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THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR AND TURKEY'S POSITION

Supporting a diplomatic solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis, Turkey has proposed acting as a mediator between Moscow and Kyiv, however as the tension escalates into a broader war, Turkey finds itself in an increasingly delicate position.

Turkey is one of the countries that will be most affected by the Ukrainian-Russian war due to its good relations with these two countries, which stand in a delicate balance, and for many reasons such as the security of the Black Sea. Aware of the possible risks, Ankara has been trying to de-escalate the crisis from the very beginning.

Dynamics of Turkey's Relations with Ukraine and Russia

Looking at Turkey's relations with Ukraine, Crimea and the Crimean Tatars occupy a special place due to Turkey's strong historical ties. Turkey, which defines Russia's intervention in Crimea as an invasion and rejects the illegal annexation of Crimea, has supported Ukraine in this regard from day one and has frequently expressed its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, political unity, and territorial integrity. Turkey has also gradually expanded its defence cooperation with Ukraine, particularly through the sale of armed drones. In addition, the signing of a free trade agreement, which is projected to increase the volume of bilateral trade between Turkey and Ukraine to 10 billion dollars, and a defence agreement seeking to boost the drone trade between the two countries within the framework of President Erdoğan's visit to Ukraine on 3 February 2022 is expected to advance relations further.

Turkey's relations with Russia are more complex. Turkey has developed strong bilateral relations with Russia in the economic and political spheres despite being a member of NATO. Turkey and Russia have managed to maintain a functioning relationship even though their interests diverge



in geographies such as Syria, North Africa and the South Caucasus. Russia is Turkey's largest supplier of natural gas and one of Turkey's top three trading partners. Turkey imports 70% of its wheat, one of the most strategic products in agriculture, from Russia. Russia is one of the countries that sends the most tourists to Turkey. In addition, Russia is the country building Turkey's first nuclear power plant and from which Turkey has acquired the S-400 air defence system despite enormous pressure from the US.

Turkey has so far managed to maintain a balance between actors such as Russia, Ukraine, NATO and the US despite the present conflicts and hostilities. However, the Russia-Ukraine war risks pressuring Turkey's policy which is based on a delicate balancing act. As the level of tension escalates and the West slaps massive sanctions on Russia, Turkey might be expected to make a choice. This implies that it will not be easy for Turkey to escape sanctions imposed on Russia, and Turkey might face significant pressure to align with

the restrictive measures imposed by the EU.

In case of deterioration of relations with Russia, many economic and political issues may cause trouble for Turkey. The damage to bilateral economic and trade relations, mentioned in detail above, may cause difficulties for the Turkish economy and Turkish businesses. Disruption of the flow of natural gas that Turkey receives from Russia may lead to an energy crisis in Turkey, disruption of wheat supplies may affect Turkey's access to many staple foods, and the decline in Russian tourists coming to Turkey may seriously affect Turkey's tourism revenues. In addition, Russia may take action against Turkey in theatres such as Syria, North Africa, and the South Caucasus, risking a deterioration of the sensitive relations.

In addition to all these, the possible discussions concerning passages from the Turkish Straits and the deterioration of the *status quo* in the region pose a threat to Turkey's long-standing policy of balance in the Black Sea. Turkey does not want

the US and NATO to have too much presence in the region, nor does Turkey want Russia to gain more power in the Black Sea.

Turkey's Position Regarding the Ukraine Crisis

Aware of all these risks, Turkey has repeatedly underlined its support for a diplomatic solution and proposed to play a mediating role between Russia and Ukraine. As a matter of fact, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, during his visit to Ukraine on 3 February, said that an agreement had been reached with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that if Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin were to meet, there is a possibility that meeting could take place in Turkey. In January, President Erdoğan had spoken on the phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Zelensky, inviting the two leaders to Turkey to find a solution to the crisis.

However, Putin's signing of documents recognising the independence of the so-called

"people's republics" in Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine on 21 February has left diplomatic efforts inconclusive, including those by Turkey. The Turkish Foreign Ministry reacted to this move by issuing a statement rejecting Russia's decision regarding the breakaway Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Similarly, President Erdoğan stressed that the recognition of the so-called "republics" was a clear violation of Ukraine's political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, President Erdoğan's statement that Turkey did not want to make a choice between Ukraine and Russia was remarkable in demonstrating Turkey's efforts to maintain the delicate balance between Russia and the West.

Following Russia's decision to launch a military operation against Ukraine in the early hours of 24 February, President Erdoğan indicated that Russia's military operation against Ukraine was unacceptable and stressed that Turkey considered the operation as a violation of international law. Moreover, Erdoğan added that "Turkey supports the struggle Ukraine wages to protect its territorial integrity."

Despite all these developments, Turkey has not given up its desire to be a mediator between the parties. Calling for a halt of Russian military operations in Ukraine during a telephone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on 26 February, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said that Turkey was ready to host negotiations that could take place between Ukraine and Russia. On the fourth day of Russia's military campaign against Ukraine, indicating that the situation constitutes a war, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu announced that Turkey will implement all provisions of the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits in a transparent manner.



TOBB PRESIDENT HİSARCİKLIOĞLU ATTENDED THE 100TH BOARD MEETING OF THE TURKISH-GERMAN CCI



On 18 February 2022, President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) M. Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu attended the 100th board meeting of the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry which was established in 2004. TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu thanked everyone who

contributed to this structure after the meeting in Berlin.

In Berlin, TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu also held a conversation with Turkey-EU Joint Consultation Committee Co-Chair Peter Clever on Turkey-EU and Turkey-Germany relations. In addition, he met with President of

the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) Peter Adrian and CEO Dr. Martin Wansleben to discuss the economic relations between the two countries. TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu also came together with former Vice President of the European Commission Günter Verheugen.

TURKEY-EU COOPERATION ON HEALTH DISCUSSED AT IKV WEBINAR



On 17 February 2022, IKV organised a webinar titled "Health and Pandemics as an Area of Common Concern Between Turkey and the EU" in association with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate of EU Affairs and as part of the Future of Europe and Turkey Webinar Series.

In the first part of the webinar, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and Director General for Relations with the EU at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Başak Türkoğlu delivered their opening speeches followed by the special addresses part of the webinar in which two keynote speeches were delivered. The first speech was by Acting Deputy Director General of the European Commission Directorate General for Health and Food Safety John F. Ryan and the second one by Deputy Minister of Health Assoc. Prof. Tolga Tolunay. In the final part of the webinar, IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit moderated the panel titled "How Can Turkey and the EU Work Together for a Resilient European Health Area?". The contributors in the panel were the Director of the Digital Health Enterprise Zone of University of Bradford Dr. Liz Breen, Centre for European Policy Studies Research Fellow Nadina Iacob, Assoc. Prof. Zeynep Güldem Ökem from TOBB University of Economy and Technology and IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas.

The speakers made a point of the fact that as a result of the

COVID-19 pandemic, the fragility of the health systems and supply chains became more visible and that cross-border nature and the scale of the problems made the countries and their leaders realise that without cooperation it is impossible to deal with the issues arising thereof. It is discussed that lessons learned during the pandemic are valuable experiences on which to build further resilience of the global health systems and the supply systems going forward and to be more prepared for the future pandemics. Local, regional and international cooperation is said to be crucial as are the continued funding and investments for R&D and innovation. Resilience and cooperation at all levels came up as recurring themes among many others. The relationship between climate change and public health, the "One Health" approach, digital health solutions, global access to COVID-19 vaccines and the international pandemic treaty were among the topics touched upon within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and going forward. The current and potential areas of cooperation in the field of health both within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and future preparedness for other cross-border public health emergencies between Turkey and the EU were also discussed during the panel which came to an end after the Q&A session.

IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU: "RUSSIA'S MILITARY OPERATION IS AGAINST PEACE AND SECURITY"

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu issued a press statement concerning the military operation launched by Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The statement reads as follows:

"The military operation launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine is a step against peace and security. History has shown us that wars inflict irreparable wounds and any wars not pursuing self-defence are unacceptable. Changing of borders by military force is against the UN Charter. Moreover, operations carried out in disregard of international law lead to an extremely difficult and uncertain international environment in which only the law of the strong is valid and whoever has more power imposes their own order. As a non-governmental organisation, we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. We invite the entire international community to exert efforts to resolve this crisis diplomatically and to take effective steps to stop military operations and conflict."



IKV AGENDA

IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU SPOKE AT GREEN TRANSITION FOR SMES MEETING

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu attended the Green Transition for SMEs Project Workshop held in Kocaeli on 24 February 2022 and delivered an opening speech. In the project workshop, organised by TÜRKONFED in cooperation with Konrad Adenauer Foundation with the support of Akbank and hosted by the Eastern Marmara Federation of Industrialists' and Business Associations (DOĞUMARSİFED), IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu discussed the European Green Deal and its possible effects on Turkey, especially in regard to SMEs. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu stated the following:

"Green transition means change for all sectors, but especially for carbon-intensive industries. In the process of transition to low-carbon production, our country is required to establish an Emissions Trade System (ETS) and a compliance carbon market in line with the EU. Accordingly, exports to the EU in five product groups -electricity, aluminium, steel, cement and fertilizers- will be subjects to carbon certificates as of 2026. We know that Turkey is among EU's leading importers, especially in cement, steel and aluminium. Therefore, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism



(CBAM) regulation may cause loss of competitiveness for Turkey. It may be possible for Turkey to create an ETS within its borders and use these additional costs to facilitate its green transition. In this respect, it is crucial for exporters to reduce their carbon footprints and take the necessary measures to realise this.

As production and consumption methods and habits change, financial and technological support should be provided, especially for SMEs. In this process, there are new opportunities presented by the green economy. Our SMEs can turn green transition into an opportunity by tacking to these new business areas. There are opportunities provided by the EU through IPA funds, research and

innovation programmes like Horizon Europe, and by institutions such as the EIB and EBRD. The green transition will protect the environment and climate, make our planet healthier and more sustainable, and set off economic dynamism and new employment opportunities. In this context, in addition to public institutions, non-governmental organisations such as TOBB, IKV and TÜRKONFED assume a very important role. We must work together to make this transition possible. The EU has embraced an approach of forming alliances to accelerate the transition to renewable energy and green technologies. The approach of forming alliances both in Turkey and abroad can also play an important role for Turkey's transition."

IKV ORGANISED A WEBINAR ON THE RUSSIA-WEST TENSION

IKV hosted a webinar entitled "The Russia-West Tension: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy and European Security Architecture" on 2 March 2022. During the webinar, moderated by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit, distinguished experts discussed the Russia-Ukraine war from perspectives of NATO, EU, Russia and Turkey.

The speakers of the webinar were Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM) Chairman, former NATO Assistant Secretary General and Turkey's former Permanent Representative to NATO Ambassador (R) Tacan İldem, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, Kadir Has University Vice Rector Prof. Mitat Çelikpala, Sabancı University Faculty Member and Istanbul Policy Center (IPC) Senior Scholar, Research and Academic Affairs Coordinator Prof. Senem Aydın-Düzgit, Marmara University Faculty Member Assoc. Prof. Behlül Özkan.



Highlighting that the current crisis in Ukraine was "transformative" in many ways, Prof. Çelikpala referred to Russian self-perception as one of the three great powers that can make independent decisions and pointed out to key miscalculations on part of Moscow. Evaluating the crisis from the perspective of NATO, Ambassador İldem stated that Russia acted with the understanding that the countries in its backyard were less sovereign and highlighted that while some aspects of Moscow's demands could be discussed, the fundamental principles of European security were

non-negotiable. Stating that the EU and especially Germany got rid of many historical taboos in the wake of the crisis, Prof. Aydın-Düzgit stressed that EU policies have undergone a tremendous transformation. Meanwhile, Assoc. Prof. Özkan emphasized that Russia's actions were based on a doctrine and warned that the situation could deteriorate further. Assoc. Prof. Nas explored whether the crisis might have a transformative effect in terms of Turkey-EU relations and stated that EU enlargement could be affected with differentiated integration becoming a more prominent theme.

TIMELINE FEBRUARY 2022

	1	
Reciprocal charter flights between Armenia and Turkey were re-launched.	2	IKV published a brief note on the state of play in food waste (in Turkish).
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
Finnish Foreign Minister Haavisto visited Turkey.	8	
	9	
Turkey and the UK launched a strategic dialogue with the first meeting held in Ankara.	10	
	11	IKV published a brief note titled "Brexit One Year On: Implications for the UK, EU and Turkey" (in Turkish).
	12	
	13	
Lüleburgaz was nominated for "European Sustainable Mobility Awards 2021".	14	
	15	
ECJ ruled to uphold the validity of the rule of law conditionality mechanism.	16	IKV organised a webinar titled "Health and Pandemics as an Area of Common Concern between Turkey and the EU".
The 6th EU-African Union Summit was held in Brussels.	17	IKV Secretary General Nas spoke at the Green Growth and Sustainable Development Summit.
The 58th Munich Security Conference convened in the shadow of the Ukraine crisis.	18	IKV, TEPAV and IPC issued a joint call highlighting the need for Turkey to phase out coal by 2035.
	19	
Russia recognised the independence of the two breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine.	20	
	21	
The 64th round of Turkey-Greece consultative took place in Athens.	22	
	23	IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu issued a press statement on the military operation launched by Russia against Ukraine.
EU and G7 leaders convened in the wake of Russia's decision to launch a military operation against Ukraine.	24	
	25	IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu delivered the opening speech at "Green Transformation Project for SMEs Workshop" organised by TÜRKONFED.
NATO leaders held a virtual emergency meeting.	26	
The EU, US, UK and Canada agreed to remove several Russian banks from SWIFT.	27	
Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu stated that Turkey will implement the Montreux Convention.	28	

“TURKEY SHOULD PHASE OUT COAL BY 2035”

Ahead of the Climate Council to be convened from 21 to 25 February 2022, IKV issued a joint call with the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) and the Istanbul Policy Center (IPC). The summary of the call which states that Turkey should gradually phase out coal in electricity generation by 2035 at the latest in order to achieve its 2053 climate goals, is given below.

As three organisations that compile data, generate information and develop strategies for designing Turkey's development policies, we shared our observations on the global green transformation agenda on 8 March 2021 and listed our recommendations for Turkey not to miss out on the green transformation.

We see that our call has been reciprocated and welcome the developments regarding the ratification of the Paris Agreement, which was a point made in our call, as well as the determination of an ambitious reduction target namely reaching net-zero by 2053. We closely follow the process of updating the Nationally Determined Contribution and redesigning industry, energy, agriculture and trade policies accordingly.

Turkey's gradual phase out of coal in electricity generation by 2035



is considered as the most urgent step that will enable Turkey to reach its 2053 target as quickly as possible and support development policies with many additional benefits. We list our observations and requests in this direction below, acknowledging that Turkey's transition to a low-carbon economy can only be possible with inclusive solutions, we openly declare once again that we are ready to fulfil our responsibilities and work in cooperation with stakeholders.

It is of great importance that Turkey as an EU candidate and Customs Union partner, closely monitors the developments in the EU while planning its coal phase out strategy. Under the “Fit for 55” package prepared by the European Commission with the aim to reduce emissions by 55% by 2030, 40% of energy is to be retrieved from renewable sources. In this context, many EU Member States have announced their coal

phase-out dates. While ten countries have declared they exited coal in 2021, other Member States have committed to quit coal by 2033 at the latest. Four countries are in the process of designing their phase-out plans. Although some Member States, such as Poland, are resisting phasing out coal, the EU encourages phasing out coal and puts pressure on its members, particularly under the “Just Transition” mechanism. It is known that in addition to Turkey being a candidate country, with the EU being Turkey's top trading partner, it will be significantly affected by practices such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. In this context, determining the exit date from coal in a reasonable time in the process of achieving climate targets and decarbonisation is also critical for the EU process and for the development of relations with the EU.

In line with the 1.5°C target adopted by Turkey as a party to the Paris Agreement and the 2053 net-zero goal, Turkey needs to take the following steps in the short and medium term:

- Turkey should promptly announce its political intention to completely quit coal as an energy source in electricity generation by 2035 at the latest,

and its action plan to achieve this.

- The government and relevant regulatory bodies should announce an official decision not to build new coal power plants, cancel new coal power plant licenses and plans, and halt new coal mine and mine expansion investments.
- Existing coal power plants should be shut down by 2035, at the latest, in line with a schedule to be prepared, starting with the oldest and more polluting power plants.
- In order to close the energy supply gap that will arise with the closure of coal power plants, a gradual transition plan that also takes into account new technologies should be prepared and thus energy supply security should be ensured.
- The coal phase-out process and sustainable energy transformation should be planned in a participatory manner and should be designed as a just transition process which will eliminate existing social and economic injustices in addition to supporting the segments of the society that are likely to be adversely affected by the transformation.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS SPOKE AT NUMEROUS EVENTS AND PROGRAMMES

IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas discussed prominent international issues and EU policies in various events and programmes throughout February.

On 18 February 2022, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Nas attended the “Green Growth and Sustainable Development Summit” jointly organised by Bahçeşehir University International Training Center for Authorities and Leaders (CIFAL Istanbul), UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Bahçeşehir University Centre for Economic and Social Research (BETAM), Giresun University, Ordu University at Giresun Zifin Hotel.

Speaking in the session entitled “Green Growth from the Perspective of Firms and NGOs”, Assoc. Prof. Nas gave information about IKV's activities on the European Green Deal and talked about the Green Deal's effects on Turkey as an EU candidate country and a Customs Union partner. Indicating that the green transition would cause important

changes in almost every sector, she underlined that production and consumption processes and habits were rapidly transforming in line with the circular economy principles. The other speakers of the session, moderated by Dean of Bahçeşehir University Faculty of Economic, Administrative and Social Sciences Prof. Yavuz Günalay, were Philip Morris Corporate Affairs Manager Assoc. Prof. Süleyman Hançerli, nature and environment TV show producer Güven İslamoğlu and BAU Global and Bahçeşehir Uğur Educational Institutions Communication Commission member Saygın Şenel.

On the same day, IKV Secretary General Nas participated as a guest speaker in the programme titled “New Agenda in Turkey-EU Relations: Green Deal” on the media channel “Daktilo1984”. Referring to the various phases and crises that Turkey-EU relations have gone through, Assoc. Prof. Nas underlined the need for renewal at this point. Stressing that the



European Green Deal necessitates a radical and comprehensive transformation throughout Europe, she noted that Turkey's adaptation to this process is of utmost importance for development and growth. Also attending

the programme prepared and directed by İpek Maya Saygın and Barış Ertürk was President of Paris Bosphorus Institute Dr. Bahadır Kaleağası.

On 24 February, Assoc. Prof. Nas analysed the EU's reaction

to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its repercussions in the “Açık Oturum” programme prepared by Alphan Telek and broadcast on *Medyascope*. Speaking alongside Ambassador (R) Faruk Logoğlu and Dr. Selin Nası, IKV Secretary General Nas stated that as a result of the Russian invasion, which poses a significant threat to European security, solidarity against Russia within NATO and the EU will be strengthened.

On the same day, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Nas took part in the programme entitled “What Kind of a World? What Kind of Turkey?” also broadcast on *Medyascope*. In the programme prepared by IPC and presented by Pelin Oğuz, Nas discussed why Turkey should phase out coal by 2035 in the context of the European Green Deal. The other speakers of the programme in which the joint statement by IKV, TEPAV and IPC calling for Turkey to phase out coal by 2035 were Dr. Güven Sak and Dr. Ümit Şahin.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

NORMALISATION STEPS IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY



A wind of normalisation is blowing in Turkish foreign policy. In addition to the ongoing normalisation talks with Armenia, the second round of which was held on 24 February in Vienna, decision-makers in Ankara are preparing to open a new chapter in relations with Middle Eastern countries. In this context, positive steps have been taken with Israel, Egypt, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, countries with which Turkey's relations were strained especially during the Arab Spring.

In this context, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid a two-day official visit to the UAE on 14 and 15 February 2022 upon the invitation of Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

During the visit which took place after nine years, President Erdoğan and Sheikh Al Nahyan discussed bilateral relations, regional and international developments and evaluated steps to enhance bilateral cooperation. In addition, 13 agreements covering significant areas including trade, defence, transportation, agriculture and health were signed between the two countries. During the visit, President Erdoğan also attended Turkey's National Day at Dubai Expo 2020. President Erdoğan highlighted the importance of dialogue and cooperation between Turkey and the UAE for the peace and stability of the entire region and added that Turkey does not consider the security and stability of the countries in the Gulf region

separate from its own.

In addition to the UAE, steps have been taken to repair the strained ties with Israel. It has been announced that Israeli President Isaac Herzog would pay a visit to Turkey on 9-10 March 2022. Ahead of the highly anticipated visit, Presidential Spokesperson Ambassador Ibrahim Kalin and Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sedat Önal travelled to Israel and Palestine on 17 and 18 February. During the visit, Presidential Spokesperson Kalin stated that Turkey's aim and effort was to build a regional order that would ensure regional peace, stability and balance in the context of the Palestinian issue. Both visits reveal that Turkey wishes to improve its relations with the countries in the region.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS WERE HELD WITH FINLAND AND THE UK AT THE LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTRIES

On 8 February 2022, Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu came together with Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto who was on a visit to Ankara. At the meeting, the two foreign ministers discussed bilateral relations, Turkey's EU accession process, the work of the UN Group of Friends for Mediation, prominent international issues including the developments in Ukraine, the situation in Afghanistan, Syria and Africa, particularly Ethiopia and Sudan. At the joint press conference held after the meeting, both ministers hailed the cooperation between Ankara and Helsinki for finding peaceful solutions to regional and global conflicts, the role shared by Turkey and Finland in launching the "Mediation for Peace" initiative and the very fruitful meeting they had.

Expressing his deep sorrow over the death of 19 migrants on the Turkish-Greek border, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu criticised Greece's policy of pushbacks and stated that by backing Greece as protector of EU's borders, the EU in a way tolerated this practice which contravenes human rights and international law. According to the report published by Aegean



Boat Report, a Norwegian NGO, the number of irregular migrants pushed back in 2021 increased by 97% compared to the previous year.

In an interview during his visit to Turkey, Finnish Foreign Minister Haavisto emphasized that Turkey and Finland cooperate on a wide range of issues from tourism to trade. Reiterating Finland's support for Turkey's EU accession, Haavisto stressed the importance of the 1999 Helsinki European Council meeting where Turkey received EU candidacy status. He also announced that Finnish Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Minister Ville Skinnari would visit Turkey with a delegation in June 2022.

On 10 February, Turkey and the UK launched a strategic dialogue with the first meeting being held in Ankara. The Turkey-UK Strategic Dialogue Meeting focused on sustaining common policies to deepen bilateral relations between the two countries, the future of Turkey-EU-UK relations and regional problems after Brexit. Turkey was represented by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Faruk Kaymakcı and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sedat Önal while the UK was represented by Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Sir Philip Barton.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN ANKARA AND ATHENS CONTINUED AMID STATEMENTS ON EASTERN AEGEAN ISLANDS



Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, in a televised interview on 10 February 2022, urged Greece to stop the militarisation of the Eastern Aegean islands in violation of international treaties. Recalling that the sovereignty of the Eastern Aegean islands was ceded to Greece under the strict condition that they remain demilitarised, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu signalled that if Athens did not stop militarising these, Greece's sovereignty over the islands could be called into question.

Despite the Treaty of Lausanne and the Treaty of Paris explicitly prohibiting the militarisation of the Eastern Aegean islands which are situated close to the Turkish mainland, Greece has been militarising these in contravention of its contractual obligations since 1960s. Turkey had expressed its opposition to Athens' attempts at altering the demilitarised status of the islands in letters submitted to UN Secretary General António Guterres last July and September.

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu's remarks caused quite a stir in Greece, with the Greek Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Alexandros Papaioannou rejecting them. Also commenting on the issue in a statement issued on 13 February, EEAS Lead Spokesperson Peter Stano reaffirmed EU's support for Greece's sovereignty over the islands and argued that disputing it contradicted the de-escalation efforts in the Eastern Mediterranean while making no mention of Athens' violation of its international obligations concerning the demilitarised status of the Eastern Aegean islands.

Despite these statements, Turkish and Greek officials came together in Athens on 22 February for the 64th round of consultative talks. A day earlier Turkish Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sedat Önal and his Greek counterpart Kostas Frakogiannis held their third meeting under the Positive Agenda initiative aimed at promoting bilateral dialogue on economy and trade.



TURKEY UNVEILED NEW PROGRAMMES TO FIGHT INFLATION

New initiatives and measures to fight inflation were introduced at the Turkish Economy Model New Steps and Inflation Measures Promotion Meeting.

Turkey's Minister of Treasury and Finance Nureddin Nebati revealed Turkey's new economic package on 12 February 2022. Minister Nebati announced additional initiatives aimed at getting households to bring gold holdings into the financial system at the Turkish Economy Model New Steps and Inflation Measures Promotion Meeting. The initiative is named "The Gold Savings Ecosystem" and it includes depositing physical gold in Turkish banks through bank branches and licensed jewellers and allows account holders to withdraw gold physically at the end of the maturity.

As of 1 March, more than 1,500 jewellers are expected to get involved in the system and their total number is expected

to reach 10,000 by the end of the year. According to the information shared by Minister Nebati, there are 5 thousand tons of gold that is not integrated to the financial system in Turkey. The economic equivalent of this amount is calculated as 250-350 billion dollars.

Minister Nebati said that sufficient progress has been made in integrating these savings to the economy and into the financial system. This, in turn, will be a new source of income for the citizens and at the same time support Turkey's growth.

Minister of Treasury and Finance Nureddin Nebati also announced the launch of the new Credit Guarantee Fund (KGF) package during his presentation, further noting that they have implemented in total

three support packages; a 25 billion lira investment support package, a 25 billion lira export support package and a 10 billion lira operating expenditure support package. He also gave news of the creation of a task force by the government to inspect prices and a mobile application to help citizens find the cheapest goods.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan joined the meeting via video conference. He started his speech by stating that he expects the decisions taken at the meeting to be an important breakthrough in Turkey's fight against inflation. President Erdoğan announced that the value-added tax (VAT) would be lowered to 1% from 8% on dairy products, fruit, vegetables and other basic food items.



TURKEY'S CLIMATE COUNCIL CONVENED FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Climate Council of Turkey, which convened for the first time in Konya on 21-25 February 2022, was centred on the theme of "2053 net-zero emission target: Turkey's green development revolution". Seven commissions worked on the previously drafted texts on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, science and technology, green finance and carbon pricing, climate change adaptation, local administrations, and migration, just transition and other social policies with the participation of stakeholders during the first three days of the Council.

UN Turkey Resident Coordinator Alvaro Rodriguez, UNDP Turkey Resident Representative Louisa Vinton, Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC Ovais Sarmad and Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut were among the foreign officials participating in the first-ever Climate Council. During the meeting held between Environment, Urbanisation

and Climate Change Minister Murat Kurum and Ambassador Meyer-Landrut, it was announced that the European Commission's Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal Frans Timmermans will visit Turkey in spring for the Turkey-EU High-Level Climate Dialogue.

While the outputs of the Climate Council were intended to contribute to Turkey's first Climate Law as well as its nationally determined contributions and Long-Term Climate Strategy and Action Plan, the final declaration disappointed environmental organisations as it did not include coal phase-out target but continued to support natural gas and nuclear energy. The final declaration was also criticised by the NGOs participating in the seven commission meetings, for failing to include most of their calls, including on coal phase-out. The final declaration of the Climate Council is expected to be announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE LAUNCHED INFRINGEMENT PROCEEDINGS AGAINST TURKEY

The Committee of Ministers, the political organ and the statutory decision-making body of the Council of Europe (CoE), adopted a new decision on Turkey. At the meeting held on 2 February 2022, the second phase of the "infringement proceedings" which was initiated in December 2021 against Turkey was put to the vote. The interim decision was adopted by a majority vote in this meeting. This is the first time this procedure is being initiated against Turkey and the second time in the history of CoE; the first being initiated against Azerbaijan. Under the procedure, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will formally ask the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) whether Turkey has failed to fulfil its



obligations under Article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The procedure is being carried out in relation to Turkish businessperson Osman Kavala case. On 17 January, an Istanbul court

ruled to continue the detention of Kavala who has been in custody since 2017. According to CoE, the new decision was taken because Osman Kavala was not released despite the ECtHR judgment. In the official letter sent from Ankara to

Strasbourg on 19 January, Turkey emphasized that it complies with the ECtHR rulings. It was also stated in the letter that ECtHR's judgment on the Kavala case has been executed, but the detention was the result of another judicial proceeding.

The EU also continues to closely follow the developments regarding the Kavala case. Noting that the launch of infringement proceedings was a tool rarely used by CoE, EEAS Lead Spokesperson Peter Stano expressed concern over Turkish judiciary's adherence to European standards in a statement issued on 3 February. The issue was also on the agenda of EP Rapporteur on Turkey Nacho Sánchez Amor who visited the country between 21 and 25 February and attended the

Kavala case at the Istanbul Çağlayan Justice Palace prior to his meetings in Ankara.

Turkey reacted strongly to the decision to launch infringement proceedings. In response to a question on the issue, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that Turkey would not respect the decision if CoE did not respect Turkish courts. Moreover, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement criticising the decision as politically motivated and indicated that "the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has maintained its stance that interferes with the independence of the judicial proceedings and violated the principle of respect for judicial proceedings".

A GLANCE INTO TURKEY'S NEW REGULATION ON THE DELIVERY OF REMOTE HEALTHCARE SERVICES



Turkey's Ministry of Health published a new regulation on the delivery of remote healthcare services. The regulation, which was published in the Official Gazette on 10 February 2022, provides a guideline as to the kind of health services which can be delivered remotely, the institutions which can provide these services and the criteria making the institutions eligible to provide remote healthcare services, among others.

According to the guideline, doctors are only allowed to give consultations remotely after being approved by the Ministry of Health based on certain criteria. They can then issue e-prescriptions, check patient's blood pressure and blood sugar levels using

wearable gadgets, monitor the health of elderly and vulnerable patients and prepare medical reports for their online patients. Patients, on the other hand, will have to have their identity verified before receiving these services. The new system also allows the patients to ask for a second opinion regarding their health issues.

In order for the institutions to offer remote health services, they are required to use software only approved by the Ministry of Health and have the required technological infrastructure. Only after meeting such certain conditions, these facilities and institutions can obtain permits from the Ministry of Health as eligible to offer remote

healthcare services. Health institutions which have the international health certificate will also be allowed to offer such services.

The benefits of the new remote healthcare system can already be seen by the fact that nearly 10 thousand COVID-19 patients used the remote health application operated by the Ministry of Health, *e-Nabız*, during the health crisis, according to Deputy Health Minister Dr. Şuayip Birinci. The application made it possible for patients to make appointments with doctors while under quarantine thus not putting the health staff under unnecessary risk by coming to the hospitals and saved time, as mentioned by Health Minister Fahrettin Koca.

TURKEY'S ODUNPAZARI MODERN MUSEUM SELECTED AMONG BEST BUILDINGS OF LAST CENTURY

Odunpazarı Modern Museum (OMM), located in Eskişehir, Turkey and designed by the world-famous Japanese architecture firm Kengo Kuma and Associates, was awarded "Special Commendation" at the European Museum Forum (EMF) 2021 Museum of the Year Awards in Europe. "Special Commendation" is given to museums that have developed "a new and innovative aspect of their public service and from which other European museums can learn". OMM also ranked 21st in the list of "25 Best Museum Buildings of the Past 100 Years" compiled by the New York-based visual arts magazine ARTNews, taking its place among the world's leading museums such as Center Pompidou, Louvre, Guggenheim Bilbao, and MAXXI.

Founder of the museum Erol Tabanca, who is an influential businessperson and art collector in the city, explained that the design story of OMM located in Eskişehir's historical Odunpazarı district started after Japanese architect Kengo Kuma visited Eskişehir and was greatly influenced by Ottoman architecture reflected in the local traditional wooden Ottoman houses. The historical Odunpazarı district has been on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Tentative List since 2012.

Museum buildings can sometimes function as objects of art themselves and are appreciated on their own. In this case, OMM made a name for itself with the originality of its wood works and architectural design



since it was opened to public. The design of the museum is said to resemble "an elegant log cabin, with interlocking boxy structures composed of stacked laminated blonde timber beams" featuring slits. OMM became a popular destination for local and foreign tourists alike and the number of visitors to the museum reached 166,321 in its first year.

OMM has received many other national and international awards both in the fields of art and architecture among which are the "2019 Special Award" by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the international project of the year within the scope of the "Museum+Heritage Awards" held in the UK in October 2020.

TURKISH-GERMAN COMEDIAN MELTEM KAPTAN AWARDED SILVER BEAR AT BERLINALE

The Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance was awarded to Turkish-German comedian, writer and actress Meltem Kaptan for her role in the film "Rabiye Kurnaz vs. George W. Bush" at the 72nd International Berlin Film Festival (Berlinale) held in Berlin from 10 to 20 February 2022. The film was directed by Andreas Dresen who also won the Silver Bear as a director. The awards were presented to their winners at a ceremony held at the Berlinale Palast Cinema on 16 February.

The movie, which is based on a real event, explains the struggle of Rabiye Kurnaz to save her son, Murat Kurnaz, who was accused of terrorism



after the attacks of 11 September 2001 and was imprisoned for nearly four and a half years in the US Guantanamo Base in Cuba.

In her speech upon receiving her award, Meltem Kaptan stressed that she dedicated her award to Rabiye Kurnaz

and to all mothers whose love transcends all borders. In the part of her award speech which she made in Turkish, Meltem Kaptan who lives in Cologne, Germany expressed her gratitude to her parents for encouraging her to follow her own path.

LÜLEBURGAZ RANKED AMONG THE FINALISTS FOR EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AWARDS 2021

The finalists of the European Mobility Week Awards 2021 were announced by the European Commission on 14 February 2022 while the winners will be revealed on 28 March at an online ceremony. The European Mobility Week Awards are presented to larger and smaller municipalities for their remarkable work in promoting sustainable urban mobility during the European Mobility Week celebrated between 16 and 22 September 2021.

Lüleburgaz, which is the largest district of Kırklareli province in Turkey's Marmara region, has been nominated as a finalist in the larger municipalities category for "highlighting the link between sustainable mobility and health through dialogue with doctors in neurology, psychology and cardiology,



while making pavements more accessible".

Lüleburgaz will compete with Amadora from Portugal and Kassel from Germany to receive the award for the larger municipalities with over 100 thousand inhabitants, while Alimos from Greece, Miajadas from Spain and Valongo from Portugal are the finalists in the smaller municipalities category.

In recognition of initiatives to make cities greener and

safer, awards will also be given in the categories of "Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning" and "EU Urban Road Safety".

European Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean congratulated the finalists in a statement and stated that they are "true pioneers in showing how cities and towns in Europe can improve people's well being by moving to cleaner, greener and easier transport options for all."

TURKEY'S CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN DEFENCE

Turkey has become a key partner for European defence with its investments in the promising defence industry, increasing counter-terrorism capacity, contribution to joint missions and mediator role in the Western Balkans.

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Turkey is one of the largest contributors to NATO and a strategic partner in European defence. Cooperation with Turkey in this field will contribute to European defence in many aspects. Firstly, it will fill the defence gap that has emerged as a result of the UK's withdrawal from EU membership (Brexit). Second, it will make the EU a more powerful actor in regional and international disputes, which is being discussed more and more. Lastly, it will strengthen EU's capability to fight against asymmetric threats.

Factors Highlighting Turkey's Importance for European Defence

Turkey was a strategic and indispensable partner for Europe's defence and security during the Cold War. The cooperation in defence and security between the two actors needs to be raised to a similar level today. This will not only increase the EU's autonomy and capability in international politics, but will also contribute to addressing the EU's internal problems and the elimination of obstacles to enlargement. There are many internal and external factors that increase the importance of Turkey in terms of European defence. These are:

- The decline in EU's defence capacity as a result of Brexit,
- The US shifting its focus to the Asia-Pacific region and becoming less concerned with the expectations of its traditional allies including both Turkey and the EU,
- Turkey's ever-increasing material capacity and operational capability.

The UK's decision to leave the EU as a member of the UNSC and an important nuclear power



has revealed fragility in terms of European defence. According to experts, EU's collective defence capability decreased by 20% with the UK's decision to leave the Union. This weakness led the EU to revive the defence initiatives such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which were delayed due to the opposition of the UK. In this regard, the EU would benefit from being more open and willing to cooperate with Ankara.

The recent foreign policy choices of the US also contribute to the increase in importance of Turkey for European security and defence. It is seen that the current US government under the leadership of Joe Biden is following a similar foreign policy approach to the previous administrations under Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump, prioritising to address the rise of China. The White House's approach of prioritising the Asia-Pacific region and paying less attention to European security further increases the importance of Turkey for the future of European defence.

Last but not least, its increased material capacity and operational capability make Turkey an important defence partner for the EU. Recently, Turkey has come to the fore with its increasing military experience in the field, as well as defence expenditures and industry products. It carried out successful military operations in the fight against asymmetric threats in regions such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh.

In addition to the military perspective of the operations, it is seen that Turkey has gained experience in post-operation tasks such as ensuring security in the relevant regions, improving the infrastructure, helping in returning life to normal, humanitarian aid, and the fight against terrorism. Turkey's experience especially in all these areas fits into what is known as the EU's "Petersberg Tasks" and contributes to Turkey's becoming a valuable partner.

Key Areas where Turkey Contributes the Most

There are many key areas where Turkey directly contributes to the European security and defence. These can be summarised as defence industry, the fight against terrorism, contribution to joint task forces and missions, and the stability of the Western Balkans.

Increasing the rate of domestic production in defence industry, Turkey has become a producer of wide range of defence industry products from smart ammunitions to complex weapon systems. It is seen that the Turkish defence industry produces strategic systems, especially in armoured vehicles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). These products performed successfully in regions such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh. This success attracted the attention of many actors, including European countries. European countries such as Poland, Ukraine, Hungary and

Slovakia have shown strong interest in these systems. For example, nowadays Ukraine is successfully fighting against the Russian invasion with *Bayraktar TB2* drones.

It is now a fact that Turkey has become a country that directly contributes to the defence of European countries by exporting strategic weapon systems and military equipment. While demonstrating Turkey's contribution to European defence, this situation also improves Turkey's position in the transatlantic alliance. In addition, the success of these systems against Russian weapon systems in Libya, Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh and more recently in Ukraine proves Turkey's increasing capabilities and importance in balancing Russia in terms of European defence.

Turkey has also become a significant partner to cooperate in the fight against terrorism for European countries. As a country which has been conducting an effective struggle against radical terrorist organisations targeting Europe such as ISIS and al-Qaeda for a long time, Turkey has extensive experience in the fight against terrorism. For example, it was announced by the Interior Ministry that Turkey carried out 187 operations in 2015, 367 in 2016, 500 in 2017 and 1,130 in 2018 against the ISIS. In the fight against terrorism, the EU and Turkey are working together on issues such as intelligence sharing, preventing the mobilisation and recruitment of foreign fighters, fighting extremism

and combating financing of terrorism.

Turkey has been contributing to world peace and European defence since the Korean War in 1950. Today, it directly continues to make an effort for the security and defence of Europe, especially through its involvement in joint missions and task forces. Turkey especially provides significant support to the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Kosovo Force (KFOR), and Operation Althea conducted by the EU. In addition to these, it takes part in peacekeeping missions and contributes to peacebuilding in many countries such as Somalia (UNOSOM), Lebanon (INIFIL), Congo (EUPOL KINSHASA), Sudan (UNMIS), Afghanistan (ISAF).

Finally, Turkey has an important place in the stability of the Western Balkans. Turkey has an influence on the Muslim community in the region. With the activities of public diplomacy institutions such as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Yunus Emre Institute and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), it makes great efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region. For example, it was seen that Turkey had made serious efforts to prevent the tension in Bosnia, which has recently threatened the security of Europe. Turkey's experience in de-escalation and mediation along with its historical ties, will prove valuable for the future of stability in the Balkans. Rather than the regional engagements of actors such as Russia and China, meeting common goals and interests in the region with Turkey, which is a NATO member and an EU candidate country, is a necessity for the stability of the Balkans and European security.

As a result, Turkey has become a very important partner for European defence with its investments in the promising defence industry, increasing counter-terrorism capacity, contribution to joint task forces and missions, and mediator role in the Western Balkans. EU countries also need to be open to this cooperation and cooperate with Turkey in areas that reflect common interests.