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## **Turkish PM Regrets EU 'Obstacles'**

Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan has accused the EU of placing new obstacles on Turkey's bid to enter the bloc.

"Don't ask us for things that aren't part of the programme," he said, adding that the EU should be "honest and sincere" in its approach.

The draft, seen by the BBC, says the pace of reform in Turkey has slowed.

It urges Turkey to guarantee greater freedom of expression and human rights.

The report also says Ankara has made no progress towards normalising relations with EU member Cyprus.

Turkey has not yet opened its air and sea ports to Cyprus, the north of which remains under Turkish occupation.

Finland, which holds the EU rotating presidency, is continuing last-ditch efforts to break the deadlock over Cyprus, which many see as the biggest obstacle on Turkey's road to Europe.

### **'Sincere approach'**

Responding to the report, Mr. Erdogan said the EU should end the economic isolation of the northern part of Cyprus before Turkey meets a treaty obligation to open its air and seaports to Greek Cypriot vessels.

He also said Turkey had met past treaty obligations set out by the EU and was moving to meet the latest ones.

"You wanted us to do everything that was required by the Copenhagen political criteria and we did it," he said.

"Now all of the Maastricht criteria chapters are in the open and we're doing those too. Ask us for these things and, if we do them, show us an honest and sincere approach."

### **Sensitive issue**

The draft report calls for Turkey to ensure freedom of expression by repealing or amending a controversial article of the penal code under which Orhan Pamuk, the winner of the Nobel prize for literature, and other Turkish intellectuals have been taken to court for their political views.

The report also highlights serious concerns about allegations of torture and ill-treatment, public statements by senior military figures, the rights of Kurds, women, religious groups and trade unions.

The European Commission says it will intensify the monitoring of all these key political criteria for membership. Any serious breach could lead to a suspension of membership talks.

But, according to the BBC's Oana Lungescu in Brussels, a partial freeze of talks may become inevitable by the end of the year anyway, as Turkey shows no sign of keeping its promise over Cyprus.

The draft report leaves blank the space for recommendations on this sensitive issue.

Few European countries want to take the risk of a major crisis with their big Muslim neighbour, our correspondent says.

But, she says, if things continue as they are, EU leaders will have little margin of manoeuvre when they discuss Turkey's membership bid at a summit in December.

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