

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
AND
THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

Free Trade Agreement Between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Albania

PREAMBLE

Desirous to develop and strengthen friendly relations, especially in the fields of economic co-operation and trade, with an aim to contribute to the progress of economic co-operation between the two countries and to increase the scope of mutual trade exchange,

The Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Albania (hereinafter referred to as “the Parties” or “Turkey” and “Albania” where appropriate.)

CONFIRMING their intention to participate actively in the process of economic integration in Europe expressing their preparedness to co-operate in seeking ways and means to strengthen this process;

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the “Agreement Establishing an Association between the Republic of Turkey and the European Economic Community” and the “Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Albania”;

HAVING regard to the experience gained from the co-operation developed between the Parties to this Agreement as well as between them and their main trading partners;

DECLARING their readiness to undertake activities with a view to promoting harmonious development of their trade as well as to expanding and diversifying their mutual co-operation in the fields of joint interest, including fields not covered by this Agreement, thus creating a framework and supportive environment based on equality, non discrimination, and a balance of rights and obligations;

REFERRING to the mutual interest of the Parties in the continual reinforcement of the multilateral trading system and considering that the provisions and instruments of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 (hereinafter “GATT 1994”) and the World Trade Organization (hereinafter “WTO”) constitute a basis for their foreign trade policy;

RESOLVED to lay down for this purpose provisions aimed at the progressive abolition of the obstacles to trade between the Parties in accordance with the provisions of these instruments, in particular those concerning the establishment of free trade areas;

HAVE DECIDED, in pursuance of these objectives, to conclude the following Agreement (hereinafter referred to as "this Agreement").

ARTICLE 1

Objectives

1. The Parties, by taking into account Turkey's obligations arising from the Customs Union with the EU and the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the EU, shall gradually establish a free trade area on substantially all their trade between them in a transitional period lasting a maximum of five years starting from the date of entry into force of this Agreement in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and in conformity with Article XXIV of the GATT 1994 and the other multilateral agreements on trade in goods annexed to the Agreement establishing the WTO.

2. The objectives of this Agreement are:
 - a) to increase and enhance the economic cooperation between the Parties and raise the living standard of the population of the two countries;
 - b) to gradually eliminate difficulties and restrictions on trade in goods;
 - c) to promote, through the expansion of reciprocal trade, the harmonious development of the economic relations between the Parties;
 - d) to provide fair conditions of competition in trade between the Parties;
 - e) to contribute by the removal of barriers to trade, to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade;
 - f) to create conditions for further encouragement of investments particularly for the development of joint investments in both countries;
 - g) to promote trade and cooperation between the Parties in third country markets.

ARTICLE 2

Basic Duties

1. In the trade between the Parties covered by this Agreement, the Parties shall apply their respective Customs Tariffs on the classification of goods for imports into them.

2. For each product the basic duty to which successive reductions set out in this Agreement are to be applied shall be the Most Favored Nation (MFN) duty that was in force in the Parties on the date of entry into force of this Agreement.

3. If after entry into force of this Agreement, any tariff reduction is applied on an erga omnes basis, in particular, reductions resulting from the tariff negotiations in the WTO, such reduced duties shall replace the basic duties referred to in paragraph 2 as from that date when such reductions are applied.
4. The reduced duties to be applied by Albania calculated, as set out in this Agreement shall be rounded to whole numbers using common arithmetical principles. Therefore, all figures which have less than 50 (included) after the decimal point shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number and all figures, which have more than 50 after the decimal point shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number.
5. The Parties shall communicate to each other their respective basic duties.

CHAPTER I INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

ARTICLE 3 Scope

The provisions of this Chapter shall apply to products originating in the Parties falling within Chapters 25 to 97 of Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System with the exception of the products listed in Annex I of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 4 Customs Duties on Imports and Charges Having Equivalent Effect

1. No new customs duties on imports or charges having equivalent effect shall be introduced in trade between the Parties from the date of entry into force of this Agreement.
2. Customs duties on imports into Turkey of goods originating in Albania shall be abolished upon the entry into force of this Agreement.
3. Customs duties on imports into Albania of goods originating in Turkey other than those listed in Annex II shall be abolished upon the entry into force of this Agreement.
4. Customs duties on imports into Albania of goods originating in Turkey, which are listed in Annex II shall be progressively reduced in accordance with the timetable laid down thereof.

5. For products listed in Annex II originating in Turkey, Albania shall accord treatment no less favourable than that accorded to like products originating in the European Union. In case of any favourable change in the treatment accorded to the European Union for the products listed in Annex II, Albania shall without delay reflect these changes to the products listed in this Annex originating in Turkey and promptly notify Turkey thereof.
6. Turkey and Albania shall abolish in trade between themselves any charges having an equivalent effect to customs duties on imports upon the entry into force of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 5
Customs Duties of a Fiscal Nature

The provisions concerning the abolition of customs duties on imports shall also apply to customs duties of a fiscal nature.

ARTICLE 6
Customs Duties on Exports and Charges Having Equivalent Effect

1. From the date of the entry into force of this Agreement no new customs duties on exports or charges having equivalent effect shall be introduced in trade between the Parties.
2. All customs duties on exports and any charges having equivalent effect shall be abolished between the Parties upon entry into force of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 7
Quantitative Restrictions on Exports and Imports and Measures Having Equivalent Effect

1. From the date of the entry into force of this Agreement no new quantitative restrictions on exports and imports or measures having equivalent effect shall be introduced.
2. All quantitative restrictions on exports and imports in the Parties and measures having equivalent effect shall be abolished on the date of entry into force of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 8
Technical Barriers to Trade

1. The rights and obligations of the Parties relating to standards or technical regulations and related measures shall be governed by the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

2. The Parties shall cooperate and exchange information in the field of standardization, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation, with the aim of eliminating technical barriers to trade.
3. Each Party, upon a request from the other Party, shall submit information on particular individual cases of standards, technical rules or similar measures.

CHAPTER II AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

ARTICLE 9 Scope

1. The provisions of this Chapter shall apply to basic agricultural, processed agricultural and fishery products originating in the territory of each Party.
2. The term "basic agricultural, processed agricultural and fishery products" (hereinafter referred to as agricultural products) means, for the purpose of this agreement, the products falling within Chapters 01 to 24 of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System and including the products listed in Annex I of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 10 Exchange of Concessions

1. The Parties to this Agreement shall mutually allocate concessions set forth in Protocol I in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter.
2. Taking into account the role of agriculture in their respective economies, the development of trade in agricultural products, the high sensitivity of agricultural products and the rules of their respective agricultural policy, the Parties shall examine in the Joint Committee the possibilities of granting further concessions to each other in trade in agricultural products.

ARTICLE 11 Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

1. The Parties shall apply their domestic regulations in the fields of veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary control in accordance with the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.
2. Measures, concerning veterinary and phytosanitary control among the Parties, shall be harmonized on the basis of the EU legislation.

3. The Parties commit themselves not to introduce discriminatory measures or other measures, which lead to unduly restricting the flow of information about the level of sanitary and phytosanitary protection of animals, plants and products.

ARTICLE 12

Specific Safeguards

Notwithstanding other provisions of this Agreement, and in particular Article 21, given the particular sensitivity of the agricultural products, if imports of products originating in a Party, which are the subject of concessions granted under this Agreement, cause serious disturbance to the markets or to their domestic regulatory mechanisms, in the other Party, both Parties shall enter into consultations immediately to find an appropriate solution. Pending such solution, the Party concerned may take the measures it deems necessary in accordance with the relevant WTO rules.

CHAPTER III

SERVICES AND INVESTMENTS

ARTICLE 13

1. The Parties to this Agreement recognize the growing importance of services and investments. In their efforts to gradually develop and broaden their co-operation, in particular in the context of the European integration, they will co-operate with the aim of further promoting investments and achieving a progressive liberalization and mutual opening of their markets for investments and trade in services, taking into account relevant provisions of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS).
2. The Parties will discuss in the Joint Committee this co-operation with the aim of developing and deepening of their relations in conformity with this Article.

CHAPTER IV

COMMON PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 14

Internal Taxation

1. The Parties shall refrain from any measure or practice of an internal fiscal nature establishing, whether directly or indirectly, discrimination between the products of one Party and like products originating in the other Party.

2. Products exported to the territory of the Parties may not benefit from repayment of internal indirect taxation in excess of the amount of indirect taxation imposed on them.

ARTICLE 15

Customs Unions, Free Trade Areas and Cross-Border Arrangements

1. This Agreement shall not prevent the maintenance or establishment of customs unions, free trade areas or arrangements for cross-border trade of the Parties with third countries to the extent that these do not negatively affect the trade regime and in particular the provisions concerning rules of origin provided for by this Agreement.
2. Exchange of information shall take place, upon request of either Party, within the Joint Committee concerning agreements establishing such customs unions or free trade areas.

ARTICLE 16

Structural Adjustment

1. Exceptional measures of limited duration which derogate from the provisions of Article 4 may be taken by the Parties in the form of increased customs duties.
2. These measures may only concern infant industries, or certain sectors undergoing restructuring or facing serious difficulties, particularly where these difficulties produce important social problems.
3. Customs duties on imports applicable in the Parties to products originating in the other Party introduced by these measures may not exceed 25 % ad valorem and shall maintain an element of preference for products originating in the other Party. The total value of imports of the products which are subject to these measures may not exceed 15 % of total imports of industrial products from the other Party as defined in Article 3, during the last year for which statistics are available.
4. These measures shall be applied for a period not exceeding five years unless a longer duration is authorized by the Joint Committee. They shall cease to apply at the latest on the expiry of the transitional period.
5. No such measures can be introduced in respect of a product if more than three years have elapsed since the elimination of all duties and quantitative restrictions or charges or measures having an equivalent effect concerning that product.

6. The Parties shall inform the Joint Committee of any exceptional measures they intend to take and, at the request of either Party, consultations shall be held in the Joint Committee on such measures and the sectors to which they apply before they are applied. When taking such measures the Parties shall provide the Joint Committee with a schedule for the elimination of the customs duties introduced under this Article. This schedule shall provide for a phasing out of these duties starting at the latest two years after their introduction, at equal rates. The Joint Committee may decide on a different schedule.

ARTICLE 17

Dumping and Subsidies

1. None of the provisions in this Agreement prevent either Party from taking trade defence action in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article.
2. If one of the Parties finds that dumping and/or countervailable subsidisation is taking place in trade with the other Party, that Party may take appropriate measures against this practice in accordance with the WTO Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 and the WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures and its own related internal legislation.

ARTICLE 18

General Safeguards

Where any product is being imported into either of the Parties in such increased quantities, each Party retains its rights and obligations under Article XIX of GATT 1994 and the WTO Agreement on Safeguard Measures. This Agreement does not confer any additional rights or obligations on the Parties with regard to safeguard measures.

ARTICLE 19

Re-export and Serious Shortage

1. Where compliance with the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 leads to:
 - a) re-export towards a third country against which the exporting Party to this Agreement maintains for the product concerned quantitative export restrictions, export duties or measures or charges having equivalent effect;
or
 - b) a serious shortage, or threat thereof, of a product essential to the exporting Party;

and where the situations referred to above give rise or are likely to give rise to major difficulties for the exporting Party, that Party may take appropriate measures under the conditions and in accordance with the procedures laid down in Article 21 of this Agreement.

2. Measures taken as a result of the situation referred to in paragraph 1 shall be applied in a non-discriminatory manner and be eliminated when conditions no longer justify their maintenance.

ARTICLE 20

State Monopolies

1. The Parties shall progressively adjust any state monopoly of a commercial character so as to ensure that by the end of the fourth year following the entry into force of this Agreement, no discrimination regarding the conditions under which goods are procured and marketed will exist between nationals of the Parties.
2. The Joint Committee shall be informed about the measures adopted to implement this objective.

ARTICLE 21

Notifications and Consultations Procedure for the Application of Measures

1. Before initiating the procedure for the application of any measures set out in Articles 12, 19, 24 and 32, the Parties to this Agreement shall endeavour to solve any differences between themselves through direct consultations, and shall inform the other Party thereof.
2. A Party which is considering to resort to measures shall promptly notify the Joint Committee thereof. The Party concerned shall provide the Joint Committee with all relevant information and give it the assistance required to examine the case. Consultations between the Parties shall take place without delay in the Joint Committee with a view to finding a commonly acceptable solution.
3. If, within one month of the matter being referred to the Joint Committee, the Party in question fails to put an end to the practice objected to or to the difficulties notified and in the absence of a decision by the Joint Committee in the matter, the concerned Party may adopt the measures it considers necessary to remedy the situation.

4. The measures taken shall be notified immediately to the Joint Committee. They shall be restricted, with regard to their extent and to their duration, to what is strictly necessary in order to rectify the situation, giving rise to their application and shall not be in excess of the damage caused by the practice or the difficulty in question. Priority shall be given to such measures that will least disturb the functioning of this Agreement.
5. The measures taken shall be the subject of regular consultations within the Joint Committee with a view to their relaxation, or abolition when conditions no longer justify their maintenance.
6. Where exceptional circumstances requiring immediate action make prior examination impossible, the Party concerned may, in the cases of Articles 12, 19, 24 and 32 apply forthwith the precautionary measures strictly necessary to remedy the situation. The measures shall be notified without delay to the Joint Committee and consultations between the Parties to this Agreement shall take place within the Joint Committee.

ARTICLE 22

Rules of Origin and Cooperation between the Customs Administrations

1. The Parties agree to apply the European preferential rules of origin in trade between them, including all existing and further amendments. In case these rules of origin are amended, the Joint Committee shall initiate procedure of amending rules of origin.
2. Protocol II to this Agreement lays down the rules of origin and related methods of administrative co-operation.

ARTICLE 23

Payments

The Parties undertake to authorise, in freely convertible currency, in accordance with the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles of the Agreement of the International Monetary Fund, any payments and transfers on the current account of balance of payments between Turkey and Albania.

ARTICLE 24

Rules of Competition Concerning Undertakings, State Aid

1. The following are incompatible with the proper implementation of this Agreement, in so far as they may affect trade between the Parties:

- a) all agreements between undertakings, decisions by associations of undertakings and concerted practices between undertakings which have as their object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition;
 - b) abuse by one or more undertakings of a dominant position in the territories of the Parties as a whole or in a substantial part thereof;
 - c) any state aid which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favoring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods.
2. Each Party shall ensure transparency in the area of state aid. Upon request by one Party, the other Party shall provide information on particular individual cases of state aid.
 3. If any Party considers that a particular practice is incompatible with the terms of the first paragraph of this Article, and:
 - a) is not adequately dealt with under the implementing rules referred to in paragraph 4 of this Article, or
 - b) in the absence of such rules, and if such practice causes or threatens to cause serious prejudice to the interest of the other Party or material injury to its domestic industry, including its services industry,

it may take appropriate measures after consultation within the Joint Committee or after thirty working days following referral for such consultation.

4. In the case of practices incompatible with paragraph 1.c) of this Article, such appropriate measures may, where the WTO/GATT 1994 applies thereto, only be adopted in conformity with the procedures and under the conditions laid down by the WTO/GATT 1994 and any other relevant instrument negotiated under its auspices which are applicable between the Parties.
5. Notwithstanding any provisions to the contrary adopted in conformity with this Article, the Parties shall exchange information taking into account the limitations imposed by the requirements of professional and business secrecy.

ARTICLE 25

Balance of Payments Difficulties

1. The Parties shall endeavour wherever possible to avoid the imposition of restrictive measures, including measures relating to imports, for balance of payments purposes. A Party adopting such measures shall present as soon as possible to the other Party a timetable for their removal.

2. Where Turkey or Albania is in serious balance of payments difficulties, or under imminent threat thereof, Turkey or Albania, as the case may be, may, in accordance with the conditions established under the WTO Agreement, adopt restrictive measures, including measures relating to imports, which shall be of limited duration and may not go beyond what is strictly necessary to remedy the balance of payments situation. Turkey or Albania, as the case may be, shall inform the other Party forthwith.
3. Any restrictive measures shall not apply to transfers related to investment and in particular to the repatriation of amounts invested or reinvested or any kind of revenues stemming there from.

ARTICLE 26

Intellectual Property Rights

1. The Parties to this Agreement shall grant and ensure adequate, effective and non-discriminatory protection of intellectual property rights, including measures for the enforcement of such rights against infringement thereof, counterfeiting and piracy, in accordance with the provisions of this Article and the relevant international agreements.
2. The Parties to this Agreement shall accord to each other's nationals treatment no less favorable than that they accord to their own nationals. Exemption from this obligation must be in accordance with the substantive provisions of Article 3 of the TRIPS Agreement.
3. The Parties to this Agreement shall grant to each other's nationals treatment no less favorable than that accorded to nationals of any other country. Exemptions from this obligation must be in accordance with the substantive provisions of the TRIPS Agreement, in particular Articles 4 and 5 thereof.
4. The implementation of this Article shall be regularly reviewed by the Parties. If problems in the area of intellectual property affecting trading conditions were to occur, urgent consultations shall be undertaken, at the request of either Party, with a view to reaching mutually satisfactory solutions.

ARTICLE 27

Public Procurement

1. The Parties consider the liberalization of their respective public procurement markets as an objective of this Agreement. The Parties aim at opening up of the award of public contracts on the basis of non-discrimination and reciprocity.

2. The Parties will progressively develop their respective rules, conditions and practices on public procurement with a view to granting suppliers of the other Party access to contract award procedures on their respective public procurement markets not less favorable than that accorded to companies of any country or territory.
3. The Joint Committee shall examine developments related to the achievement of the objectives of this Article and may recommend practical modalities of implementing the provisions of paragraph 2 so as to ensure free access, transparency and mutual opening of their respective public procurement markets.
4. During the examination referred to in this paragraph 3, the Joint Committee may consider, especially in the light of international developments and regulations in this area, the possibility of extending the coverage and/or the degree of the market opening provided for in paragraph 1.
5. The Parties shall endeavor to accede to the relevant Agreements negotiated under the auspices of the GATT 1994 and the Marrakesh Agreement, establishing the WTO.

ARTICLE 28
Establishment of the Joint Committee

1. A Joint Committee is hereby established in which each Party shall be represented. The Joint Committee shall be responsible for the administration of this Agreement and shall ensure its proper implementation.
2. For the purpose of the proper implementation of this Agreement, the Parties shall exchange information and, at the request of either Party, shall hold consultations within the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee shall keep under review the possibility of further removal of the obstacles to trade between the Parties.
3. The Joint Committee may, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3 of Article 29, take decisions in the cases provided for in this Agreement. On other matters the Joint Committee may make recommendations.

ARTICLE 29
Procedures of the Joint Committee

1. For the proper implementation of this Agreement, the Joint Committee shall meet at an appropriate level whenever necessary upon request but at least once a year. Either Party may request a meeting be held.
2. The Joint Committee shall decide by consensus.

3. If a representative in the Joint Committee of a Party to this Agreement has accepted a decision subject to reservation of the fulfillment of internal legal requirements the decision shall enter into force, if no later date is contained therein, on the date of the receipt of the written notification stating that such requirements have been fulfilled.
4. The Joint Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure which shall, inter alia, contain provisions for convening meetings and for the designation of the Chairperson and his/her term of office.
5. The Joint Committee may decide to set up such sub-committees and working groups as it considers necessary to assist it in accomplishing its tasks.

ARTICLE 30

Security Exceptions

Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent the Parties from taking any measures, which it considers necessary:

- a) to prevent the disclosure of information contrary to its essential security interests;
- b) for the protection of its essential security interests or for the implementation of international obligations or national policies:
 - i) relating to the traffic in arms, ammunition and implements of war and to such traffic in other goods, materials and services as is carried on directly or indirectly for the purpose of supplying a military establishment; or
 - ii) relating to the non-proliferation of biological and chemical weapons, nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; or
 - iii) in time of war or other serious international tension constituting threat of war.

ARTICLE 31
General Exceptions

This Agreement shall not preclude prohibitions or restrictions on imports, exports or goods in transit, justified on grounds of public morality, public policy or public security, the protection of health and life of humans, animals or plants and environment; the protection of domestic treasures possessing artistic, historic or archeological value; the protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property, or rules relating to gold or silver or the conservation of exhaustible natural resources, if such measures are made effective in conjunction with restrictions on domestic production or consumption. Such prohibitions or restrictions shall not, however, constitute a means of arbitrary discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade between the Parties.

ARTICLE 32
Fulfillment of Obligations

1. The Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the achievement of the objectives of this Agreement and the fulfillment of their obligations under this Agreement.
2. If either Party considers that the other Party has failed to fulfill an obligation under this Agreement, the Party concerned may take the appropriate measures under the conditions and in accordance with the procedures laid down in Article 21 of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 33
Evolutionary Clause

1. Where either Party considers that it would be useful and in the interest of the economies of the Parties to develop the relations established by this Agreement by extending them to fields not covered thereby, it shall submit a reasoned request to the other Party. The Parties may instruct the Joint Committee to examine this request and, where appropriate, to make recommendations to them, particularly with a view to opening negotiations.
2. Agreements resulting from the procedure referred to in paragraph 1 will be subject to ratification or approval by the Parties to this Agreement in accordance with their national legislation.

ARTICLE 34

Amendments

Amendments to this Agreement, as well as to its Annexes and Protocols, shall enter into force on the date of receipt of the latter written notification through diplomatic channels, by which the parties inform each other that all necessary requirements foreseen by their national legislation for the entry into force of this Agreement, have been fulfilled.

ARTICLE 35

Protocols and Annexes

Protocols and Annexes to this Agreement shall form an integral part thereof. The Joint Committee may decide to amend the Protocols and Annexes in accordance with the national legislation of the Parties.

ARTICLE 36

Validity and Withdrawal

1. This Agreement is concluded for an unlimited period.
2. Each Party to this Agreement may withdraw from this Agreement by a written notification to the other Party. The termination shall take effect on the first day of the seventh month following the date on which the notification was received by the other Party.
3. The Parties agree that, in case of accession of one of the Parties to this Agreement to the European Union, the Agreement will be terminated on the previous day before the date of the accession to the EU.

ARTICLE 37

Entry into Force

The Parties shall ratify this Agreement in accordance with their own procedures. This Agreement shall enter into force on the first day of the second month, following the date of the receipt of the latter written notification through diplomatic channels, by which the Parties inform each other that all necessary requirements foreseen by their national legislation for the entry into force of this Agreement, have been fulfilled.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned plenipotentiaries, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Agreement.

DONE at Tirana, this 22nd day of December 2006 in three originals, each in the Turkish, Albanian and English languages, all texts being equally authentic. In case of differences of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

For the Republic of Turkey

For the Republic of Albania