

## **Joint Venture for EU Training of Austrian "navreme" and Turkish "epsilonteknoloji" launched** *training course "Tips and Tricks for EU Programmes and Tenders" as first activity*

Ankara/Vienna (4 September 2006) – **navreme** and **EpsilonTeknoloji** inaugurated their new partnership today in Ankara. **navreme**, an EU-registered expert network based in Vienna, Prague and Skopje, and **EpsilonTeknoloji**, a technical consulting company from Ankara, join forces for the establishment of the new EU training academy "navremepsilonteknoloji" (NET). The partnership will focus on the areas of training, consultancy and research.

The EU budget for Turkey has risen significantly since Turkey changed status from a candidate to an accession country. However, high percentages of this budget have not yet been allocated. As **EpsilonTeknoloji** President Nuray Karalar states, "two reasons account for the lack of disbursement of funds: firstly, the limited absorption capacity of the Turkish administration charged with the "De-Centralised Implementation"; and secondly, the lack of high-quality offers from the side of Turkish recipients." During the Opening Ceremony of the NET training course, the new Austrian ambassador Dr. Heidemarie Gürer stressed that "there are concrete opportunities for Turkish businesses to access EU funding, including work contracts offered by the European Delegation in Ankara, pre-accession funds aimed at helping Turkey meet the Copenhagen criteria, or education, research, and development grants by the European Commission, for which Turkish enterprises are now eligible."

In order to increase the participation of Turkish companies in EU programmes, a four-stage system (curriculum development; train-the-trainers course; implementation and roll-out; quality assurance, evaluation and update) was designed. For the training course on "Tips and Tricks for EU Programmes and Tenders" beginning today, EU experts will introduce the prepared curriculum and deliver training to 20 Turkish future trainers. Later this month, the EU experts and the trainers of **navremepsilonakademi** will collaborate to design the roll-out courses based on questions and needs posed in the context of Turkish companies and institutions. As of October, the Turkish trainers will teach participants from Turkish businesses and enterprises about strategies for applying for EU funding in country-wide, continuous seminars. The EU experts will provide on-going support as necessary.

The particularly high scepticism of Austrian and Turkish populations regarding the accession of Turkey to the EU is well known to the project initiators. "This is just one more reason to engage in cooperation, in particular between Austria and Turkey, and between EU and Turkish enterprises in general. By working together and getting to know each other, a substantial part of the fear of the other (xeno-phobia) can be diminished", says Dr. Bernd Baumgartl from **navreme**. "Regardless of the outcome of the negotiations process between Turkey and the EU, support for and investment in Turkey will increase in coming years," affirmed Ambassador Gündüz Aktan in his keynote speech at today's Opening Ceremony.

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