

Strategy for development cooperation

Turkey

2005 – 2009



GOVERNMENT OFFICES
OF SWEDEN

Strategy for development cooperation with Turkey 2005-2009

1. SUMMARY

The Swedish Government will initiate a programme to promote increased contacts with the Turkish society. Development cooperation will be one of the main components of the programme. The previous country strategy comprised SEK 10 million of development assistance via the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and a further SEK 14 million via the Section for Turkish-Swedish Cooperation at the Consulate General in Istanbul (the Consulate-General). This new cooperation strategy for Turkey 2005-2009 amounts to a total of SEK 45 million of annual assistance, SEK 15 million of which will go to the Consulate-General.

Cooperation with Turkey will predominantly focus on the country's European Union membership negotiations, which begin in the autumn of 2005. The European Commission would like to see an active dialogue between the Member States and Turkey in order to support reform in the country and increase international exchange, not least on the civil society level. The area that has been most in focus during the EU's previous dialogue is human rights, where women's rights, ethnic minority issues and torture have received particular attention. The country's economy is in relatively good shape, even if problems, such as corruption, still remain. Income is unevenly distributed and the south-eastern parts of the country are particularly disadvantaged. The development assistance comprises only a marginal part of the economy. The EU is the largest donor in the country, employing a broad programme for the introduction of the EU regulatory framework and investments.

Swedish development cooperation through Sida has mostly supported efforts to promote human rights. The Consulate-General in Istanbul has mainly been involved in projects concerning the EU process and a broad exchange between Sweden and Turkey.

Within the framework of the overarching objective of Swedish development cooperation, the goal for future cooperation with Turkey shall be to strengthen the continued process of democratisation and respect for human rights and to promote closer links with European cooperation structures and common values. The positive experiences from previous efforts and active participation of the Swedish society form the basis of future cooperation. Activities will be focused in two areas; support for human rights and cooperation in support of Turkey's integration into Europe.

2 NEW PREREQUISITES

The EU's decision in December 2004 to start membership negotiations with Turkey brought about a new situation for the country. The decision opens the door to a long and extensive process in which Turkey is to adapt its administration and judicial system area by area to the EU *acquis communautaire* and fulfil the Copenhagen criteria to the full.

In its recommendation, the European Commission ascertained that there were several areas in need of radical reform. The situation in south-eastern Turkey must be normalised. The rights of the Kurds, women's rights, gender equality, freedom of religion, trade union rights and the struggle against torture were singled out as areas in need of particular attention. The Europe Commission further recommends an intensified dialogue between EU institutions and Member States and Turkey in a number of areas, and that civil society is to play an important role in this dialogue. The European Parliament has also emphasised the importance of supporting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with human rights issues in Turkey.

Economic development

Because of its sheer size, Turkey represents a completely different challenge to the EU than any of the other candidate countries. With approximately 70 million inhabitants, the population is second only to Germany in the EU. Economic development in Turkey is favourable, even if there are substantial regional disparities. Its GDP growth is currently one of the highest in the world, standing at 9.9 per cent in 2004. The greatest growth is within the export sector. Inflation in 2004 was below 10 per cent for the first time in thirty years. Foreign investments are still limited but there is considerable hope that membership negotiations will lead to an influx of fresh capital. An agreement is currently being concluded with the IMF on further loans that are essential to the country's economy. Economic development is deemed to be on the right track and Turkey claims it will fulfil the Maastricht criteria as early as 2007. The economic picture is not unequivocally positive, however. Unemployment continues to be high and there are wide regional disparities. Corruption is another problem within many sectors of Turkish society, despite the country having adopted several new laws to combat it in recent years. Corruption among politicians, in the judicial system and in the health sector are for example highlighted in a report by Transparency International.

Income in Turkey is unevenly distributed. The income levels in certain western parts of the country are equivalent to those in the EU whilst those to the far east are comparable to those of the least developed countries of the world. In the UNDP's Human Development Index 2004, Turkey came last of all the OECD countries and other EU candidate countries. It was lower on the list than countries such as Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and the Ukraine. This low ranking is mostly due to deficiencies in the country's healthcare and education systems. In the efforts to fulfil the UN Millennium Goals, the country's greatest challenges lie in the social domain, where healthcare and education in particular will require substantial investments.

HIV/AIDS is not yet a major problem in Turkey. Less than 0.1 per cent of those in the 15-49 age group suffer from the disease.

Human rights

Human rights constituted one of the stumbling-blocks in the membership negotiations with the EU. During the last two years, major reforms have been initiated and development is progressing in a positive direction, even if there is still plenty of work to be done. Turkey has been party to fundamental UN human rights conventions since 2003. These have not been implemented in full, however, and human rights violations are reported to be continuing in several areas.

Torture and excessive violence by law enforcement officials still occur in Turkey, but in the last two years, the country has begun to make good its promises of zero tolerance. Above all, there is now a judicial framework to combat torture in place. According to one EU report, however, torture still occurs, even though it is no longer systematic, and its perpetrators are far too seldom brought to justice.

Turkey is home to three recognised religious minorities; Greek Orthodox, Armenians (Orthodox and Catholic) and Jews. None of the other ethnic groups in the country, including Assyrians/Suriyanis, Romanies and Kurds, are officially recognised minorities. Kurds make up around 20 per cent of the population. They are the dominant ethnic group in south-eastern Turkey, but are spread all over the country and through all social strata. There are also Kurdish IDPs (internally displaced persons) living in shanty towns connected to the major Turkish cities. The Kurds have, for example, been pushing the issue of their right to the Kurdish language. Private language institutes have been allowed to run courses in the Kurdish language since 2002 and the first Kurdish language school was opened in Batman in south-east Turkey in 2004. Kurdish programmes are slowly but surely gaining ground on the radio and TV, but the scope for using the Kurdish language is still limited.

Gender equality, especially the rights of women and girls, is a neglected area in Turkey. There are also major regional disparities. The greatest failings are in healthcare and education. In the poorest regions, 65 per cent of the women are illiterate and only half the girls go to school. In contrast, basically all the children in western Turkey go to school. Less than five per cent of MPs are women and the proportion of women in the business sector is equally low. Penal legislation regarding violence against women was tightened in 2004, but large-scale measures will be required to change people's attitudes to women's rights and the role of women in society and in the home. Honour-related violence continues to be a major problem.

People with disabilities suffer from discrimination and social exclusion and their rights are restricted. Legislation, social security systems and accessibility are all in need of reform, support and capacity building. The EU has highlighted the problem, but will not introduce support until 2007 at the earliest.

3 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 2002-2004 COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Sweden has been pursuing limited development cooperation with Turkey since 1992. The level of assistance was about SEK 4 million from the beginning and cooperation focused on giving support to measures aimed at increasing respect for human rights. In connection with the Swedish Government taking the decision to adopt a cooperation strategy 2002-2004, extended to 30 June 2005, the level of assistance through Sida increased to SEK 10 million. The strategy had five areas:

- Support to promote human rights,
- Support for the establishment of EU-funded cooperation projects between Swedish and Turkish authorities,
- Education and training measures in the media sector,
- Support for local self-government and
- Cultural cooperation.

The strategy also included the Section for Turkish-Swedish Cooperation, set up in 2001 at the Consulate-General in Istanbul. The Consulate-General has had an annual budget of SEK 14 million, financed from the development assistance appropriation. During the period 2002-2004, Sweden's bilateral assistance to Turkey amounted to just over SEK 60 million, of which SEK 33.5 million was through Sida (including Sida's framework organisations, which were not included in the strategy) and SEK 26.5 million was through the Consulate-General.

3.1 *Cooperation financed through Sida*

Support for human rights has dominated during the period, making up about 60 per cent of the total assistance given. Swedish efforts have centred on combating torture, capacity development within the Turkish legal system and the rights of those belonging to minority groups. Despite relatively modest sums of money, Sweden's efforts have led to concrete results and been well received.

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute has successfully implemented a cooperation project with a private university in Istanbul, Bilgi. The project involved the capacity development of judges, public prosecutors and key personnel within public administration. The project has helped improve knowledge of EC law and international practice in the area of human rights and received a great deal of attention in Turkey. Study visits have been an effective tool in the project. The organisation Lawyers without Borders has been awarded funds to monitor judicial proceedings. For several years, the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) has been playing an important role in highlighting the struggle against torture and has contributed to the positive development in this area. The support to HRFT will be phased out during the period 2005-2007. The gradual decrease in this support is an acknowledgement of the fact that Turkey's ambition to introduce "zero tolerance" is beginning to show results.

Some economic support to the establishment of EU-funded cooperation has been given. Over the last two years, Sida has tried to spark interest in Swedish authorities

to apply for different forms of EU-funded cooperation projects, but this has so far only led to two twinning projects, implemented by the National Board of Fisheries and the National Courts Administration respectively.

A project involving further training for young journalists was successfully implemented in the educated, English-speaking media environment of Istanbul but met with problems when it came to reaching out to local media, identifying a proper Turkish counterpart, a poor level of participation and strong ownership concentration that gave rise to limitations. The project came to a premature end. Support to promote local self-government has been initiated. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has initiated a cooperation project with its Turkish equivalent and carried out a workshop. Three Swedish municipalities have begun twinning projects, but these have not yet developed into fully fledged cooperation projects.

The Swedish Institute has mostly implemented measures regarding various types of further training. These include a seminar in Stockholm for politically active women, a workshop at Gotland's School of Fine Arts for teachers of children's culture and Ulla Lemberg's workshops for young photographers in Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakir in connection with her photography exhibitions. Gender equality and women's rights have been and still are priority areas regarding the various measures being taken.

3.2 *Cooperation via the Consulate-General's Section for Turkish-Swedish Cooperation*

The Section for Turkish-Swedish Cooperation at the Consulate-General aims to promote contacts between Sweden and Turkey and support Turkey's aspirations of European Union membership. The Consulate-General also deals with issues of importance for the relationship between the countries in the region. The Consulate-General takes an active part above all in projects concerning the EU process and exchanges between Sweden and Turkey in the areas of political, economic and social development, including human rights and gender equality, and increased mutual understanding as regards tradition, culture and religion. Primary cooperation partners are administrations, universities and research institutes, NGOs and media in Turkey and Sweden. A reference group linked to the Consulate-General had its first meeting in 2004. The reference group is to continuously monitor the Consulate-General's activities and contribute both stimulus and experience.

Examples of projects carried out by the Consulate-General include EU seminars all over the country in cooperation with Turkish partners, support to migration research, cooperation and exchange of experience regarding honour-related crime, women's involvement in politics and gender equality, research and seminar cooperation concerning e.g. Romanies and Assyrians/Suriyanis, etc. A high level of commitment from cooperation partners on both sides has meant that the projects have been consolidated into long-term cooperation projects, which in several cases have developed without additional support from the Consulate-General. About a third of the Consulate-General's budget has gone to scholarships for masters' studies and research at Swedish universities and university colleges. The focus has been on EU-related educational programmes. The first scholarships in memory of Anna Lindh

were awarded to Turkish students in June 2005 to study human rights law in Sweden. The Swedish Institute administrates these scholarships.

The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul promotes research in Turkey and the Near East. The Research Institute comes under the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science and has its own very limited budget. It has received support from the Consulate-General for some of its activities.

3.3 Summary

In conclusion, development cooperation during the previous strategy period consisted of two components: efficient but limited support administrated by Sida above all for the promotion of human rights and sound and diversified activities at the Consulate-General, including scholarship activities administrated by the Swedish Institute.

4 OTHER DONORS

Considering Turkey's size, the assistance, even that from the EU, is marginal compared to the country's own national budget. In total, the assistance comprised a mere 0.3 per cent of GDP in 2002. Turkey's status as a candidate country means that the EU and most other donors will make further resources available, but even then, the assistance will still only comprise a fraction of Turkey's total economy.

4.1 The EU

EU funded projects totalling approximately EUR 1.15 million are currently ongoing (approved 1996-2004) During 2005, the total pre-membership support amounts to EUR 277.7 million and is expected to rise to EUR 500 million in 2006. EU financing will be spread over a number of areas but will have two main components: Institution-building and investments. The objective of institution-building measures is to help the country to implement the EU *acquis communautaire* and to prepare it for EU integration. Investments are divided into two sub-areas, *acquis*-related investments to strengthen the authorities and the legal structure and investments in economic and social equity.

4.2 Other multilateral donors

The World Bank's strategy regarding the 2004-2006 period and its programme for 2005 contain 19 investment projects, a 'gift' component and a programme involving the Word Bank Institute. Lending totals USD 646 million and is distributed among a number of sectors, including infrastructure and energy, health, the social sector, agriculture and rural development, economic reforms, the public sector and financing. Girls' education is a priority.

There is a UNDAF for Turkey with four cross-cutting issues: a) Governance and participatory development, b) Reduction of socioeconomic and regional disparities, c) Gender equality and d) Increased awareness of UN conventions and increased mobilisation of human and financial resources for their implementation. During 2005,

the UNDP is launching a new programme of cooperation with Turkey for the period 2006-2010. The programme will have three main areas: democratic governance, poverty and the environment. UNFPA has a programme focusing on sexual and reproductive health and women. UNICEF supports projects focusing on children's rights issues, women's rights and girls' education.

4.3 *Bilateral donors*

Denmark's programme comprises SEK 30 million for 2005-2007 and is primarily focused on the foundation of an independent national institution for human rights and associated capacity development. Ireland has a programme aimed at capacity development of civil servants, focused on the EU's structural funds. Germany's programme is focused on EU adjustment, supporting sustainable development at the local level and on income-generating activities, primarily the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in southern Anatolia. The UK's programme comprised just over SEK 30 million in 2004/05 and included support for economic reform, public administration, the civil society, common foreign and security policy, combating organised crime and the strengthening of trade relations between the two countries. The Netherlands has included Turkey in a regional programme over the last five years, a programme that supplements the EU's funding and has the same goals as the EU's development cooperation policy.

5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The overarching objective of the Government's global development policy, on which this strategy is based, is equitable and sustainable development. The objective of Swedish development cooperation is to help create the prerequisites for poor people to improve their living conditions. The perspectives and eight central component elements of the Government's global development policy and Swedish development cooperation can all be relevant to the cooperation with Turkey. Compared to the EU's support for Turkey's EU accession, Swedish bilateral funds are very limited. Sida should therefore concentrate on just a few priority areas. The challenges facing the country over the next few years are substantial and strongly linked to the negotiations on membership of the EU, whose comprehensive regulatory framework places considerable demands on reform of the Turkish society. Turkey's active participation in EU accession is deemed to be the best way of combating poverty in Turkey in the long term. The work to strengthen human rights is central to negotiations and has also dominated Sida's cooperation with Turkey during previous strategy periods. Experience from the cooperation up until now has been positive and the efforts made to promote democracy and human rights have produced good results and been in demand by Turkey. Human rights and EU adjustment should therefore be the mainstays of future cooperation. Programme and budget support will not come into question in Turkey.

5.1 Objectives for development cooperation with Turkey

Within the framework of the overarching objective of Swedish development cooperation, the goal for future cooperation with Turkey shall be:

to strengthen the continued process of democratisation and respect for human rights and to promote closer links with European cooperation structures and common values.

Based on the rule of law, the support should focus on the promotion of human rights, including the rights of women, minorities and persons with disabilities. Areas in which Sweden has a comparative advantage or where the country's experience is very much in demand should be prioritised, as should the needs of south-eastern Turkey. Swedish authorities, organisations, popular movements, municipalities and enterprises should be encouraged to participate in the implementation of the support. Coordination with other donors should be sought. Transition experiences from the new EU Member States, should, when possible, be utilised through three-party cooperation projects. Increased bilateral contacts and rapid development in Turkey may to some extent change the prerequisites. Flexibility and readiness in the face of new needs and initiatives are therefore important.

Development cooperation with Turkey through Sida comprises about SEK 20 million for 2005 and is to rise to about SEK 30 million per year for the remainder of the strategy period. The Section for Turkish-Swedish Cooperation at the Consulate-General in Istanbul has SEK 14 million at its disposal for 2005, SEK 9 million of which is for projects. The Consulate-General's activities are expected to continue on approximately the same level for the duration of the strategy period. Swedish development cooperation with Turkey is expected to continue parallel with the country's ongoing negotiations with the EU.

5.2 Future areas of cooperation

5.2.1. Support for human rights

Respect for human rights is one of the most important aspects to consider in the continuing reform and capacity-building efforts. It is also a priority for the EU. Special priority should be allocated to the efforts to strengthen the rights of minorities, women and persons with disabilities. Sweden already has an active dialogue and has built up efficient forms of cooperation that can form a platform for future dialogue. The rule of law and human rights, especially focusing on the rights of women, minorities and persons with disabilities, stand out as particularly important aspects of this dialogue.

Turkish authorities have expressed continued interest in Swedish-Turkish training measures within the judicial system. Future cooperation shall help to build up local capacity so that local actors will be empowered to run educational programmes in human rights. In addition, support is needed for the civil society to strengthen its role as a competent party and a guarantor of compliance with the international conventions to which Turkey is now signatory.

Emphasis should also be given to involvement of the civil society in both Sweden and Turkey when it comes to strengthening the rights of women, minorities and persons with disabilities.

5.2.2 *Cooperation in support of Turkey's integration into Europe*

The European Commission has urged the Member States to actively encourage all forms of cooperation with societies, organisations, authorities, municipalities and other associations in Turkey. Sida is to create the opportunities for this. The Consulate-General in Istanbul shall continue its efforts in this field and intensify its cooperation with the Swedish Institute. Collaboration with the Swedish business sector shall occur whenever possible.

a. Cooperation between government authorities / twinning

Turkey has expressed its desire to cooperate with authorities in all EU Member States with the aim of implementing the *acquis*. The EU is making considerable funds available for this purpose, e.g. via twinning projects. Sida shall contribute funds for preparations, public tendering and co-financing in order to encourage Swedish authorities to participate. Furthermore, Sida shall be open to the idea of supporting bilateral cooperation projects. It shall be possible to finance smaller-scale projects and exchanges of expertise that may precede or be the result of larger EU-funded projects.

b. Cooperation between municipalities / municipal partnership

The development towards local self-government in Turkey is under way. This process is supported by the exchange of experience and cooperation between Swedish and Turkish municipalities made possible through municipal partnerships. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions can play an important role by inspiring reform of the municipal sector and development of its Turkish equivalent.

c). Cooperation between NGOs

It is possible for Swedish NGOs to receive grants covering 90 per cent of the costs of cooperating with their Turkish counterparts to promote organisational development. The support is administrated through Sida's framework organisations. NGO-cooperation can be intensified and encouraged through special measures under this strategy. The Consulate-General and the Swedish Institute shall provide support for cooperation projects in accordance with their remits.

d. Cultural cooperation and academic contacts

The Consulate-General in Istanbul shall continue its established activities and prioritise topical and pioneering projects and cooperation programmes. The cultural exchange programme between Sweden and Turkey, administrated by the Swedish Institute, shall continue and possibly be broadened. It should focus on culture and social issues that can improve the prerequisites for democratisation and EU integration.

Within the framework of the strategy, there should also be scope to consider proposals for support for academic contacts between Sweden and Turkey, provided that these are in line with the strategy objectives. The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, in partnership with the Consulate-General, could play a key role in this context.

The forms of cooperation via the Swedish Institute, as well as those regarding support for academic contacts, will be formulated in more detail by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

Sida and the Consulate-General have the overarching responsibility for implementing the development cooperation strategy and should strive for broad participation from Swedish authorities, organisations, popular movements, municipalities and enterprises. Annual status reports from Sida and the Consulate-General shall be produced and annual meetings between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sida, the Consulate-General and the Embassy in Ankara shall take place. The administration of the support via Sida has previously been handled using 0.1 man-years. An increase to 0.5 man-years is planned during the strategy period.

Activities at the Consulate-General are expected to continue to the same extent and with the same resources as before. The Consulate-General runs its programme independent of Sida and is governed both by this strategy and the special regulations issued by the Government. The established reference group can provide important stimuli for and lend key experience to the work done by the Consulate-General, and will hold regular seminars. An evaluation of the Consulate-General's activities will be performed during the strategy period.



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