

17 AUG 1996

Turkey-Asem

TURKEY SEEKS MALAYSIA'S SUPPORT IN ITS APPLICATION TO JOIN ASEM

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- Turkey has sought Malaysia's support in its application to participate in the Asia-Europe Summit (Asem).

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said that Turkish Prime Minister Prof Dr Necmettin Erbakan made the request to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at a meeting of the Turkish and Malaysian delegations today.

"Dr Mahathir stated that Malaysia will convey Turkey's wish to the relevant authorities," he said in his briefing to reporters after the meeting here.

The first Asem was held in Bangkok in March. Asem brings together the leaders of 15 countries of the European Union (EU) and Asian countries including the Asean seven, China, Japan and South Korea.

Abdullah said that discussions centred on efforts to further enhance bilateral cooperation especially in the economic field.

Dr Erbakan, who arrived here at the head of the Turkish delegation yesterday, earlier had a four-eye meeting with Dr Mahathir.

Abdullah said that Dr Mahathir and Dr Erbakan also agreed to set RM3.8 billion (US\$1.5 billion) as the target for the volume of trade between the two countries. The trade volume between Malaysia and Turkey was RM201 million during the first three months of the year.

He said that they identified fields to further upgrade cooperation between the two countries like the construction, defence, electronics, automotive and tourism fields.

"They acknowledged the important role played by the private sector to forge closer trade ties between Malaysia and Turkey," he said, adding that the two leaders agreed to initiate a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation in such fields.

According to him, Dr Mahathir had stated that it had always been Malaysia's wish to take part in development projects in Turkey including in the Mediterranean country's free trade zones to enable Malaysia to further penetrate the European and Balkan markets.

Abdullah said that Dr Mahathir and Dr Erbakan agreed that Asean establish ties with the Economic Cooperation comprising the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey.

He said that Malaysia requested Turkish assistance to enable it to play an active role in the development of the Balkan states and countries of the CIS and hoped that the private sector could establish joint ventures in those areas especially in the construction sector.

The Turkish airlines was also expected to operate its services here soon, he said.

Abdullah said that both leaders expressed satisfaction over the existing political cooperation between the two countries including their participation in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and in Bosnia Herzegovina. -- BERNAMA

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