypocrisy.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: I totally agree with you that the--

The Hon. Egemen Bağış: The day Lufthansa decides to land in Larnaca airport, I declare in Brussels Forum, Turkey is ready to open her ports to all Greek Cypriot

vessels.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: I agree that EU should stick to its promises and I think we all agree that, you know, if you had a choice in solving the Cyprus issue, we wouldn't start from here.

But given that this is the situation we're in, why not implement the Ankara Protocol and put the ball back firmly into the EU's court?

The Hon. Egemen Bağış: There's a saying in Robert's country, it takes two to tango. Turkey has been trying to invite our partners to tango.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: You dance along quite readily in many other areas.

The Hon. Egemen Bağış: We sure do. But Cyprus is a type of dance where it requires all the guarantor states, all the communities on the island. I mean, it's a fact, Katinka, when the sun shines on that beautiful island every, single morning, it shines on two different states with two different presidents, two different parliaments, two different school systems, two different health systems, and so forth.

In a period when we're trying to promote democracy,

free-market economy all around that region, we are ignoring a very well-functioning democracy. Two very well-functioning democracies. And I think we have to create carrots and sticks for both sides.

The problem--the reason for Annan's plan to fail was because the Turkish Cypriots had nothing else to lose anymore so they voted in favor. And the Greek Cypriots had nothing else to win anymore because they had already insured full membership to EU so they voted against. We have to create new reward and punishment mechanisms for both sides.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Point taken. We could, of course, talk about Cyprus for the rest of the week, but let's move on. Michael Leigh, you're Director General for Enlargement at the European Commission so you deal with Turkey/EU relations on a day-to-day basis. You've also been an integral part of the first attempts to get a really practical foreign policy corporation going between the EU and Turkey, for example, in Bosnia. From this sort of very practical point of view, how do you assess the ability of the EU and Turkey to work together in foreign policy?

Mr. Michael Leigh: Before answering that, Katinka, I just can't resist drawing Egemen's attention to the fact that there's a terrific tango scene in Brussels. And if he has nothing to do this afternoon, I happen to know that at 4:00, there's a great tango session so we could have--

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Are you going to go together?

Mr. Michael Leigh: Go along together and--

The Hon. Egemen Bağış: Are you so sure you want to dance with me? Well--

Mr. Michael Leigh: I would love to. Way back in Argentina at the start of the 20th century, that's the way it was. And I know there's a great tango scene in Istanbul, as well. But I think that for the EU, as for Turkey, the accession process and Turkey's eventual accession is in the strategic interest of both of us. And I'm very reassured to hear such strong, ringing reaffirmations of this from Egemen.

But I think, in practice, we've often asked ourselves in recent times whether, indeed, this is a true strategic priority for the Turkish government or whether it's not a tactical issue that can be put on

the front burner, the back burner, according to the political configuration of the moment. I think if it were really a key priority, we would have solved the Ankara Protocol issue a long time ago without getting back into all those old debates and we would not see what you referred to rather mildly as backsliding on the reform agenda.

I think there are many in Europe today who really do wonder whether Turkey remains committed to the kind of reforms, particularly in the political area, that are really necessary to move towards the EU, real concerns about freedom of expression. I think we've all followed these issues in recent time.

So my first real question is, does this remain a strategic priority for Turkey, in reality? And secondly, as far as foreign policy is concerned, is the new foreign policy of the Turkish government really seen as a compliment to the EU accession process, as it's usually presented by official representatives? Or the subliminal message, not so subliminal even in Egemen's introduction, that somehow we'd been pushed into these foreign policy initiatives, putting it

extremely bluntly and exaggerating, if you don't want us, we have other options.

Now, I don't feel the second approach is a constructive one. It may not be the predominant approach. I think the EU and Turkey acting together can achieve a great deal.

You mentioned concrete policy cooperation in specific areas. Turkey usually gives the impression that the EU has not responded to its desire to have high-level dialog on foreign policy. We could respond more. We could set up a structured dialog. We should do so. But I must tell you that on the one or two occasions when we have put in place such a dialog--and I was involved myself in one on the western (inaudible) particularly on Bosnia. We came to Ankara, Robert Cooper and myself. We tried to engage. We did not find that there was a very responsive position and we basically felt that familiar positions were being repeated.

So we are open to a foreign policy dialog. With all the changes in the world, it's necessary more than ever before. And I think Turkey will find a partner ready to

do more than just tango.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Can you be a bit more concrete on what do you see as the obstacles to this foreign policy dialog?

Mr. Michael Leigh: Well, if we just take one example, which I think is an area where Turkey and the EU really need to work together, it's in my (inaudible) at the Commission, it's not at the top of the headlines today, but it's the ongoing problem of Bosnia. I don't think we're going to find a solution to the problems of governance in Bosnia without Turkey.

And I think this is an issue that we should strongly engage with. I think Turkey sees Bosnia as being extremely close. Sometimes it's even stated part of the Turkish nation. And I think we really need to work together in this field and a solution could be found, I think.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: I'm going to bring the audience in here, now. While you get your questions ready, can I ask you, Congressman Wexler, you are in favor of Turkey's membership in the European Union. Most Americans would also very much welcome a stronger

role of the European Union in foreign policy, in particular, in its neighborhood.

Given what you know about the obstacles and the disagreements we've had in this particular area between the EU and Turkey, what can you advise both sides? You know both the European Union and Turkey extremely well. How can we get together? How can we get that dialog going? And more importantly, dialog doesn't necessarily lead to convergence of views. But how can we insulate our broader relationship when we don't agree on issues such as Iran or Libya or the Caspian?

Mr. Robert Wexler: Again, I wouldn't agree with this broad sweep of we don't agree on issues such as Iran, Libya and else ways. But I would offer this. And the suggestion would apply just as much to the United States as it would to Europe and in a different way to Turkey.

We all need to be honest. You ask what's the obstacle or what are the primary obstacles to certain foreign policy achievements or cooperation? The degree of domestic politics, both in Europe and in the United States, that adversely affect the bilateral

relationship with Turkey, I would argue, is disproportionate in this relationship as compared to any other relationship.

And if we would first--and it's not the people in this state. But as nations, if we acknowledge that fact that it's not so much the facts or the substance at times relating to the specific issue, but it's the domestic policy influences that have a very different agenda that tend to poison relations at time, then I think that would be a first step to acknowledge it.

And then, individual leaders in their respective countries have to make the argument to their electorate that whatever might be the basis of that domestic political influence, that given the enormity of the issues facing Turkey, America, Turkey, the European Union, that are concentrated now in the Middle East and North Africa, we need to push that aside. And we need to do it quickly. And if we don't, we all are adversely affected by it.

So that would be my recommendation, to first acknowledge that these relationships are more adversely affected by domestic political politics than probably

any other important relationship that we have and then face it straight on.

And Turkey has a responsibility, too, with their emerging prominence, with their emerging influence, what Turkish leaders, respectfully, need to do is not just address and respond to public opinion in Turkey, which their leaders--I stand in awe, they do very well. But they also need to lead. And I would cite as one example of leading, which would be, respectfully, Turkey's relationship with Israel. That the continuation of the despair between Turkey and Israel--and while there, of course, have been events, in part, that have caused that, that leaders in Turkey need to explain to the Turkish public why restored relations between Turkey and Israel are good for Turkey.

And the Israeli leadership needs to do the same. And certainly, in America, we stand ready to do whatever it is we might possibly do to bring those two allies together because it's more important than ever.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: I can't resist but to give that question to Ruprecht Polenz because in Germany, Turkey is as much a domestic policy issue as it is a

foreign policy issue. Now, you'd like to take up the Congressman's recommendation of acknowledging that Turkey is--Turkish EU Policy is an issue for domestic policy. How do you do that? Can we have a microphone?

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: Of course it is because we have, in Germany, about 4 million people of Turkish origin living in our country. Many of them very well integrated with no problems, but partly, there are problems. And so the whole debate between the European Union and Turkey is overlaid by these integration problems.

I'm always talking to my fellow countrymen. Turkey wants to join the European Union and not Germany, but this does not help very much. Because there is--even if people don't know very much about the European Union, they know, in the end, it means free movement. And then, they are afraid of having more problems with evacuating Turks to Germany.

But there is also another problem we should also address here in this forum and this is that after 9/11, the image of Islam in the Western world, in general, but also in Germany, deteriorated very, very badly. And

there is a general feeling that we are better off or we would be better off if we could get Islam as far away from us as possible. And this we have to overcome.

We have to explain, and maybe the developments in the Arab world will help us to do so, that there is not a principle contradiction between Muslim population and democracy and Turkey is an example that this is possible. But, unfortunately, if I'm trying to discuss this with people in Germany, as the Saracen discussion showed, there are really big prejudices in the German public also with regard to Islam.

So we have to overcome at least two barriers, the barriers of problems from integration and the barrier of how to deal with Islam, with the challenges of Islam in our societies. And therefore, we have to link the discussions.

And a last remark. In all the successions processes, enlargement process of the European Union, there was a feeling amongst those who were in the club for a long time, okay, we make an open door policy and we help them with some programs. But it was never so much in a discussion that it is in our interest that

they will come and they will stay course. It is in our interest that Turkey stays course and therefore, we should be also in our political rhetoric more expressing that is in our interest that Turkey can join the European Union. Of course Turkey has to fulfill all the criteria, not only in the written law books but also in daily practice. But if this is the case, then we are very fine off because then (inaudible) you arrive. Then the European Union provides a peace model even for the conflicts in the 21st century as well as they had provided it for the conflicts of the 20th century.

So I really think that we have to change the rhetoric and here it comes also to domestic policy. Every leader in Europe knows that only in Britain there is a slight majority in favor of Turkish EU accession. In all the other European member countries, there is a bigger or less a majority against Turkish accession and the rhetoric is also dealing with this general mood in our population.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Thank you. I'm going to start collecting some comments and questions from the audience now. Please tell us who you are and please stick to the Twitter rule that was introduced by Anton yesterday. Keep it very short because I've already seen dozens of you who want to come. We'll start with Joshua.

Mr. Joshua Walker: Joshua Walker, German Marshall Fund. I want to ask the question directly to my friend Minister Bagis. The saying in Turkish, kind of peace at home, peace abroad that your founder began with, today we see tension at home, revolution abroad. What does this mean for Turkey and particularly the Turkish model? Because everybody is talking about it and one of the keys to being a model democracy is a constitution. Your party has said that that's what you're focused on but given what we're seeing today in the domestic side of things, what does it look like in the future and how can we continue to support that democratic movement in Turkey?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Can you hold that thought? I'd like to collect a couple of questions and then I'll give them all back to you.

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Okay.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Natalie.

Ms. Natalie Tocci: Natalie Tocci, (inaudible) for International Affairs in Rome. I wanted to go back to Kadinka's (sic) point about the strategic foreign policy dialogue. The relevance of which has obviously increased immensely in view of the Arab Spring.
Question to Egemen Bagis.

Is Turkey seriously interested in a strategic foreign policy dialogue with the EU or is it worried that such a dialogue smacks of privileged partnership?

And a question to Michael. The EU obviously has declared its intent and interest in such a dialogue, but is it willing and able to overcome its institutional rigidities to offer a dialogue which is actually attractive to Turkey?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Heather. I've seen you, yes.

Ms. Heather Grabbe: Thanks. Heather Grabbe from the Open Society Institute. Well, Turkey's relationship with one particular member's state over the past week has definitely not looked like tango but more like a boxing match, and that's France. The problems between Turkey and France over Libya have crystallized what have been tensions and rifts over a number of years, particularly on the accession process, but also in a number of strategic issues. How do you see going forward the relationship between Turkey and France? Is it possible to develop some kind of positive or a policy cooperation based on interests outside the accession process? Or is this a relationship that just simply has to wait until the 2012 presidential election?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Let's take one more. The gentleman here.

Mr. Oded Eran: Oded Eran, the Institute for National Security Studies in Israel. Despite coming from Israel, I think that Turkey should have been long

into the final process of becoming members and if that had been the case, maybe the only list would've been looking different today with some sort of, not necessarily membership, but something close to it for other neighbors in the region. However, this is the situation and listening to Mr. Polenz and listening to the others, I think it's quite clear to the audience this morning, if not to the rest of the world, that the negotiations go nowhere.

My question to the panel is when the two sides decide to go for a different model of relationship, and what is this possible model for relationship? Is it something you get, is just a mere custom union (inaudible) proved or otherwise? Or is it something which is membership minus which can satisfy both sides, although it's not full membership?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Thank you very much. I'll start with you, Minister Bagis. Two questions directly addressed to you.

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Well, let me start by the argument which you raised in the beginning and Michael repeated, that there's a slow down on the reforms, which I disagree. But not only I disagree, the commission's report outlines that Turkey had progress in all 33 chapters in the last one year, but we could only open two chapters because most of them are blocked

Right now, we have opened 13 chapters and could only close one. But if there were no political blocks, by now we would have opened 29 chapters and closed 13 chapters, because my parliament, with the support of my opposition, has already passed many reform laws.

A month ago, in the Turkish parliament, we passed the Turkish trade code and the code on obligations, a total 3,200 articles. If the opposition parties want to delay it, and believe me, they are very capable of delaying those when they want to, it would have taken us five years just to pass those two laws. But we did it in five days.

This is a clear-cut indication that when there is a will, there is a way. Turkey is willing to move ahead, but we have to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Right now, with everything going on in North Africa and Middle East, people are demonstrating on the streets. They're not demonstrating against Israel. They're not demonstrating against European Union. They're not demonstrating against United States. They're demonstrating for democracy, human rights, better schools, better hospitals and so forth. What they demand is they want to be like Turkey.

That's why, Joshua, this Turkish model, or I prefer using the word social administration has been on the agenda recently because the people are looking at Turkey and saying, "These guys are just like us. They have similar approach to life, they have similar traditions, cultures, but they've done it. They live in a democracy in prosperity with better living standards."

And the reason Turkey is different, the reason Turkey is the shining star of the region is because back in 1923, Turkey decided to become a democratic secular state of law and the roadmap for making our reforms has been the EU key. For the last 52 years, Turkey is trying to become a member of a union, despite all this moody attitude of the union, the dietician, as I call it, Turkey is passing these reforms laws.

So on one side, European Union wants to encourage the demands for a democracy and human rights in this neighborhood. On the other side, they're treating the social administration of those demands in a very negative manner.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Are you--

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: There's a big dispute. So the constitution issue, yes, my political party is determined to prepare a new constitution because the current one is still, despite all the amendments, has the spirit of the 1980 military coup. But we are willing to do with our opposition. We are hoping that

after our elections on June 12th, we can unite with our opposition and prepare a constitution that each and every single citizen of Turkey, no matter what their political views are, no matter what their ethnicity is, no matter what their religion or approach to religion or whichever religion is, would say "this is my constitution." And we are determined and we think we can do it. We have done more difficult tasks in the past. This is not going to be that big of an issue.

Now, about the strategic foreign policy. Very good question. I thank you for it. Until Bulgaria and Romania joined European Union, candidate countries were invited to council summits and the strategic issues were discussed at the level of presidents and heads of states. But after the last enlargement phase, neither Turkey nor Croatia nor other candidate countries have been invited to the council summits.

So on one side, there is a demand for strategic dialogue for foreign policy. On the other side, some leaders in Europe want to determine what the policy is

and ask the others to follow. There's something wrong. Right now, Turkey is the sixth largest economy of Europe. We have the largest military in Europe with the youngest workforce of Europe, with access to 70% of energy resources that Europe needs, and we are a very proud nation. We would like to be there when those decisions are made. At least, we want to contribute with our ideas.

Now, if Europe wants to have influence in this part of the world where there are revolutions, as Joshua--or demands for revolutions, then I think Turkey ought to be heard. Turkey doesn't observe Libya or Egypt or Tunisia and Bahrain or even the Balkans, as Michael mentioned, with the developments of the last few months. We have 500 plus years history with all these regions. Yesterday, I was in Macedonia. The founder of Turkish Republic went to military school in today's Macedonia and then he was serving as a member of Turkey's military in today's Libya. That was all one part of a country and people would move. And there are

still people are looking in both geographies, both in the Balkans and in the region.

And we want to see peace. Turkey has no inspirations, no aspirations, no demands on other people's soil, oil, resources, but we want to see peace. There's a Turkish saying that, you know, if your neighbor's house is on fire and you don't help them put it out, that fire will eventually burn your own home.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: But your neighbor's house is on fire and what is it that you're doing?

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: And we're trying our best to prevent a bloodshed. We're trying our best to prevent fires. And I think with our 500 plus years of experience, we should be heard.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Okay. Let's go to Syria, a very close neighbor, a country that you get on with very well now. What is Turkey's position on what is happening in Syria?

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Well, let's start with ten years ago. Ten years ago we had to deploy--

Ms. Katinka Barysch: No, no. Let's speed it up a bit. Why don't we--

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: No. No. I'll come to--I'll come to today. No, no. Okay. Ten years ago, 300,000 Turkish troops to our border with Syria because they were supporting PKK terrorism at the time. But today, our relations have changed. I'm just trying to explain that the only constant is change.

Robert, your country had Syria on the list of Axis of Evil. But two years ago, you decided to open an embassy in Damascus. Things change. Turkey believes people in the region deserve to live better with higher standards. My prime minister was on the phone--

Ms. Katinka Barysch: And democratic freedoms?

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: My prime minister was on the phone with President Bashar yesterday to congratulate him on his decision to take some reform commitments, the announcements he made. We believe that the people in the region have seen all kinds of conflicts and wars, hot wars, cold wars, guerilla wars, wars of

aggression. It's time for us to give diplomacy a chance to solve some of the problems.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Okay. Let me pass it on. Turkey wants to be invited to EU summits, Michael. There are some opposition from certain EU member states, but is the EU actually too rigid to have that foreign policy dialogue with Turkey?

Mr. Michael Leigh: There are certain rigidities for sure. But we're trying to work around them. The foreign minister was invited to the recent informal meeting of foreign ministers and I think this is a direction in which we want to go. But, of course, when it comes to looking at the issues, it's necessary that there should be a real dialogue, a real flow of information, and we're not really sure that, besides the insistence on the point it's a matter of principle, that we're really there when it comes to the substance of the issues.

I'd like to come back on Odette's question and perhaps Heather as well to some degree. I mean, Odette's question rather presupposed that the accession

process has broken down. I think this is premature, to put it mildly, and I think it's in the hands of both sides to see whether the proverbial train crash occurs this year or not. I think Turkey, immediately after the elections, which everyone expects to see the AKP victorious, will be in a strong position to address all the kind of reforms on the (inaudible) protocol without mixing this with a whole set of other issues. Immediately (inaudible) chapters open up, we can close any other chapters, which until now, we couldn't close, and the process gets a new lease of life.

Just as important, all through the accession process with all countries, has been the principle that the pace of progress towards the EU depends also on the pace of reforms. And I think it's perfectly clear that the pace of reforms have slowed down and drastically over the last few years. And there's a little bit of a disconnect between our somewhat abstract conversation and the kind of conversations I've had recently in Istanbul, for example, with civil society, people of

all stripes who are very concerned, to put it mildly, with the current climate in Turkey with regard to freedom of expression, the arrest of journalists, the extension of the (inaudible) question to people whose involvement is implausible, to put it mildly.

The signal's given also on relations with the neighbors. We know that the (inaudible) with Armenia ran into difficulty. But, really, the kind of signal given by the determination to demolish the monument to Armenian/Turkish friendship, this monument by Turkish leader (inaudible), how is it possible that that can be made compactable with other aspirations?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: So--

Mr. Michael Leigh: So it takes two to tango. The process can be preserved. It hasn't broken down yet, but there has to be a real will to do that on both sides.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: So talk is domestic--

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Haven't you (inaudible), Michael?

Mr. Michael Leigh: I have.

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Have you gone there and seen?

Mr. Michael Leigh: No.

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: I recommend you to.

Mr. Michael Leigh: I--

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Because it sticks out like an awkward structure, which doesn't fit, and local people voted for a mayor who campaigned that he would knock it down. People in the region are not against the idea of the sculpture. The idea is fine. There's no one who is against friendship with Armenia in that part of Turkey because they would benefit with better relations with Armenia because they're right on the border. And they would trade and that would bring prosperity. But the sculpture itself was not enjoyed by the local people in that region because it doesn't fit with the architectural mixture, the trends of their society.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Okay. Thank you. We leave that question.

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Yeah.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Michael Leigh suggests that it is actually the domestic developments in Turkey that make it somewhat hard for the EU to have a constructive dialogue, including on foreign policy, with Turkey. From that perspective, if you were going to adopt an interest-based approach, is there actually an inconsistency between the EU accession process, where we pay most attention to what Turkey does internally in our interest in cooperating with Turkey on foreign policy, in particular now in a situation where the accession is frozen, but the need for foreign policy cooperation is stronger than ever?

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: I give you a simple example. If we are talking about what NATO will do in the Arab region right now or what the EU will do, I think it is of crucial importance to have at least one Muslim country on board. And when NATO--or when we saw this Summit in Paris, it was voluntarily from the French side that Turkey was not invited. It was a huge

mistake in my view, but, of course, the French calculated it brilliantly. They knew if Turkey's not invited to the Summit in Paris, it will at least cost three days within NATO structures to overcome this thing. And exactly these three days, the French wanted NATO not to jump in. So I think these games is what I don't like. Especially, we have discussed in this forum very much what is going on in the Arab world.

In my view, the more we can integrate Turkey in our efforts, be it NATO, be it European Union, the better. And, unfortunately, I don't see these efforts. And I can understand the Turks, that they want to participate in elaborating a policy and not just be confronted afterwards and being asked to join. And the rigidities, as you put it, I think we have to overcome it. We did overcome it with Russia. We have with Russia now a strategic dialogue between Lady Ashton and Lavrov. Why not the same thing between European Union and Turkey? I don't see any reason--

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: (Inaudible) different. Turkey's a candidate country.

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: Yeah, maybe even more so we should try to incorporate Turkey into foreign security policy because Turkey is contributing. They are contributing in Afghanistan. They are contributing in the Balkans. And we are not taking this--maybe to some extent we are taking this for granted, but this would be a--it is a mistake. And if we are complaining--and I've also complaining about what Turkey did with the UN sanctions against Iran. But if we are complaining, the way out of this dilemma, seeing Turkey not siding with us, is not blaming Turkey afterwards, but it is taking Turkey in our consultations more closely from the beginning. In that way, we might be able to avoid that Turkey plays a similar role in these attempts. So I think it's up, also, to us to do so.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: From a U.S. perspective, obviously the Obama administration took a very different approach, Obama calling Erdogan a couple of

times about the crisis in the Middle East. What does the EU approach look like from a U.S. perspective?

Mr. Robert Wexler: A bit hypocritical--

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Robert Wexler: --and also judgmental to a degree that is undeserved. And you started this whole round with asking Egemen about Turkey's policy on Syria, and I agree with your question. It's a good question. But let's also be fair. We, in the United States, we could be pointed out on a number of hypocrisies or different applications of our foreign policy. And Europe, I would say, has an equivalent amount. So we all should be questioned.

But somehow in this debate, Turkey's inconsistencies at times, and I think, actually, I think Syria is very small in consistency. There are so much larger inconsistencies in Turkey's policy that should be brought to light. But if a Turk had made an argument that was made earlier-- and, again, not as to the individual, but the notion that Europeans are

somehow reluctant to engage with Turkey regarding the European Union because of September 11th, think about the logic that's employed.

Number one, with all due respect to Europe, we were the victims of September 11th, and--no, no. The point being, what did the American government do? President Bush, two days later, went to a mosque and took the leadership to show the American people that, in a vibrant democracy where there are differences, we respect them, even in the most tragic of times. And the notion that September 11th should be employed in this debate, with all due respect, whether it be Germany, France, Belgium, whatever the situation is, the failure of those societies to indoctrinate and incorporate their respective Muslim communities has nothing to do with September 11th. It predates it by decades. So the refocusing of that debate is not an appropriate way in which to engage. Point out the legitimate things that Turkey has or has not done, and in the process. That's fair.

But until there's political leadership that's willing to take that on, I imagine, head-on--and my European friends could say it's real easy for an American to say because we're not engaged in a negotiation with a country of 80 million people of the Muslim faith. And that would be fair to point out. But you asked what does it look like from an American perspective? That's what it looks like.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Let's collect some more comments and questions. The gentleman over there.

Mr. Tomohiko Taniguchi: Thank you. Tomohiko Taniguchi of Keio University from Tokyo, Japan. One of the traits of Turkish new foreign policy Mr. Leigh referred to may have been made evident, it seems to me, when Wen Jiabao, Chinese Premier, visited your country October last year. The agreement forged between Ankara and Beijing was wide-ranging from asking Chinese state enterprises to lay out all the high-speed rail links in your country to an agreement to settle the bilateral trade using no U.S. dollars, using your own currencies.

And you also invited a squadron of Chinese aircraft, fighter aircraft, for the first time as a NATO member nation to your sky and conducted a joint exercise between your air force and the Chinese air force. By the way, the squadron from China stopped over in Iran for refueling. And so one has to be led to wonder if you have started to use a China card here.

And, by the way, your perseverance and resilience have been extremely well-taken across the board in Japan's policy circle. That much I can testify as a former of the foreign ministry. Thanks.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Thank you. If you'd pass the microphone forward?

Mr. Schlomo Avineri: Thank you. Shlomo Avineri, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I want to go back to the title of this meeting, which is zero conflict or zero problems with its neighborhood. I mean, Turkey has had, in the last few years, a very interesting, sometimes controversial, but in a way very (inaudible) philosophy of zero conflict in the neighborhood. And

this has helped, in many cases, stabilize some situations, especially with Syria, for example.

But when you take a principle to its extreme, you get the opposite. The Turkish vote on the Security Council on UN sanctions created a conflict with the United States. The Turkish respond as to the Turkish (inaudible). Despite the criticisms, as an Israeli, I can have against the way we handled it, the Turkish response created a conflict with Israel. And now, you are in a situation where, as part of NATO, Turkey is going to be in a conflict situation vis-à-vis Libya because there is a war going on in Libya, even if it's called by any other name. And my question is, is there perhaps a time for the Turkish foreign ministry, foreign ministry personally, to rethink some of the consequences of this abstraction of zero conflict which sometime leads to new conflict?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Okay. If we--yeah, behind you. Those two people behind you want to comment. Just keep it brief, please.

Mr. Tsuneo Watanabe: Yeah, thank you. Tsuneo Watanabe, the Tokyo Foundation from Japan. So, first, I'd like to express the Turkish Minister there for your great generosity to support the Japanese earthquake, seriously, 'cause a Turkish friend told me that in Turkey, the civilian support was very generous, and that is the one thing. And my question is the Turkish role in the margin between the East and West, I think, as you mentioned, is creating a very good opportunity to the leadership. And its (inaudible) that Turkey's a free integrated in a Western society or European, I think, could lose some of the opportunity to (inaudible) to power to (inaudible) of a nation. So I'm curious. What is the balance, good balance to the main thing there, the soft power in the Europe (inaudible)?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Thank you. One more back there. Thank you.

Mr. Ognyan Michev: Ognyan Minchev, Bulgaria. Mr. Minister, several journalists have been arrested lately in Turkey, one of them (inaudible) for writing but not

publishing a book. Cases like those are bringing my friends and colleagues in Turkey to a suspicion, to (inaudible), that the wave of democratization which came with the AKP government is coming to an end. Is that true?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: While the microphone goes over here, Mr. Bagis, would you like to answer this question?

The Hon. Egemen Bagis: Well, sure. First of all, in response to what Robert said about September 11th and Islam, as president of Germany said this publicly is a reality in Europe. By the next 10 years, 10 percent of European population will be Muslim, and I think Turkey has a responsibility in helping the integration of not only Turks in Europe, which are more than 5 million now in EU member states, 3 million alone in Germany, but Muslims and other communities. Turkey's membership issues also very closely followed by the people who have different faiths within Europe and around the

globe. Even people in China are following Turkey's EU aspirations very closely.

There are doctorate thesis written in India and Africa, all around the world. I think this is very important, this signal that you want to give to the rest of the world.

As far as the relations with Israel is concerned, Turkey is the first Muslim nation to recognize the sovereignty of Israel. Turkey has convinced many other Muslim countries to do the same. Turkey has tried to mediate between Israel and Pakistan, Israel and Palestine, Israel and Syria.

We conducted four rounds of indirect talks between Israel and Syria regarding Golan Heights. The fifth round was when Prime Minister Erdogan hosted Prime Minister Olmert in (inaudible), called President Bashar in front of them, convinced the two leaders to get together. But, unfortunately, that two-year process was broken apart when Israel attacked Gaza four days after that meeting without informing Turkey at all.

What happened with the Flotilla incident is, in international waters, nine Turkish citizens were executed by Israeli military within 20 centimeter, 10 inch distance. These were execution shots. These are not, you know, mistakenly fired bullets.

And all Turkey demanded, expected, was a public apology because we are a democracy. We're not an emirate. The public opinion in Turkey was upset and Turkey's leaders had to echo the public opinion.

We--despite that, bilateral trade between Turkey and Israel has increased by 30 percent in the last one year. If Turkey had any animosity against Israel, trade would not have increased.

I, myself, went to Auschwitz to represent my government two months ago and it was the first time Turkey was represented in the last five years at the level of minister. We have nothing against Jewish people. We have nothing against people of Israel, but talking about if Turkey's foreign minister needs to rethink, I would ask the same question first to

Israel's foreign minister about rethinking. Mr. Lieberman should be questioned on some of his statements and his attitudes.

Is Turkey using a Chinese card? As I said in the beginning, Turkey is trying to enhance all four legs of this bridge of trade, energy, peace, harmony and China is a very important country, a member of the Security Council. Of course, we are interested in enhancing our relations with China as much as we're interested in enhancing our relations with Russia, with the United States, with EU member states, with countries all around the world. And I think that's why 151 nations voted to have Turkey represent their aspirations in the Security Council of the United Nations.

And in the Security Council, the reason we voted against these actions in Iran is because we think we know the Iranian mentality a little better than other countries in the Security Council because we share a very long and historical border with them.

Sanctions have not led to anything. There were sanctions against Libya and then the leader of Libya decided to pay \$3 billion to the victims of Pan Am and the sanctions all of a sudden disappeared.

The Iranian sanctions will only unite people within Iran against the West. We think the policy should be engagement. We should try to talk. Iranians are a very historical culture and that's what Turkey offered, her knowledge, her know-how, her experience.

But once the vote was taken, despite Turkey's rejection, that decision was implemented by Turkey. We did not vote--I mean, we voted against the sanctions, but we did comply with the UN Security Council decision because Turkey is a state of law.

Regarding these journalists that were detained, the same independent judicial branch started a case against my political party and tried to ban me from politics because I had said peoples' representative should represent the people.

Some prosecutors thought this was very provocative and I should be banned from politics. Three years ago, I went through an eight-month-long process of being prosecuted. It's the independent judicial branch. It has nothing to do with my government.

The government in Turkey today is led by someone who was imprisoned for reciting a poem which was in the textbooks. My Prime Minister spent four and a half months in prison for having recited a poem in a public rally.

The prosecutor, after very strong statements by our president, announced that the reason those two journalists were detained had nothing to do with their profession. He had strong evidence against them in terms of misconduct or misdoing, but they were classified.

So we all have to be a little bit patient for the prosecutor to finish writing his indictment and share with the public to see what those charges are, what

kind of criminal activity he is alleging those two journalists to be involved in.

And Michael mentioned to the same case that the prosecutor's working on, Ergenekon. It's your commission report saying the Ergenekon case is a great opportunity for enhancing Turkey's democracy because it brings transparency, things that were happening for the last 30 or 40 years in Turkey that we could not even discuss publicly. We were hesitating. Now, are a part of our daily discussions.

Now, you turn on any Turkish television station and people are discussing about the wrongdoings of the government, of some of the NGOs, of some of the government entities, of some the (inaudible) in the past which were not democratic. And there were attempts, according to this prosecutor's evidence, to topple democratically elected government of Turkey through undemocratic means.

That is a crime all around the world. I mean, Italy went through this. Other countries went through this

and they cleansed their institutions. Hopefully, as the commission writes in the progress reports, this can be an opportunity for Turkey to resolve some of its obstacles.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Minister, I have to wrap up and I'd love to give the other panelists the opportunity to come in.

During his words on Israel, you really looked like you wanted to come in there. Is that what you wanted to contribute?

Mr. Robert Wexler: Sure. When I was in Ankara, in my last visit, I believe, a prominent Turkish official asked me why weren't Americans more outraged over the Flotilla? After all, one of the fatalities was a Turkish-American. And I responded by saying that, to the degree Americans are focused on the Flotilla and understand the circumstances, Americans, by and large, don't view the Flotilla as one incident. They view the Flotilla as one of a series of occurrences.

And what brought us to the Flotilla, unfortunately, was a significant degree of inflamed behavior, disproportionately so, respectfully, I would argue, by certain Turkish officials. And when you play with matches, you will get burned. And it's unfortunate and, in this case, 10 people lost their lives. But to my dear friend, I don't think using the word execution is a fair representation of what occurred in that circumstance.

But, in fairness, and I think Egeman was about to say it, or maybe he did, the Turkish government's response to the Flotilla, again, regardless of whether one agrees entirely with Turkey or disagrees entirely with Turkey, the Turkish response has been relatively measured considering the loss of life. And what Turkey has asked for is an apology and compensation. And what very creative people need to do is figure out a word that in Turkish means I'm sorry and in Hebrew means I regret.

And I don't mean to make light of this situation, but after the Turkish elections, it would behoove Americans, Europeans, Turks and Israelis, most importantly, to figure out how to put that very tragic and unfortunate circumstance behind us.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Michael, the Turkish judiciary was unpredictable then. It is incomprehensible now. So what do we do?

Mr. Michael Leigh: Yes. The words that Egeman put into the mouth of the European conviction on the Ergenekon case is not entirely in line with my recollection. But as soon as I leave, I will go and check immediately on our report.

What I recall is that we expressed considerable concerns and we said that if this question is pursued in line with the rule of law and due process, it would give Turkey a chance to demonstrate the transparency and the accountability of its process. We did not say that it was being done in that way and we expressed concerns.

Broadly, notwithstanding the views of certain leaders of the European Union, who've expressed them very openly, the European Union has remained committed to the succession process and I'm not ready to draw a line under it yet. I don't think we should base all our reasoning on the assumption that this is going to break down.

Heather asked a question about France in the most immediate context, but in my little world, let's remember that, during the French presidency of the Council just two years ago, it was the aspiration to open four chapters. We actually opened two so France has been playing the game with Turkey, at least to the greatest extent as all other member states have, notwithstanding well-known views of certain prominent French leaders.

Therefore, I do feel that, although we need to show less rigidity on the dialog, Egeman has a good point about European Council meetings and all the rest. This process can continue and I agree it is in our mutual

interests and we need to do a much better job at explaining to public opinion in the European Union itself why we consider this to be in our interests. And there are a whole range of reasons, not only stability, security, even global competitiveness, which is one of the top issues with the Commission's 20/20 strategy.

It's clear that, as part of the single economic space, the EU and Turkey together will be far more competitive globally than separately. There are a whole range of arguments we could make far better in explaining to the public why this is in our interest.

But still, I think, to a considerable extent, the ball is in Turkey's court and following the elections, we would like to see answers to many of the questions that are there on the table. We haven't dwelt on them in any great length now, but the commitment to Syria's reforms to making Turkish society more and more the kind of society that is attractive, not only to the Turkish people themselves, but to people throughout the region in the Middle East.

And I agree that the conceptive model is not appropriate, but it's obviously clear that when people throughout the Middle East look to Turkey and find it attractive, this is at least partly because Turkey is a modern society, an increasingly open society, a society that aspires to be more integrated with the West.

And if we've lost sight of this dimension, I'm not sure how sustainable the current success with the Middle Eastern countries is so let's not write off this process. On the contrary, let's do whatever we can to push it forward.

Ms. Katinka Barysch: Herr Polenz, you travel quite a lot in the Middle East and in Northern Africa and I'd like to ask you that question about the Turkish (inaudible) and Turkey as an aspiration. I mean, from our perspective, I guess Turkey looks like an incomplete democracy. From the perspective of a Libyan, it probably looks like a pretty good place to be.

How do you assess? What is your view of what the people in the region think of Turkey and how the EU, in its cooperation with Turkey, could capitalize on that?

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: I do think that the people in the region, also some of the officials, are looking towards Turkey, especially after AKP took over government because AKP defines its own political approach as being a Muslim in a democracy and trying to enhance the situation of the people. And Turkey is successful in the economic sphere and the people are living more freely than most of the Arab countries and, therefore, it is attractive.

And, of course, the Arab people are looking, also, toward the European Union how we are behaving towards Turkey and we have to lose credibility if we don't treat Turkey fairly. This should also be in our mind.

And yes, there are shortcomings with regard to reform and the pace of reform, which we did not mention. For instance, it's an important question in Germany that the Christians have not this kind of

religious freedom as the European Commission would like to see it, as we would like to see.

But the only way to get it is to keep the EU process going and not to use these shortcomings as an argument to stop it.

The Hon. Egeman Bagis: But they are better today than they were two years ago.

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: Yes, I know.

The Hon. Egeman Bagis: They're not perfect, but they're getting there.

The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz: Yeah, yeah. You are, but there are still some important shortcomings and hopefully, we can overcome them as well.

But, in my view, the only way to overcome the shortcomings, to get Turkey on this reform track moving forward is to keep the process going and not to use this as an argument or as a pretext to say--we have always said Turkey will not fit into the European Union. Let's stop and let's look for another model. Especially to my Israeli friend, I would like to say

that it's even especially in the interest of Israel that the EU process is on track and is kept going.

And I would also say to your remarks, maybe Germany should also contribute before the Turkish elections, after Turkish elections, to repair the relationship between Israel and Turkey because Israel is--we have a very special relationship from Germany to Israel. I have a very good relationship with Turkey and we should really also invest in getting to a better relationship between Turkey and Israel again.

The Hon. Egeman Bagis: Is there such a German word that Bob was looking for?

Ms. Katinka Barysch: We'll think about that. Unfortunately, we're out of time.

I take away that this conversation will continue in the future. I apologize to those of you who couldn't come in. I can see that the foreign policy dialog is very much going on already, even though perhaps not at the level of an EU summit.

I also take away from this conversation that, although the fact that Turkey is a country negotiating for accession makes the foreign policy dialog more complex, we have to keep trying. Thank you very much, all of you.