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CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES 13.10.2010 www.osw.waw.pl

Germany is intensifying relations with Turkey

Chancellor Angela Merkel met on 9–10 October in Berlin with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The main subjects of the talks were the integration of Turks in Germany and the process of Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU. Germany hinted a change in its approach towards Turkey as regards both of these issues at a time when Turkey's economic and geopolitical significance in the region is growing.

This was the second bilateral meeting of Merkel and Erdogan this year and the sixth meeting of the two countries' most senior officials. German President Christian Wulff will visit Ankara on 18 October. Two more meetings of Merkel and Erdogan have been scheduled for 2011; in March they will open the IT fair CeBIT, during which Turkey will be the partner state, and in October the Turkish prime minister will visit – having been invited by Angela Merkel – to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the German-Turkish agreement on the recruitment of Turkish workers. Additionally, Chancellor Merkel hinted she would support the continuation of Turkey's EU accession process and offered during her visit to Cyprus in January to mediate in the Cypriot-Turkish dispute, which is one of the main impediments in the negotiations between Turkey and the EU. Given the increasing economic and geopolitical significance of Turkey, the German government seems to be abandoning the rhetoric linked to the concept of the 'privileged partnership', which it was fostering as an alternative to Turkey's EU membership. It is also trying to soothe the frictions which have occurred in German-Turkish relations due to the pushing through of that idea. <krut>