



**REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
THE PRIME MINISTER**

Sofia, 10 March 2016

Dear President Tusk,

I am writing to you with regard to the ongoing negotiations with Turkey on the immediate steps to be taken by the Turkish government with the aim of considerably reducing the number of migrants coming from Turkey to the EU.

*We have repeatedly insisted on the paramount importance of **protecting all EU external borders with Turkey**, not only because we have to find a durable solution to the migration crisis, but because we have to guarantee the security of the EU as a whole. In this regard, we reiterate the fact that not all EU external borders are Schengen borders. All front-line countries should be able to rely on EU support to manage and protect the external EU borders and not be left looking for individual solutions.*

*Firstly, an immediate priority for the EU should be stemming the migratory flows through the Turkish borders. To this end, and being aware of the unpredictability of the migrant flows, the EU cannot afford to concentrate only on the migration route from Turkey to the Greek islands. **The Turkish land borders with EU Member States – Bulgaria and Greece, and the maritime borders between Turkey and the EU, inter alia in the Black Sea, need to urgently become part of the negotiations and the agreement with Turkey.** Bulgaria would not be ready to accept a partial Turkish engagement (only for the Greek islands) which will most probably lead to opening up of new migration routes. We insist that a clear formula on “the Turkish land borders with EU Member States – Bulgaria and Greece, and all maritime borders between Turkey and the EU” be included in the document to be agreed upon with the Turkish side.*

*Secondly, we understand the importance that our Turkish partners attach to the visa liberalization process. It has become an integral part of our partnership with Ankara. At the same time the **visa liberalization process cannot be calendar-driven and should remain directly bound to the implementation of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement**. Lifting of visa requirements for Turkish citizens should be started only after the bilateral implementing protocols on the application of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement enter into force and a tangible implementation progress is achieved. This is an essential prerequisite, if we want to accomplish concrete results and stem the migration flows coming from Turkey.*

*Thirdly, an adequate assistance and resources for all the affected countries should be provided in order to allow the **effective implementation of readmission and return** as a vital part of the comprehensive EU response.*

Dear President,

I am fully aware of the urgency of the measures to be taken with respect to the refugee crisis. At the same time, we should ensure inclusiveness through participation of all Member States in the decision-making process. We expect this to be taken into account in preparing the conclusions for the upcoming March European Council.

I wish you best of luck in your negotiations with Turkey on behalf of all of us.

Please accept the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.



BOYKO BORISSOV

**TO: Mr. DONALD TUSK
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL**

CC: MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

**Mr. MARTIN SCHULTZ
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**Mr. JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**