

STUDY DAY

“MOROCCO-TURKEY RELATIONS: WHAT POTENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT in respect of REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CHANGES?”

INTRODUCTION

MOHAMMED TAWFIK MOULINE

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

Rabat
January 20th, 2011.

Excellency, Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you today for a study day devoted to relations between Morocco and Turkey from a strategic perspective.

I want to thank our honorable guest His Excellency Mr. Tunç ÜĞDÜL, Turkish Ambassador to Morocco, to have accepted to be here with us today to bring us his valuable insights on the Turkish development model and on the reality relations between Morocco and Turkey and the prospects for strengthening them in the light of regional and international changes.

Let me reiterate that this event is part of a study project initiated by the IRES. It is about the "Morocco- international relations", which is a part of a general program on "global competitiveness and positioning of Morocco in the global system. Our interests in this project covers issues related to the Euro-Mediterranean neighborhood, including those relating to economic and geopolitical issues that should accompany the world after the crisis.

Excellency, Gentlemen

The progress made by Turkey in the economic, social and political plan made it a regional player whose positioning is well established. Through a sustained process of reforms, the country was able to modernize its economy, improve its international market position and improve the welfare standard of its people.

The country's status as a candidate for accession to the European Union is the culmination of a long process after which Turkey has not only regained its European vocation, but also reaffirmed its position as a bridge between East and West.

Due to its increasing proximity with the Arab world and its interest in the South-South cooperation, Turkey has become a partner of choice in the dialogue on key issues on the international agenda. Its initiatives relating to promoting of peace, stability and prosperity at level of its immediate neighborhood and beyond, shows a spirit of cooperation that motivates the Turkish foreign policy options (mediation at the major issues in the Middle East, support the Euro-Mediterranean integration, interest in the development of Africa, promoting a modern and tolerant Islam ...).

Excellency, Gentlemen

Building on a framework of strong cooperation and constant development, the economic relations between Morocco and Turkey have a turning point after the FTA trade agreement between the two countries entered into force.

If the agreement has helped boost bilateral trade, it is clear that this dynamism was far more profitable in terms of imports from Turkey, whose volume has more than doubled between 2005 and 2008. Such volume did however, decreased relatively in 2009 as a result of the global crisis.

Today, as the highlight data exchanges Outside, Morocco recorded a large trade deficit in its relations with Turkey (-2.8 billion Dirhams in 2005 and nearly -6.1 Billion Dirhams in 2008), resulting in a reserve ratio of 25%. This situation is only slightly offset by revenue trips (176

million Dirhams in average between 2005 and 2009) or by direct Turkish investment, which despite its dynamism is still far from being a rebalancing factor of the bilateral trade relations.

Nevertheless, the current imbalance of trade relations between Morocco and Turkey is certainly not inevitable. Margins for improvement do exist as long as efforts are made to take advantage of the many opportunities offered from one another. This can be achieved through a win-win perspective.

For this, it would be appropriate to promote direct Turkish investment in Morocco, notably through joint-ventures operations. All in order to take advantage of the export opportunities targeting European markets as well as African and American markets. Similarly, it is important to strengthen economic cooperation through mechanisms such as the technical and scientific cooperation structuring, cultural exchange and institutional twinning.

Excellency, Gentlemen

To better understand the current issues and future cooperation between Morocco and Turkey, we should first explain and try to answer the following questions:

1. What are the keys of success of the Turkish development model? What are the major challenges raised by such a development model and the responses given by Turkey to handle it?
2. As part of its tie to the European Union, on what basis has Turkey defined its priorities for acquis recovery? What were the financing sources mobilized for this purpose? How Turkey succeeds to sustain the momentum of reforms related to adoption of the acquis, while there is still ambivalence about the future membership to the European Union?
3. What are the strategic priorities of Turkey at the Maghreb region? What is the vision promoted by Turkey in regards to major issues on the global agenda (environmental issues, monetary, financial and commercial issues, and new architecture of global governance, etc)?
4. Given the strategic value that the African continent represents for Morocco and Turkey, what types of strategies alliances should be preferred between enterprises of both countries? What are the sectors that could benefit the more efficiently of these alliances?
5. How to realize the potential cooperation between Morocco and Turkey in various fields and by what means should we act to bring Moroccan-Turkish relations to the level of Strategic partnership?

Excellency, Gentlemen

Those are some issues that should frame our discussion. The presence today of an expert panel, comprising of senior officials of public sector, academics and world business

representatives, thus constitutes a great opportunity for deeper reflection on the different aspects of relations between Morocco and Turkey from a strategic perspective.