IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF EU-TURKEY BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS AND MODERNISATION OF THE EU-TURKEY CUSTOMS UNION

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

1. **Scope:**

   The initiative aims at updating the EU-Turkey Customs Union and to enhance the bilateral trade relations by concluding a new agreement that will cover new areas such as services, public procurement, further liberalisation in agriculture, Sanitary and Phytosanitary issues, Non-Tariff Barriers. Stakeholders will be consulted on all key elements of the impact assessment, i.e. on problem definition, objectives, options and their possible impacts. Taking into account the fact that the negotiations of trade agreements fall in the area of the EU exclusive competence according to Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), it is not foreseen to consult stakeholders on subsidiarity.

   Stakeholders will be also consulted on the main elements of the evaluation of the current framework for the EU-Turkey preferential trade relations.

2. **Dedicated website:**

   The consultation strategy as well as announcement about individual consultation activities will be published on


   and


3. **Objectives:**

   The stakeholder consultation will focus on collecting views and opinions and on testing the ideas and analysis.

   Factual information and data will be collected via an external study which has been launched in autumn 2015 and should feed into the impact assessment. This study will also build on and complement the evaluation of the EU-Turkey Customs union (see point 5).
4. **Identify/map stakeholders**

Key stakeholders will be both public authorities and the private sector both in the EU and Turkey: business associations, social partners, NGOs, SMEs and Chambers of Commerce, both EU-wide (Business Europe, Eurochambers, UEAPME, etc.) and Turkish (TÜSIAD, MÜSİAD, TUSKON, TIM, YASED, TÜRKONFED, etc.), academia and think-tanks.

5. **Consultation actions already carried out:**

An evaluation of the EU-Turkey Customs union, commissioned by the DG NEAR, was conducted by the World Bank and finalised in March 2014. Targeted consultations of stakeholders took place within this evaluation:

- Through the project Steering committee in March and December 2013, which included participation of Commission services and Turkish authorities, universities, think-tanks and Turkish business associations, in connection with presentation and discussion of the inception and final reports by the WB;

- In February, May, and November 2013, WB experts consulted extensively EU and Turkish business associations, economic stakeholders and authorities through ad hoc and collective meetings. The consultations were focused on factual collection of data, an ex post assessment on the strengths and weaknesses in the functioning of the Customs Union, as well as on its major bottlenecks, perceived restrictions and untapped potential;

- Two workshops were organised with economic stakeholders and public authorities to present and discuss the final results of the Evaluation Report. These took place in April 2014 in Istanbul and Brussels. The former, which took place at TOBB's (the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey) premises, was attended by Turkish authorities, key business, trade and investment associations and academia, as well as by the Commission services. The latter, held at Brussels-based CEPS, witnessed the presence of Commissioner Füle and the Turkish Minister, along with key representatives of academia, think-tanks and business associations.

6. **Planned consultation actions:**

6.1. **Open internet-based public consultation**

An open internet-based public consultation is planned to be launched in March 2016 and it will be focused on:
1) main elements of the ex-post evaluation assessing the current framework for the EU-Turkey preferential trade relations, i.e. effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and coherence;

2) key elements of the impact assessment, i.e. problem definition, objectives, options and their possible economic, social, environmental and human rights impacts.

The launch will be announced in the consultation planning that can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/docs/planned-consultations_en.pdf.

6.2. Other consultations

The Commission intends to carry out consultations (e.g. ad hoc meetings and/or conferences) targeted to stakeholders likely directly affected by the initiative and/or interested in it (e.g. business sector from EU and Turkey, social partners, companies and SMEs, chambers of commerce, investors associations; NGOs, profit and non-profit organisations; think-tanks, universities, research institutes, academia and law firms; governmental agencies, ministries and regional authorities) as per relevant. These can take place in Brussels and in Turkey with the support of the EU Delegation.