



- ▶ Ministry
- ▶ Foreign Policy
- ▶ Press & Information
- ▶ Consular Information
- ▶ Protocol Topics
- ▶ Diplomatic Archives
- ▶ Publications
- ▶ Announcements
- ▶ Subscribe
- ▶ Cultural Events at the Suna Çoğür Ilicak Art Gallery

Search



▶ Turkey-EU Relations

▶ The Cyprus Problem

>Latest Speeches of Minister>

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Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Babacan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Regarding the Recognition of Kosovo by Turkey, 18 February 2008

The Assembly of Kosovo declared independence of Kosovo on 17 February 2008. In this context, an appeal was made to all countries of the world for the recognition of the Republic of Kosovo.

The Republic of Turkey has welcomed the content and elements of the Declaration of Independence, and with this understanding, has decided to recognize the independence of the Republic of Kosovo.

Securing peace and stability in the Balkans is one of Turkey's foreign policy priorities. Turkey attaches importance to advance the understanding of lasting peace in the Balkans which has suffered immensely in recent years and hopes that the independence of Kosovo will present an opportunity for the enhancement of stability and confidence among the countries in the region.

Serbia has a significant role and responsibility in the future of the Balkans. Turkey attaches importance to improving its relations and cooperation with Serbia, both at bilateral and regional levels.

Turkey believes that rule of law and the universal values of human rights, democracy and pluralism should be promoted in Kosovo. Turkey is also of the opinion that creating an atmosphere of mutual confidence and cooperation between Kosovo and her neighbours is essential.

Turkey believes that its long-established historical, cultural and human ties with Kosovo will be further strengthened. Turkey will continue its assistance and contributions for the development of Kosovo.

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go top ▲

- Ministry
- Foreign Policy
- Press & Information
- Consular Information
- Protocol Topics

<< >>

