



# İKVM NİTİLY



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## TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ELECTIONS: PROSPECTS FOR A REVITALISATION?

The presidential and parliamentary elections in Türkiye to be held on 14 May will determine the future direction of Türkiye-EU relations.

**T**ürkiye's relations with the EU have gone through a long and arduous process and entered into a period of stagnation since 2016. The negotiations for Türkiye's accession to the EU have come to a standstill since the opening of the chapter on financial and budgetary provisions in June 2016. The General Affairs Council (GAC) of the EU noted in its conclusions in June 2018 that no new chapters will be opened. It also added that the start of the Customs Union modernisation process is not contemplated. The visa liberalisation process which started with the signing of the Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement in 2013 and accelerated with the Turkey-EU Refugee Deal of 2016 could not be completed.

The positive agenda proposed by the Union in 2020 as a means to defuse the tension in the relations and lay the groundwork for a re-engagement could not produce the desired effects. It did however manage to control the dangerous heightening of a confrontational turn in the relations. While high-level dialogue meetings were initiated in areas such as climate and public health, trade facilitation talks took place between the European Commission and the Ministry of Trade with a view to providing solutions to trade irritants. It is certainly the case that the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in Türkiye to be held on 14 May with the possibility of a second round on 28 May, will make a critical impact on the future direction of Türkiye-EU relations.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was first elected as the President while Türkiye was still governed by a parliamentary regime. With the 2017 referendum, the country made a transition towards a presidential regime and President Erdoğan was elected for the second time in 2018. He is the candidate of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the People's Alliance (Cumhur İttifakı) this time as well. The other candidates are



Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the Chairperson of the Republican People's Party (CHP) who is the joint candidate of the Nation Alliance (Millet İttifakı), Muharrem İnce, the Chairperson of the Country Party (MP) who was the candidate for the CHP in the 2018 elections and Sinan Oğan, who is the candidate for the Victory Party (ZP) and ATA Alliance. According to the latest opinion poll by Asal, Erdoğan is set to receive 46.8% of the votes while Kılıçdaroğlu is set to receive 42%, İnce 8.4% and Oğan 2.6%. In another opinion poll by Yöneylem Araştırma, Kılıçdaroğlu leads with 43.8% followed by Erdoğan with 39.2%, İnce with 8.6% and Oğan with 2.7%. Regarding the parliamentary elections, various polls point to a range between 28-30% and 37-40% for AKP, 24 to 28-31% for CHP. There is considerable variation in the results of opinion polls and surveys. While who the winner of the presidential election will be causes the most anticipation, the distribution of the votes in the parliamentary elections will also be critically important.

The results of the elections are critical for the future of the country since the Nation Alliance runs the

election campaign on an agenda of returning to the parliamentary system and carrying out reforms which are expected to bring about progress in the rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms and also run an economic recovery program. If President Erdoğan and the People's Alliance win, then we can expect a continuation of the present regime which may take an even more conservative and authoritarian turn. It also seems to be a geopolitical election which will make an impact on Türkiye's international orientation in the direction of a revitalisation of the western dimension of a strengthening of the Eurasian dimension.

Following the elections Türkiye's relations with the EU will be on the table. If the candidate of the Nation Alliance Kılıçdaroğlu wins, the agenda will likely include a revitalisation of the relations on the basis of the Customs Union modernisation, Green Deal and visa liberalisation processes. Türkiye's probable return to a parliamentary system where a system of checks and balances are better protected is also in line with the EU's norms and values as embedded in the Copenhagen criteria. The differences over the

Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean will likely continue even in the case of a change in government. But still a more amicable relationship based on dialogue may also serve to view these conflicts under a new light and provide for an impetus for renewed negotiation.

The refugee issue will continue to be critical for the future of Türkiye-EU relations. The CHP and İYİ Party's insistence on the return of Syrian refugees to their homeland is surely viewed sceptically by the EU in the light of the Turkey-EU deal and due to its impact on migration management and humanitarian dimensions. Hence in the case of a change in government, the new President should make sure that international protection for refugees continue and forced expulsions will not take place. The management of the economy will also be critical. Re-establishment of the autonomy of such institutions as the Central Bank will be viewed favourably by the EU and a rationalised management of the economy in addition to a positive turn in rule of law issues may also increase Türkiye's value as a destination for investment and economic cooperation.

Last but not least, what about Türkiye's membership perspective? While Türkiye continues to be a candidate country, highest level EU officials such as the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and leaders of the Member States no longer make any references to Türkiye's status as a country to join the EU in the near future. In her 2022 State of the Union address, President von der Leyen called out to "the people of the Western Balkans, of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia" that they are a part of the European family but did not care to include the people of Türkiye. The recent membership applications by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia revitalised the enlargement process of the EU. Although these countries are not likely to fulfil the conditions for membership in the near future, it is up to the EU to respond to the rightful expectations of all the candidate countries including Türkiye by encouraging and supporting their European perspective and progress towards membership.

If Türkiye's critical elections lead the way to a renewal of Türkiye's democratisation efforts and lead to improvements in rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, then Türkiye may be re-inserted into the map of an enlarged EU. This will surely make a positive contribution to the EU which is struggling with internal problems and trying to find a normatively sound and pragmatically valid position in the midst of the global competition for power between the US and China. Improvement in the political and economic situation in Türkiye and a rationalised, transparent, and effective management of the economy with a renewed emphasis on climate and environmental policies will most likely lead to effective cooperation and coordination between Türkiye and the EU and elevate Türkiye's value as an indispensable partner and future member state.



## IKV ORGANISED A WEBINAR ON THE SECOND YEAR OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR AND EUROPE

IKV organised a webinar entitled "The Second Year of the Russia-Ukraine War and Its Effects on Europe" on 17 March 2023. During the webinar, moderated by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit, the multidimensional effects of the Russia-Ukraine war on Europe and global politics were discussed.

The opening speech of the webinar was delivered by IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu. Chairman Zeytinoğlu stated that Europe unexpectedly faced the facts of war after Russia's attack to Ukraine in violation of international law and the terms of the UN Charter. Referring to the rising importance of NATO membership, the alternation of the Germany's defence and security policy, efforts to reduce the dependency on Russian energy, the changing EU enlargement framework and the crimes against humanity committed in the Ukraine war, Zeytinoğlu concluded his speech by emphasising that this war changed and transformed European geopolitics.

After the opening speech, the first panellist, IPC Senior Fellow Prof. Atila Eralp stated that Europe has



been going through a "multiple crisis process" since 2008. Prof. Eralp noted that the financial crisis brought a "concerned Europe" on its own future and this fact was followed by the migrant crisis, Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and now the Ukraine war. Atila Eralp underlined that although discussions regarding the future and uncertainty arise in every crisis, the "security" discussions became more visible in the last crisis. Pointing out that there is a process where "the old is dead and the new not yet born" in terms of security, Eralp emphasised that Türkiye's geopolitical importance has increased after the Russia-Ukraine war. He also added that Türkiye

cannot play its geopolitical cards without achieving a progress in its democracy.

Taking the floor after Eralp, Kadir Has University Faculty Member Prof. Sinem Akgül Açıkmеше started her speech with the emphasis on "comprehensive security". Stating that the Russia-Ukraine war changed the security paradigm of Europe in a hybrid way in areas such as defence, finance, energy and food, Açıkmеше noted that the EU started to perceive Russia as a threat by evaluating it within the scope of securitisation. In addition, Prof. Açıkmеше pointed out that the EU, which has placed food

security into global context after the Russia-Ukraine war, is making efforts to provide more support to underdeveloped countries. Finally, Açıkmеше emphasised that the acceptance of Ukraine and Moldova's applications for EU membership is a unique development for the EU.

The third panellist of the panel, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas addressed the Russia-Ukraine war from a different perspective and explained how the EU's green transition process was affected by the war. Stressing the importance of the European Green Deal goals in terms of the use of fossil fuels and reducing Europe's dependence on Russia, Assoc. Prof. Nas stated that the war did not hinder the EU's transformation into renewable energy, on the contrary, it accelerated it. Lastly, Nas noted that the EU acts to overcome bureaucratic obstacles in order to speed up the decision-making procedures for energy and investment projects.

The next panellist, Okan University Faculty Member Habibe Özdal evaluated what the war means for Russian foreign policy and emphasised that Russia's goals on

Ukraine is unclear. Özdal also stated that the constant changes in Russia's strategies and rhetoric is an indicator of instability. Expressing that Russia seems to have with drawn into itself by turning into its domestic politics, she stressed that Russia also makes itself isolated from the West. Drawing attention to Türkiye's mediation role during the war, Özdal underlined that Türkiye follows a balanced foreign policy in the international arena. The last panellist of the webinar, Marmara University Faculty Member Prof. Çağdaş Üngör discussed the war in detail through its effects on China. Üngör stated that China, which appears to be a secret and pro-Russian actor, has taken pro-peace moves against the war. In addition, she stressed that China represents an axis as the world's second largest economy and is perceived as a "threat" especially by the US in this period, which is called new Cold War era. Üngör noted that the Russia-Ukraine war did not strengthen China's hand and did not serve its interests.

The highly participated webinar ended with a Q&A session.

## IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU ATTENDED THE INTERNATIONAL AID MEETING RELATED TO EARTHQUAKE-STRICKEN AREAS



On 24 March 2023, IKV Chairman and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB) Vice President Ayhan Zeytinoğlu attended an online meeting which aimed to assess the earthquake that occurred in Türkiye and Syria.

The meeting was organised within the scope of the programme carried out by the German Marshall Fund (GMF) think tank in cooperation with TOBB.

Making the opening speech of the meeting, Zeytinoğlu touched upon the devastating effect of the earthquake and the projects to be made by TOBB to ensure recovery in the coming period. Zeytinoğlu also highlighted the significance of the International

Donors' Conference, held in Brussels on 20 March 2023, in order to heal the wounds of the earthquake that affected approximately 13.5 million people directly and according to official figures, resulted in the loss of lives of approximately 50,000 people.

Permanent Delegation of Türkiye to the EU Ambassador Faruk Kaymakcı, GMF South and Executive Director Ian Lesser, European Commission European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) Deputy Director General Michael Koehler and Senior Program Officer Ceylan Akman Canbalek were the other speakers.

## IKV İSTANBUL EUIC ATTENDED THE DISASTER AND WOMEN PANEL

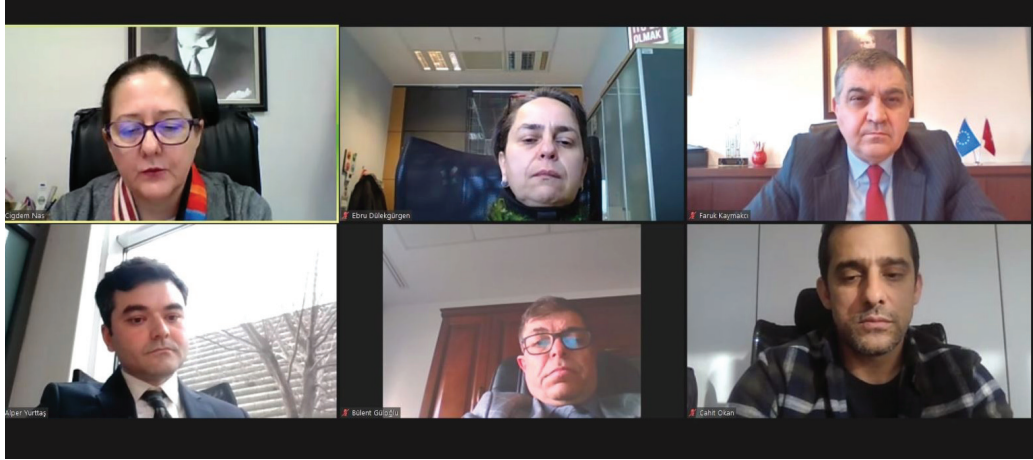
The "Disaster and Women Panel" was held on 8 March 2023, in partnership with the EU Delegation to Türkiye and the Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality. EU Information Centres Network operating in 19 provinces in Türkiye participated in the panel online. At the panel moderated by Journalist Afşin Yurdakul, the physical and

psychological effects of the 6 February earthquakes, which affected eleven provinces in Türkiye, on women were discussed in all aspects. Academicians, non-governmental organisations working on gender equality, representatives from national and international organisations participated in the panel.





İKv AGENDA



## İKv SECRETARY GENERAL NAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

In February and March 2023, İKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas discussed Türkiye-EU relations and crucial foreign policy issues in various events and programmes.

On 2 February 2023, İKV Secretary General Nas attended the opening meeting of the Jean Monnet module titled "EU Integration and Türkiye (IntegrEUtor)" carried out by Istanbul Technical University (İTÜ). During the online meeting, İKV Secretary General Nas discussed the current situation and expectations in relations between Türkiye and the EU.

İKv Secretary General Nas spoke at a webinar entitled "A Long and Thin Road: the EU and Türkiye From Past to Present" within the Bruxircle programme on 9 March 2023. At the event attended by students from various universities, Assoc. Prof. Nas touched upon the Türkiye-EU relations with a special focus on historical and latest developments.

On 18 and 23 March 2023, İKV Secretary General Nas gave two seminars on "European Green Deal, Green Growth Strategies and Türkiye" within the scope of climate change and sustainability trainings. The impacts of climate change, the European Green Deal process, climate and sustainability policies were discussed in the online training seminars organised within the scope of Boğaziçi University Lifelong Education Center.

On 21 March, İKV Secretary General Nas held a seminar on "EU New Term Priorities and Green Deal" within the scope of the EU Certificate programme organised with the support of Konrad Adenauer Foundation and in cooperation with TANDEM, TESAM and Marmara University. During the seminar, Nas gave a speech about the strategic agenda of the EU institutions, and the scope, objectives, and effects of the European Green Deal.

İKv Secretary General Nas made a speech on "EU

Institutions, Structure and the Belgium's Place in the EU" on 22 March 2023. In the webinar organised within the scope of Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) Future Leaders Executive Program (FLEP), Assoc. Prof. Nas discussed the establishment and development of the European Communities, the emergence of the idea of the EU, the institutional structure of the EU, its supranational characteristics, important policies, objectives and critical issues.

İKv Secretary General Nas spoke at the seminar entitled "The Structure, Institutions and General Framework of the European Union" on 23 March 2023. During the webinar, Assoc. Prof. Nas addressed the main issues and challenges the EU faces, while also addressing the twin priorities that are known to be the green transformation and the digital agenda.

İKv Secretary General Nas made a presentation on "EU Security Strategies" in the certificate programme entitled "The Big Game: Back to the Future - Global Powers and Security Strategies" organised by the Foreign Policy Institute (DPE) on 25 March 2023.

İKv Secretary General Nas made a presentation on the "Modernisation of the Türkiye-EU Customs Union and the European Green Deal" within the scope of TISK Meetings held online on 28 March 2023.

The article entitled "Structural Transformation for an Inclusive and Resilient Economy", written by İKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, was published in the special issue of the Congress of First Quality Magazine, the publication organ of the Turkish Quality Association (KalDer) on 28 March 2023.

## TIMELINE MARCH 2023

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8	İKv EU Info Centre attended the "Disaster and Women Panel".
9	İKv Secretary General Nas spoke at a webinar entitled "A Long and Thin Road: the EU and Türkiye From Past to Present" within the Bruxircle programme.
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13	European Commission announced that the EU approved the "Antakya Künevesi" from Türkiye as Protected Geographical Indication.
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16	Finnish President Niinistö paid an official visit to Türkiye.
17	İKv organised a webinar entitled "The Second Year of the Russia-Ukraine War and Its Effects on Europe".
18	İKv Secretary General Nas spoke at the "European Green Deal, Green Growth Strategies and Türkiye".
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21	İKv Secretary General Nas held a seminar on "EU New Term Priorities and Green Deal".
22	İKv Secretary General Nas made a speech on "EU Institutions, Structure and the Belgium's Place in the EU" webinar.
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24	İKv Chairman Zeytinoğlu attended an online meeting on the earthquake that struck Türkiye and Syria.
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28	İKv Secretary General Nas spoke about the "Modernisation of the Türkiye-EU Customs Union and the European Green Deal" at the TISK Meetings.
29	Hungarian President Katalin Novák visited Türkiye.
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31	Minister Çavuşoğlu visited Hungary.

## İKv SECRETARY GENERAL NAS ADDRESSED TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS FOR POLİTİKİYOL



On 5 February 2023, the article entitled "Batı'nın Türkiye'ye Yaklaşımı ve AB Süreci" (The West's Approach to Türkiye and EU Process), written by İKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, was published on the news website "Politikyol".

On 26 March, the article entitled "AB ile Yeni Bir Başlangıç Mümkün mü?" (Is A New Beginning Possible with the EU?), written by İKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, was published on "Politikyol".

## HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

## A NEW CHAPTER IN TÜRKİYE-EGYPT RELATIONS



On 18 March 2023, Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu paid an official visit to Egypt and held a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry in Cairo. In the meeting, all aspects of Türkiye-Egypt relations were discussed and views on regional and international issues were exchanged.

Saying "I'm very glad that we are taking steps for normalising relations with Egypt", Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu stated that both countries

will develop diplomatic relations step-by-step over a short period. Minister Çavuşoğlu added there is a sincere political will to develop these relations and highlighted both parties' willingness to increase relations in some areas including transportation, energy and trade. Çavuşoğlu also pointed out developing bilateral relations as a way to ensure peace in the region.

For his part, Minister Shoukry said the development of Turkish-Egyptian relations is in the interest of both

countries. Emphasising that there is a willingness to keep communication channels between the two countries open and continue coordination, Minister Shoukry stressed that Türkiye and Egypt shared a common vision on many regional and international issues. Minister Shoukry also added that the resumption of ties and the appointment of ambassadors were discussed.

Minister Çavuşoğlu is the first foreign minister to visit Egypt from Türkiye in eleven years.

## FOREIGN MINISTER ÇAVUŞOĞLU CAME TOGETHER WITH EU MEMBER STATES' AMBASSADORS



Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu came together with EU and Member States' ambassadors to Türkiye and other European diplomats in Ankara on 9 March 2023. While it was announced that the primary agenda of the meeting was the earthquake disaster in Türkiye, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu stressed the "strong international solidarity" has been shown after the deadly earthquakes that shook the southern provinces of the country.

"This support not only gives us morale but also strength", Çavuşoğlu added and stated that

Türkiye has encountered a disaster that resulted in a major loss of life and destruction in the republic's history as well as the most unusual natural disaster to occur in a European country in a century.

Minister Çavuşoğlu also expressed gratitude to all countries that sent their officials on solidarity visits and rescue teams to Türkiye and its earthquake-hit regions by emphasising that the EU, with its members, candidates and institutions had a great share in this support.

## CRITICAL MEETING IN ANKARA FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP OF FINLAND



Upon the invitation by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Finland Sauli Niinistö paid an official visit to Türkiye on 16-17 March 2023. On the first day of the visit, Niinistö visited Kahramanmaraş province, the centre of the 6 February earthquakes, and announced that Finland would continue to provide humanitarian and expert assistance to help those affected by the earthquake.

On the second day of the visit, Niinistö was welcomed by President Erdoğan with an official ceremony at the Presidential Complex. The two leaders made a joint press statement

after their meeting and both leaders gave major statements on Finland's NATO membership, which was the main agenda of the meeting. President Erdoğan stated, "We have decided to initiate the approval process of Finland's accession protocol to NATO in our Parliament due to the sensitivity of addressing our security concerns." The parties reviewed Türkiye-Finland relations in all aspects and discussed the steps that can be taken to improve cooperation between the two countries. They also shared their views on Türkiye-EU relations as well as current regional and global issues.

## MINISTER ÇAVUŞOĞLU ATTENDED THE G20 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING



Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu attended the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting, which was held in New Delhi on 1-2 March 2023, under the Indian Presidency of the G20.

The meeting was attended by over 40 foreign ministers, including Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang. At the opening of the meeting, a minute of silence was observed for those who lost their lives in the earthquakes in Türkiye. Minister Çavuşoğlu exchanged views on prominent issues on the global agenda such as humanitarian aid and disaster relief, food and energy security, combating terrorism, strengthening multilateralism and development cooperation. Çavuşoğlu also held bilateral meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Russia, India, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Australia, and the UK.

## DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS ALTUN SPOKE AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Director of Communications, Fahrettin Altun, spoke at the European Parliament at a panel titled "Solidarity to Overcome Disaster" in Brussels. Altun expressed gratitude for many countries' response to Türkiye's call for international assistance, and the support and solidarity received from friends abroad, including many European governments, after the devastating earthquakes that struck eleven provinces in Türkiye. Altun emphasised the need for international cooperation to address global challenges such as pandemics, wars, and disasters, and develop a new model of cooperation to stop them and heal the wounds.



Altun noted that healing the wounds of the disaster would be a long-term task and that over 3.7 million people had been evacuated, and steps were being taken to support them financially and emotionally to rebuild their lives.



HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

## AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY MINISTER KIRIŞÇI ATTENDED THE UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE

On 23 March 2023, Agriculture and Forestry Minister Vahit Kirişçi participated in the UN 2023 Water Conference, co-hosted by Tajikistan and the Netherlands, in New York. Within the scope of the Conference, Minister Kirişçi delivered a speech on behalf of Türkiye at the General Assembly.

During his speech, Minister Kirişçi drew attention to the fact that Türkiye has been facing more frequent and intense droughts and floods due to its location in the Mediterranean basin, which renders Türkiye more vulnerable against climate

change. While saying that Türkiye, as a water stressed country, has been establishing systems to manage water resources in a reasonable and holistic way, Kirişçi stated that Türkiye gives importance to developing water monitoring networks based on hydrology and climate.

Reminding the water projects launched by Türkiye in Africa, Minister Kirişçi also underscored that Türkiye would continue to contribute to the global efforts that aim to ensure access to safe and fresh drinking water.



## MINISTER ÇAVUŞOĞLU VISITED ESTONIA



Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu paid a visit to Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, upon the invitation of Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu on 1 February 2023. During the meeting between Minister Çavuşoğlu and his Estonian counterpart, all aspects of bilateral relations were discussed, and views were exchanged on Türkiye-EU relations, NATO enlargement, issues in Ukraine, the Caucasus and Syria.

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu stated that the trade volume target between the two countries is to exceed 1 billion dollars. Minister Çavuşoğlu signalled more cooperation in many areas such as economy, education, tourism, defence industry and counterterrorism. Çavuşoğlu also met with Estonian President Alar Karis and invited President Alar Karis to the Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

## HUNGARIAN PRESIDENT NOVÁK VISITED TÜRKİYE AFTER EARTHQUAKE DISASTER



As Türkiye heals its wounds after the twin earthquakes struck on 6 February in Kahramanmaraş and Gaziantep, Hungarian President Katalin Novák visited Türkiye on 29-31 March 2023. After immediate rescue aid from Hungary which saved thirty-five lives from debris, Novák visited those places, including Hatay.

In her Türkiye visit, Hungarian President Novák came together with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to discuss bilateral relations, Türkiye's mediation role in the war in Ukraine and regional and global developments. Hungarian

President Novák also underscored Türkiye's strategic contributions on energy security as well as Hungary's dependence on the TurkStream. While visiting Hatay with Hungarian rescuers, including the rescue dog named Hope, she also visited the five-year-old boy Ahmet Yıldırım, who also rescued by the Hungarian rescuers. Novák brought toys to Ahmet and played with him as and said, "You are there in the hearts of Hungarian people" and added that his rescue on the fifth day is a true miracle.

## TÜRKİYE AND GREECE MADE SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN SEVERAL AREAS OF COOPERATION



The deputy foreign ministers of Türkiye and Greece, Burak Akçapar and Konstantinos Fragkogiannis, held a meeting on 22 March 2023 to discuss the progress in the Türkiye-Greece Positive Agenda dialogue, which mainly focuses on economic and trade sectors.

Many items on the Positive Agenda list have been successfully concluded, and satisfactory progress has been made on others. After the meeting, a statement by the Foreign Ministry indicated that "a detailed update was made on the progress achieved over the 25 topics of the Positive Agenda list" such as the cooperation and enhancement in the fields of tourism, transport and

telecommunications, entrepreneurship, energy, CT, education, social security, health, and the environment. The two countries have agreed to explore additional items of cooperation. The meeting also has set the framework for finalising relevant agreements to be signed during the next high-level meeting.

Despite their historical rivalry and past strained ties, Türkiye and Greece have shown solidarity in recent months, with Greece sending rescue workers and humanitarian aid after earthquakes in Türkiye, and Türkiye extending condolences to Greece after a deadly train crash.



## EU GRANTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION TO ANTAKYA'S KÜNEFE

European Commission announced that the EU approved the "Antakya Künefesini" from Türkiye as Protected Geographical Indication.

The EU approved the Antakya Künefesini as Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) on 13 March 2023. The Antakya Chamber of Commerce and Industry had applied for registration in March 2019.

The "Antakya Künefesini" is a traditional dessert from Hatay province, located in the southern part of Türkiye, which was deadly hit by the earthquakes occurred on 6 February 2023. The recipe of the

Antakya Künefesini, "transferred from one generation to the next based on a master-apprenticeship relationship", is comprised of a lightly baked thread-like dough (künefelik kadayıf), fresh salt-free fermented Antakya cheese produced by goat milk, butter and syrup.

Künefe is the ninth Turkish food product to be granted EU's PGI, following "Giresun Tombul Fındığı" from the Black

Sea Region. The number of Turkish products pending the EU's approval has reached 42.

The EU maintains a register of the names of agricultural goods, foods and beverages that are protected throughout the EU, which includes geographical indications, product qualities and legal protection instruments.



## THE BLACK SEA GRAIN DEAL HAS BEEN EXTENDED AS A RESULT OF TÜRKİYE'S EFFORTS



The Black Sea Grain Deal, which has provided 25 million tons of grain to the world markets, has been extended for at least 60 days on 19 March 2023, thanks to the joint efforts exerted by Türkiye and the UN.

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borell hailed Türkiye and the UN for securing an extension to the Black Sea Grain Deal.

## TURKISH STOCK EXCHANGE UP 1.9% AT CLOSE

The BIST 100 index, which is Türkiye's benchmark stock index, closed on 22 March 2023 at 5,001.06 points, showing an increase of 1.92% from the previous day's close.

The total market value of the BIST 100 reached approximately 4.06 trillion Turkish liras (213.8 billion dollars) at the end of the trading day, with a daily trading volume of 53.4 billion Turkish liras (2.8 billion dollars).



## EUROPEAN COUNTRIES SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH TÜRKİYE AFTER EARTHQUAKES



While Türkiye continues to heal its wounds after earthquakes, EU Member States have taken several actions to show solidarity with Türkiye and send aid.

Following the earthquakes, some European countries such as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany took action to facilitate visa procedures for victims of the earthquakes in Türkiye to be hosted by relatives living all over Europe.

European governments, municipalities and citizens alike gave a helping hand to Turkish people by sending aid. Belgium's seven most important charities raised 1.8 million euros in favour of the victims of the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria. It was stated that they received three times more donations than an average day.

On 17 February, in the city of Arnhem, which is home to a significant Turkish population, people gathered in front of St. Eusebius Church on Thursday to commemorate the victims of the disaster and show solidarity. The municipality of Arnhem collected 165,000 euros to be used in relief efforts in Türkiye following the disaster. Private donations raised around 89 million euros in the Netherlands in a one-day campaign for earthquake victims supported by national broadcasters. Celebrities such as Karsu joined to promote the campaign and the account. The Dutch government donated 10 million euros in addition to the emergency aid provided.

PAME, one of the largest trade unions in Greece, launched a nationwide fundraising campaign for relief supplies, including blankets, powdered milk, diapers and other personal hygiene items.

Several Italian NGOs also launched fundraisers for people affected by earthquakes. In the UK, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak joined volunteers at the earthquake donation centre and helped students pack items, as well as donating hats, scarves and blankets.

## TÜRKİYE'S FIRST ELECTRIC VEHICLE TOGG RECEIVED MORE THAN 170,000 PRE-ORDERS



Türkiye's first domestically produced electric vehicle, TOGG, received 7,734 pre-orders in the first four hours for its T10X model. Following the pre-order period which ended on 27 March 2023, a draw was held on 29 March to determine those who will receive 20,000 T10X electric cars later this year. While a total of 12,000 T10X electric cars were planned to be sold to those who

won the draw initially, this number rose to 20,000 as more than 170,000 people showed interest in the drawing process.

The price of the T10X will start from 953,000 Turkish liras (about 50,200 dollars) to 1,055 million liras (about 55,600 dollars), while the long-range model was priced at 1,215 million liras (about 64,000 dollars).



## HISTORICAL MARAŞ BAZAAR STARTED TO REOPEN ITS SHUTTERS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE



Following the 6 February earthquakes, several shops, made of stone and wood, were damaged and some were destroyed in the historical Maraş Grand Bazaar, which was built in the 1500s.

The tradesmen started to reopen the shutters in the Grand Bazaar, which consists of a total of nine

entrances and 495 workplaces, for life to return to normal. The Grand Bazaar, Saraçhane, Bakırcılar, Semerciler, Mazmanlar, Kazzazlar and Demirciler Bazaars continued to operate despite the damages from the earthquakes.

During the interviews, the shopkeepers stated that even though the city is empty, they aim to make

people forget their pain for a while by opening their shops. Meanwhile, a small number of shopkeepers in Adıyaman and Malatya, which were also affected by the earthquake, opened their shops or set up stalls on the streets, not to make a profit but to revitalise the city.

## TÜRKİYE ANNOUNCED REPATRIATION OF 12 ANTIQUITIES FROM THE US



Consul General of Türkiye in New York Reyhan Özgür announced that 12 antiquities smuggled out of Türkiye would be returned to their homeland. Özgür drew attention to the deeper cooperation between Türkiye and the US against cultural property smuggling as well as the implications this cooperation would

have on global combat against cultural property smuggling. New York County Assistant District Attorneys Matthew Bogdanos and Lisa DelPizzo also expressed happiness about the repatriation, adding they will continue to work closely with Türkiye. The 12 antiquities will be displayed in a special section

in the Antalya Archaeological Museum as of 31 March 2023.

Between 2002 and 2023, 1,203 cultural properties were returned to Türkiye as a result of Türkiye's intensive efforts to fight cultural property smuggling and protect the cultural heritage of Anatolian lands.

## PHOTO EXHIBITION FEATURING TÜRKİYE'S EARTHQUAKE-HIT AREAS OPENED IN BRUSSELS

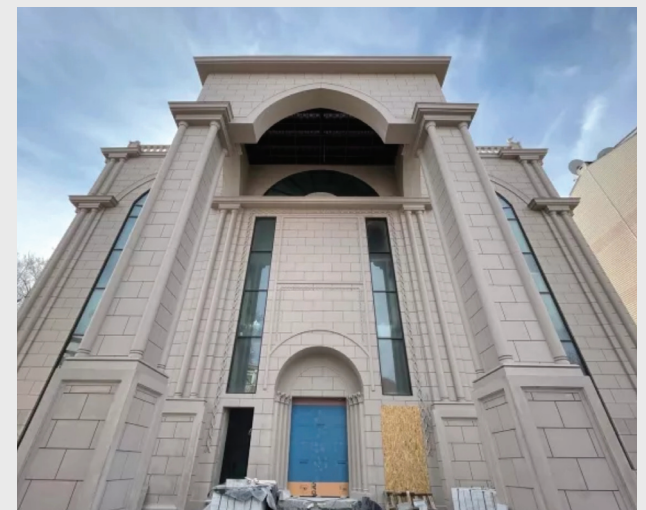
20 photos from the 6 February earthquakes in Türkiye were put on display at the photographic exhibition "The Disaster of the Century: Photos from the Fault Line" at the Brussels Press Club on 20 February.

The photographs documented the aftermath of two deadly earthquakes that struck Türkiye's southeast, causing widespread devastation and a death toll of nearly 50,000. The exhibition was curated by İpek Tekdemir, a communications and policy



adviser at the European Parliament, and aims to honour the victims, survivors, and over 10,000 first responders. The exhibition was attended by EU officials, diplomats, and representatives of various nongovernmental organisations.

## FIRST SYRIAC CHURCH IN THE REPUBLIC ERA EXPECTED TO BE OPENED SOON



The first church built during the Republican era is ready for opening after a short delay due to the deadly earthquakes that hit Türkiye on 6 February 2023. Ephrem Syriac Orthodox Church, which was designed as a five-storey project in an empty area of the Latin Catholic Cemetery, is located in Yeşilköy.

One floor of the church was reserved as a cultural hall for the congregation to come together after rites and ceremonies such as baptism, funerals and weddings, as well as for meetings and conferences. On the ground floor

are the bishop's room, guest rooms and a car park.

The church, located in Yeşilköy on the European side of İstanbul, was laid in 1919 with a ceremony attended by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. This will be the first church built from scratch in the country since 1923, when the Republic of Türkiye was founded. According to the sources, Syriac people came to İstanbul after the 1950s. Except for the church in Tarlabası, which was established in İstanbul in 1844, there is no Syriac Orthodox church on Turkish lands.



# THE EXEMPLARY ACT OF SOLIDARITY: THE DONORS' CONFERENCE

By organising the International Donors' Conference following the devastating earthquakes in the region, the EU showed solidarity and unity with the people of Türkiye and Syria in these challenging times as an indication of the way forward for Türkiye-EU relations.

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IKV Senior Researcher

On 6 February 2023, Türkiye was hit by two earthquakes of magnitude 7.7 and 7.6 within nine hours of each other. The disaster impacted eleven cities and nearly 13.5 million people in the south of the country as well as the northern regions of Syria and left around 50,000 people dead, many more injured. Thousands of buildings including houses, schools, hospitals, public buildings turned to rubble and airports, highways and infrastructure became unable to function, making it impossible even for search and rescue efforts to be carried out effectively, let alone for life to go back to normal. The extent of the area and the damage was so big that it was beyond the means of any one country to deal with.

## EU Support on the Ground

As soon as it became clear that the capacity of the local and national disaster response teams was not enough to manage a disaster with such serious consequences, Türkiye requested assistance from the EU Civil Protection Mechanism which coordinates response to disasters and emergencies at the EU level. In a very short period of time, help in the form of search and rescue efforts was under way from European countries reaching a total of 1750 search and rescue specialists, 111 search and rescue dogs and six medical teams. The EU Civil Protection team of experts arrived in the affected areas to help with the search and rescue efforts, as well as to support the coordination of local, national, and international aid. Within the scope of the Civil Protection Mechanism, health services and five field hospitals were also deployed to the region in order to support the disrupted health services.

## The International Donors' Conference

EU's support for Türkiye in the aftermath of the earthquakes



did not stop there. The European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced plans, together with the Swedish Presidency of the European Council, for organising a Donors' Conference in support of Türkiye and Syria. The International Donors' Conference 'Together for the people in Türkiye and Syria,' co-hosted by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Ulf Kristersson, for the Swedish Presidency of the Council took place in Brussels on 20 March 2023. According to the preliminary post-disaster needs assessment report titled "Türkiye Earthquakes Recovery and Reconstruction Assessment - TERRA", prepared by the Strategy and Budget Office of the Turkish Presidency in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, along with the EU ahead of the Conference, Türkiye's needs are estimated to be 100 billion US dollars. The international community

consisting of, but not exclusive to, more than 60 delegations from the EU and its partners, the EU Member States, the UN, international and European financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) came together on the day. European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi and Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Johan Forsell jointly moderated the session in which donations were made.

7 billion euros were raised in funds to support the people of Türkiye and Syria. A total of 6.05 billion euros have been raised for Türkiye, 1.705 billion of which will be given as grants and 4.292 billion in loans. Syria will receive 911 million in grants. Of the total amount, 3.6 billion was pledged by Team Europe which comprises the European Commission and the EU Member States, the European Investment Bank and the

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The European Commission itself pledged 1 billion euros for reconstruction in Türkiye and a further package of 108 million for humanitarian assistance. The Council of Europe Development Bank also made a contribution; 500 million euros in loans and an additional 3 million in grants.

The funds directed to Türkiye will be mainly used to help with humanitarian needs and the reconstruction of the affected regions, making sure all international standards for construction in seismic regions and the priorities of the Turkish Green Deal are taken into account. Von der Leyen stated that the EU was ready to share its "expertise and experience on building seismic resistant houses, schools and hospitals," and to "work together to build environmentally friendly houses to reduce energy rules and the impact on the climate."

Addressing the Conference by videoconference, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said "the solidarity

displayed during these difficult days" by Türkiye's friends will not be forgotten and expressed his gratitude to everyone "who stand with us during these trying times." He referred to the support given by the EU and the international community as "yet another example showing the strong basis of the relations between our peoples."

While von der Leyen praised the international solidarity shown by the international community, President of the Council of the EU Prime Minister of Sweden Kristersson referred to the Conference as an opportunity "to turn our words of condolences and solidarity into action" and said the Conference had "reached its goal" to provide relief, recovery, and rehabilitation after the devastating natural disaster. Delivering a speech at the Conference, Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu expressed his gratitude for the solidarity and thanked the international community for their support.

## On the Sidelines of the Conference

Ahead of the Conference, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu held a tête-à-tête with his Greek counterpart Nikos Dendias after which they pledged to maintain solidarity after the earthquakes in southern Türkiye and a fatal train accident in Greece. In a joint statement, they referred to the positive atmosphere in the relations between the two countries and agreed to support each other's candidacy bids on international platforms.

The Donors' Conference was exemplary of the solidarity the EU and the international community showed towards the people of Türkiye during a very difficult time. It is an indication of the extent of the relations between the EU and Türkiye when they can work constructively and in unity towards a common goal.