Turkey has long sought to act as a bridge between the East and the West, and today it aspires to be not only a bridge but also a regional factor that is significant on its own right in a strategically important region. A Turkey that can combine the elements of both the Western and Muslim civilisations and ways of thinking may become a most successful and competitive society of the 21st century, and may serve as a model and regional hub for neighbouring countries and regions.

However, for the time being, although opening up to the East brings opportunities involving long-forgotten neighbouring regions or remote markets of Asia and Africa, they only constitute ancillary benefits rather than a real alternative for EU relations.