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## **HISTORY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

### **Abstract:**

Turkey is the only pluralist secular democracy in the Moslem world and has always attached great importance to developing its relations with other European countries. Historically, Turkish culture has had a profound impact over much of Eastern and Southern Europe.

Turkey began "westernising" its economic, political and social structures in the 19th century. Following the First World War and the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, it chose Western Europe as the model for its new secular structure.

Turkey has ever since closely aligned itself with the West and has become a founding member of the United Nations, a member of NATO, the Council of Europe, the OECD and an associate member of the Western European Union. During the Cold War Turkey was part of the Western alliance, defending freedom, democracy and human rights. In this respect, Turkey has played and continues to play a vital role in the defence of the European continent and the principal elements of its foreign policy have converged with those of its European partners.

Having thus entered into very close cooperation with Western Europe in the political field, it was therefore only natural for Turkey to complete this in the economic area. Thus, Turkey chose to begin close cooperation with the fledgling EEC in 1959.

### **Keywords:**

History of Relations Turkey and the European Union

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