

## **Twitter heads to Turkey for negotiations amid ban threat**

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**By Onur Ant and Ali Berat Meric, Bloomberg**

Twitter Inc is seeking to ease tensions in Turkey amid accusations from prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's administration that the US company evades taxes and refuses to abide by Turkish law.

Twitter vice president of Global Public Policy Colin Crowell will meet Tayfun Acarer, head of Turkey's Information and Communications Technologies Authority, in Ankara today, a spokesman for Acarer said by phone today. Twitter didn't immediately respond to requests for comment made by e-mail.

Erdogan accuses the San Francisco-based company of tax evasion, while Burhan Kuzu, the lawmaker appointed to lead efforts to rewrite Turkey's constitution, filed a case with the Constitutional Court on April 10 to have a ban on the microblogging service reinstated. Kuzu cited insults to his personal dignity that were posted on Twitter.

Turkey banned access to the website before March 30, 2014 municipal elections after Erdogan vowed to "dig up" Twitter and other social media websites where leaks purporting to reveal corruption in his government were being posted. Erdogan has dismissed the leaks as fake or irrelevant, and accused Twitter of a double standard in not blocking content upon Turkish court orders. The Constitutional Court lifted the ban on April 3, 2014, a decision that Erdogan said he didn't respect and his administration has said it will seek to undo.

"These companies will comply with the constitution, laws and tax code of my country like any other international firm," Erdogan said on Apr 12, 2014, according to the state-run Anadolu news agency. "Twitter, YouTube and Facebook are companies established to earn profits that evade taxes. This has nothing to do with freedoms."

The European Union and US have criticized the Twitter ban as well as a ban on access to Google Inc's YouTube that was imposed on March 27, 2014. The lead candidate of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's party for European Parliament elections, David McAllister, cited on April 12, 2014 what he called an "assault on

freedom of expression” by Erdogan, saying it showed Turkey wasn’t politically fit to join the EU.

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