



IKVM MONTHLY

ISSUE: 83 APRIL 2022

www.ikv.org.tr / contact: ikv@ikv.org.tr

TURKEY'S RISING PROFILE IN DIPLOMACY AND THE ANTALYA DIPLOMACY FORUM

The international community's attention turned to Antalya where Russian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers met thanks to Turkey's mediation efforts and many prominent leaders gathered for the 2nd edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

The 8th İstanbul Mediation Conference was held under the auspices of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in Antalya on 10 March 2022. For the first time this year, the conference was realised outside of İstanbul to create a synergy with the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. The conference was held under the theme "Spotlight on Mediation in a Changing Peace Landscape". During the conference, which is Turkey's contribution to the world with its solution-oriented diplomatic approach, regional and global problems were discussed. However, the most remarkable moment of the conference was the appearance of Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov sitting around the same table. Thanks to Turkey's mediation effort, Ukraine and Russia had a high-level diplomatic contact for the first time since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu stressed the importance of mediation and reconciliation to ensure lasting peace and stability after the trilateral meeting.

Although no agreement was reached on a ceasefire, Turkey succeeded in gathering the two sides around the same table to negotiate the terms of a possible compromise. Foreign Ministers Kuleba and Lavrov praised Turkey for its efforts and support, while Kuleba signalled that Ukraine would not leave the diplomatic table and would continue to participate in similar efforts in the future. In addition, for the first time since the war began, the meeting provided an opportunity for the press to address their questions directly to the governments in Moscow and Kyiv. Nearly 400 local and foreign media



representatives came to Antalya to follow the Turkey-Ukraine-Russia Trilateral Foreign Ministers Meeting.

The 2nd Antalya Diplomacy Forum Took Place at a Critical Moment

On 11-13 March, the 2nd Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF), held under the auspices of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and hosted by Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, took place at a critical time when the Russia-Ukraine war was unfolding. 17 heads of state and government, 80 ministers and 39 representatives of international organisations attended the Forum, which hosted more than 3,000 participants from 75 countries in total. Commenting on this high level of participation, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu said that about 40% of the world was represented at the highest level in the ADF. President Recep Erdoğan held 11 meetings and Çavuşoğlu held a total of 67 bilateral meetings during the Forum.

The rich content of the ADF was shaped around the question of

"how can we better use diplomacy to fight injustices in the world?". The ADF, which expanded in content compared to last year, covered numerous topics such as climate change, clean energy, energy security, security in Europe, the role of the UN, democratic governance, justice, maritime borders, food security and agriculture, irregular migration, green economy, and gender equality. In parallel with these themes, three meetings of heads of state and government, 27 panels, four interviews, three roundtable meetings and side events took place throughout the ADF. The Forum, centred on the main theme of "Recoding Diplomacy," focused on what can be done in a collaborative effort to manage change, facilitate adaptation, and foster collaboration to address global challenges by leveraging technology and innovative digital diplomacy capabilities.

Leaders and diplomats from various countries conveyed important messages about the Ukraine-Russia war, holding

discussions on the global importance of various issues, in sessions "The Price of Peace, the Cost of War" and "Paths to Peace and Prosperity" in particular. The ADF, with its format, high-level of participants and its broad content, has taken its place among the important platforms shaping discussions in the field of international relations, and highlighted that we need diplomacy more than ever.

Stoltenberg Praised Turkey's Leadership Role

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who attended the first day of the ADF, held bilateral talks with President Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu. Stoltenberg praised Turkey for facilitating diplomatic and political processes that "could lead to a peaceful discussion between Ukraine and Russia" and called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the war. At the same time, Stoltenberg noted that "NATO is partially united in imposing unprecedented costs on Russia in a way that we have not seen before".

Borrell Pointed Out to the Importance of Turkey

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell attended the second day of the ADF and held several bilateral talks, including with Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu. During his meeting with Minister Çavuşoğlu, High Representative Borrell discussed how Ankara and Brussels could work together to mitigate the impact of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Borrell also noted that this situation should strengthen relations with Turkey as a partner and a candidate for full EU membership. Speaking at the panel session on EU's strategic autonomy, Borrell said that Turkey is an important geopolitical actor and that its influence extends to Africa. Borrell emphasized that Russia's aggression against Ukraine challenged the world and Europe, and that these challenges were growing every day. "All these problems affect all of us, the EU Member States, NATO, and Turkey. We need to strengthen our relations with Turkey, and that is why I am here", Borrell added.

Constructive Talks with Armenia

On 12 March, one of the most notable meetings on the sidelines of ADF took place between Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu and Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan. Both foreign ministers issued constructive statements after their meeting. Çavuşoğlu and Mirzoyan reiterated that the two rounds of normalisation talks had begun and stated that they were assessing the process. "We are working for stability and peace in the South Caucasus and receive support from all sides for our efforts in this direction", Çavuşoğlu told the reporters.



IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU VISITED THE USA

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu held official talks in the US between 14 and 18 March 2022. Zeytinoğlu participated in the "Commercial Diplomacy Events" held in the US, under the coordination of the Republic of Turkey Directorate of Communication and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM), within the framework of the 100 billion dollar Turkey-US trade volume target. The delegation held talks on commercial diplomacy and bilateral economic relations in Washington and New York.

President of the Presidential Investment Office Ahmet Burak Dağlıoğlu, Chief Advisor to the Presidency and Member of the Economic Policy Board Cemil Ertem and Chairman of the Parliamentary Industry, Trade, Energy, Natural Resources, Information and Technology Commission, AK Party Konya Deputy Ziya Altunyaldız, TIM Deputy Chairman Başaran Bayrak and Vice-Chairman of TIM Brand Council Süleyman Orakçioğlu were included in the delegation.



The delegation met with Turkish and American businesspeople and visited the US Departments of State and Commerce and the US Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the delegation discussed advancing commercial relations between the US and Turkey at the Atlantic Council think tank and met with members of the American and international press. Within the framework of the official visit,

panels and commercial diplomacy workshops were organised to boost Turkey's role in transatlantic exports. Panels titled "Joining Forces for Prosperity: Turkey-US Relations" and "Turkish-American Efforts for New Horizons: Trade Goal of \$100 Billion" held at *Türkevi* Center in New York. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu made presentations at the panels on Turkey-US trade relations and how relations could be improved.

IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU VISITED TRADE MINISTER MUŞ



On 11 March 2022, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and EUROCHAMBRES President Luc Frieden, who was on a visit to Turkey upon the invitation of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), paid a courtesy visit to

Turkey's Minister of Trade Mehmet Muş. During the visit, latest developments regarding Turkey's trade were discussed and views were exchanged on the state of play in Turkey-EU trade relations and the modernisation of the Customs Union.



IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU ATTENDED 2ND ANTALYA DIPLOMACY FORUM

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu participated in the Second Antalya Diplomacy Forum organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 11-12 March 2022. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu held numerous exchanges in the context of the Forum and spoke at the panel titled "A Green Economy for an Inclusive and Sustainable Growth" which was organised by

TOBB and moderated by Maria Ramos from TRT World. Other speakers of the panel alongside IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu were UAE Economy Minister Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri, Secretary-General of Asian Cooperation Dialogue Pornchai Danvivathana, EUROCHAMBRES President Luc Frieden and TOGG CEO Gürçan Karakaş.

IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU SPOKE AT THE TEBD SME SURVEY LAUNCH EVENT

In his capacity as TOBB Vice President, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu delivered an opening speech at the event held within the scope of the Turkey-EU Business Dialogue (TEBD) Project carried out by TOBB and EUROCHAMBRES on 10 March 2022. During the event, the findings of the survey measuring the approaches of SMEs towards Turkey's relations with the EU and the Customs Union were presented.

In his opening speech, IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu introduced the project and evaluated the role played by the business community in Turkey-EU relations. Indicating that the modernisation of the Customs Union is supported by the business communities both in Turkey and the EU, Zeytinoğlu stated that Turkey-EU economic and trade relations will develop further with the launch of the process.

Following the opening speeches by EUROCHAMBRES President Luc Frieden, Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut and Director General of Financial Cooperation and Project



Implementation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate for EU Affairs Bülent Özcan, the event continued with the presentation of the report by EUROCHAMBRES CEO Ben Butters and a panel session. The speakers of the panel were President of Turkish-German

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr. Markus C. Slevogt, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, TEPAV Programme Director Prof. Güven Sak and Nele Eichhorn, Head of Unit at European Commission's Directorate General for Trade.

İKVV AGENDA



İKVV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU: "TURKEY HAS A CRITICAL POSITION IN THE EU'S EMERGENCE AS A STRATEGIC ACTOR"

On 24 March 2022, İKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu issued a statement regarding the Strategic Compass adopted by EU foreign ministers and set to be endorsed by the European Council on 24-25 March 2022. İKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu made the following remarks:

"On 21 March 2022, the EU Foreign Affairs Council adopted the document titled 'Strategic Compass' which will determine the course of the EU security and defence policy until 2030. The Strategic Compass could be viewed as the EU's effort to create a strategic identity in the face of geopolitical challenges. The emergence of this document happens a time when the strategic rivalry between the great powers is heating up, the nature of security threats is transforming and the war is knocking on Europe's door in the wake of Russia's intervention in Ukraine. The Strategic Compass is a guide for action with concrete actions and a detailed timetable which consists of the following four elements:

- The EU acting more rapidly and decisively in the face of crises,
- Protecting its citizens against rapidly evolving threats,
- Investing more and smarter in capabilities and technologies,
- Strengthening cooperation with partners in line with common goals.

Moreover, the creation of a Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5,000 troops to be deployed in different operational scenarios and at different stages of crises stands out as one of the most significant novelties under the Strategic Compass. Increasing the

level of preparedness with exercises and developing the ability to station 200 fully equipped civilian experts in crisis regions within 30 days under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) by mid-2023 are among the other novelties that stand out. The document lays out numerous actions ranging from increasing military mobility and making CSDP missions and operations more flexible to developing coordinated tools against hybrid and cyber threats on the one hand, from a VAT waiver to encourage joint investment in capabilities to strengthening cooperation with like-minded countries and partners on the other. Unlike its predecessors, the 2003 European Security Strategy and the 2016 EU Global Strategy, the Strategic Compass has been designed through a process in which EU capitals were in the driver's seat and is complemented by a clear timetable and a strong monitoring mechanism."

Referring to the way Turkey is addressed in the Strategic Compass, İKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu stated the following: "In the document, Turkey is addressed in the context of the Eastern Mediterranean in the part where the strategic environment is analysed and in the section on bilateral partnerships. In the section on the Eastern Mediterranean, one can see that regarding Turkey a hostile rhetoric reflecting the Greek and Greek Cypriot claims is adopted. Arguing that the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean continue and have the potential to escalate rapidly due to provocations and unilateral actions against Member States, breaches of international law, violations of sovereign rights,

as well as the instrumentalisation of irregular migration, it is stated that a stable and secure environment and a cooperative relationship based on mutual benefits in accordance with the principle of good neighbourly relations is in the interest of both the EU and Turkey.

On the other hand, in the bilateral partnerships section, Turkey's contribution to CSDP missions and operations is mentioned and it is emphasized that the EU would continue cooperating with Turkey in areas of common interest. While indicating that the Union is determined to develop a mutually beneficial partnership with Turkey, it is stated that this requires equal determination on part of Turkey in advancing on a path of cooperation, sustained de-escalation and to address EU's concerns in line with European Council conclusions of 25 March 2021.

As the European security architecture is going through an unprecedented breaking point, the partial and contradictory rhetoric towards Turkey, a NATO ally and a candidate country, which has played an extremely critical role in ensuring the security of Europe, does not contribute to the EU's ambition to become a strategic actor and risks undermining it. Building the EU's defence vision upon areas that will bring the EU and Turkey closer together with a far-sighted approach instead of a divisive rhetoric shaped around the claims of some Member States, would contribute greatly not only to the development of the EU's security and defence identity, but also to NATO-EU cooperation."

TIMELINE MARCH 2022

	1	İKVV organised a webinar titled "The Russia-West Tension: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy and European Security Architecture".
	2	
Georgia and Moldova formally applied for EU membership.	3	
	4	İKVV Secretary General Nas participated in the opening meeting of the "POW-EU-R Jean Monnet Module".
Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu attended the Extraordinary NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting in Brussels.	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	İKVV Chairman Zeytinoğlu issued a statement on the occasion of International Women's Day.
Israeli President Herzog visited Turkey, marking the first visit by an Israeli leader since 2008.	9	
	10	İKVV Chairman Zeytinoğlu spoke at the TEBD SME Survey Launch Event.
Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Russia and Ukraine met in Antalya.	11	İKVV Chairman Zeytinoğlu paid a courtesy visit to Trade Minister Muş.
The 2 nd Antalya Diplomacy Forum convened under the theme "Recoding Diplomacy".	12	İKVV Chairman Zeytinoğlu participated in the 2 nd Antalya Diplomacy Forum.
Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis visited Turkey.	13	
	14	İKVV Chairman Zeytinoğlu visited the US in the context of the commercial diplomacy initiative by the Directorate of Communications and TIM.
German Chancellor Scholz paid his first official visit to Turkey.	15	
	16	İKVV Secretary General Nas co-authored a policy brief titled "Turkey-Germany-EU relations in an Era of Geopolitical Turmoil".
Polish President Duda paid a working visit to Turkey.	17	
The 79 th meeting of the Turkey-EU JPC was held in Brussels.	18	İKVV published a brief titled "Visa Liberalisation Dialogue between Turkey and the EU: The Road So Far".
The 1915 Çanakkale Bridge, which is the world's longest suspension bridge, was inaugurated.	19	
	20	İKVV researchers prepared a set of information notes on the reports adopted at the EP plenary.
The EU Foreign Affairs Council adopted the Strategic Compass.	21	
Dutch Prime Minister Rutte paid an official visit to Turkey.	22	İKVV Brussels Representative Nuray spoke on Ekotürk TV.
	23	
World leaders gathered in Brussels for a set of emergency summits of NATO, European Council and the G7.	24	İKVV Chairman Zeytinoğlu issued a statement regarding the Strategic Compass.
	25	İKVV Secretary General Nas attended the 2022 Kartepe Summit.
	26	
	27	Finland's Ambassador to Turkey Mäki and Commercial Counsellor Selin visited the İKV and met with İKV Secretary General Nas and Deputy Secretary General Kilit.
	28	
The latest round of peace talks between Ukraine and Russia were held in İstanbul.	29	
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	31	

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MESSAGE BY IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU

In a statement issued on the occasion of 8 March International Women's Day, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu highlighted the themes of women's rights and gender equality for a better future. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu touched upon the importance of Women's Day in terms of the adoption and development of gender equality for a sustainable future. Indicating that gender equality is an issue that concerns human rights, especially women's rights, and even the activities carried out in the fight against climate change, he stated that women's participation and leadership in sustainable initiatives is an essential requirement for change in all societies. Zeytinoğlu also stated that women and girls should be actively involved in the decision-making processes to ensure sustainable development and gender equality on more solid grounds and expressed that it is not possible to create an egalitarian future in every sense without ensuring gender equality. He made the following remarks:

"Thanks to the determined stance of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on giving women an equal place in the society, Turkey is one of the countries in the world where women were granted



full suffrage – the right to vote and be elected – well before many countries. However, there are still important problems regarding the prevention of domestic violence, harassment and discrimination against women. In the Global Gender Gap Report, our country ranked 113th among 156 countries in 2021. According to this statistic, Turkey needs to take more progressive steps in gender equality. Courses on theme of gender equality should be added to school curricula and sensitivity on the issue should be raised. Explaining and teaching gender equality to the entire society will support Turkey's progress in the indexes. Creating opportunities for women's participation in economic life, bringing the rate of women in employment to EU standards,

supporting women's participation in political life, improving education opportunities and equipping women with 21st century skills, and raising awareness of girls about possible health risks are the main areas which require increased focus.

Underlining that IKV attaches importance to the principle of equal representation, IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu stated that IKV is an institution of equal opportunities and the rate of female employees is 60%. Zeytinoğlu mentioned that IKV's activities are based on women's rights and gender equality, and that women-themed panels and online meetings are held frequently. He also added that Turkey internalizing gender equality will have positive reflections on the EU accession process.



FINLAND'S AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY MÄKI VISITED IKV

Finland's Ambassador to Turkey Ari Mäki and Commercial Counsellor Joonas Selin visited the IKV and came together with Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit on 28 March 2022. During the meeting, in which the Turkey-EU and Turkey-Finland relations were discussed, it was

stated that the parties should be in more dialogue and diversify the areas of cooperation. At the meeting, in which regional and international issues on the common agenda of the two countries were discussed, it was underscored that the Russia-Ukraine war should come to an end.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

In March, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas discussed Turkey-EU relations and crucial foreign policy issues in various events and programmes. IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Nas first participated in the opening meeting of the "POW-EU-R Jean Monnet Module" supported by the EU within Kocaeli University on 4 March 2022 and gave a speech on the European Green Deal and the EU's global actorhood. The other speaker of the opening meeting of the Jean Monnet module, coordinated by Assoc. Prof. Pelin Sönmez and Assoc. Prof. Oğuz Demir from Kocaeli University, was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı.

On the same day, Assoc. Prof. Nas analysed the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in the programme hosted by "Ben Seçerim" (I Choose) Association. Nas stated that Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which was in violation of international law as well as UN's



prohibition of the use of force, endangered European security, and stressed that at the current stage it was important that the EU reacted strongly. Nas emphasized that Russian President Putin's demands from Ukraine reflected an approach which ignored the independence and sovereignty of the country, and that no justification could legitimize the invasion of a country.

On 8 March, Assoc. Prof. Nas spoke in the "War-Climate-Life:

Turkey Should Phase Out Coal" episode of the "Pandemic and Society" webinar series organised by Istanbul Policy Center (IPC). In the webinar, which focused on the joint statement by IKV, IPC and TEPAV calling on Turkey to phase out coal by 2035 and the recent developments in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Nas highlighted the importance of setting clear targets and designing a roadmap for Turkey to achieve its 2053 climate goals. She also stated that Turkey, as an EU candidate country and a Customs Union partner, was primarily affected by the European Green Deal. The other participants of the webinar, moderated by Prof. Senem Aydın-Düzgüt, were Prof. Güven Sak and Bengisu Vural.

Moreover, IKV Secretary General Nas co-authored a policy brief entitled "Turkey-Germany-EU relations in an Era of Geopolitical Turmoil". The co-authors of the policy brief, published on 16 March by the IPC, include TEPAV

EU Studies Center Director Nilgün Arisan-Eralp, IPC Director Prof. Fuat Keyman, IPC Research and Academic Affairs Director Prof. Senem Aydın-Düzgüt and Mercator-IPC Senior Fellow Atila Eralp. On 22 March, Nas shared her views on Turkey-Germany-EU relations and areas of cooperation at the webinar organised by IPC as part of the "Pandemic and Society" webinar series in which the policy brief was discussed.

On 24 March, IKV Secretary General Nas was a panellist in the closing meeting of the project titled "A New Road Transport Cooperation Between Turkey and the EU: Prospects and Probability" co-organised by the International Transporters Association (UND), the European Union and Global Research Association (ABKAD) and the European Neighbourhood Council (ENC) within the scope of the Supporting Civil Society Dialogue Between the EU and Turkey Grant Scheme (CSD-VI).

Assoc. Prof. Nas indicated that transportation is an integral part

of the Turkey-EU Customs Union and that obstacles and surcharges in the transportation sector constitute non-tariff barriers. Stating that the disruptions and obstacles in the supply chains caused by the pandemic and the Ukraine crisis have made the Turkey-EU trade relationship even more important, she emphasized that the Customs Union should be modernised to include more effective cooperation in the field of transportation, as well as green and digital agendas.

A day later, Nas moderated the session titled "Transformation of Industry" at the 2022 edition of the Kartepe Summit held under the theme "Resilient Cities and Transformation of the City". During the session, Kocaeli Chamber of Industry Deputy Chairman Çınar Ulusoy, Chairman of the Board of Hidropar Motion Control Technologies Center Tunç Atıl and Manager of LEED Green Building Certification System Cemil Yaman shared their views on the subject.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

DIPLOMATIC TRAFFIC BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EU INTENSIFIED IN LIGHT OF TURKEY'S MEDIATION EFFORTS



Parallel to Turkey's mediation efforts between Russia and Ukraine, March witnessed increased diplomatic traffic between Turkey and EU with numerous EU leaders visiting Turkey. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan intensified dialogue with various European heads of state and government with a particular focus on the recent developments in the Ukraine-Russia conflict and Turkey-EU relations.

President Erdoğan firstly met with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on 13 March in Istanbul to discuss the role of Turkey and Greece in the changing European security architecture and Turkey-EU relations. President Erdoğan touched upon the steps taken by Turkey to open a new page in bilateral relations. Erdoğan also expressed Ankara's willingness to make progress on the Aegean issues, minorities, the fight against terrorism and irregular migration while underscoring that this could only be achieved through sincere and honest

dialogue established not only in times of crisis but also in normal times. The two leaders agreed to boost cooperation and focus on the positive agenda.

On the next day, President Erdoğan came together with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz who visited Turkey for the first time since taking office in December 2021. Both leaders confirmed their common views and concerns as NATO allies and pledged to continue diplomatic initiatives to achieve a permanent ceasefire in Ukraine. While Chancellor Scholz commended Turkey for closing the Bosphorus Strait to warships in a move to restrict Russia's access to the Black Sea, President Erdoğan voiced the need to revive the existing high-level consultation mechanisms with Germany in light of the recent developments.

On 16 March, President Erdoğan hosted Polish President Andrzej Duda in Ankara. During the meeting between the two leaders, Turkey-Poland relations,

economic issues as well as regional developments were discussed. Polish President Duda expressed the will to continue the bilateral defence cooperation recently launched between Turkey and Poland while President Erdoğan praised Poland for opening its borders to approximately 2 million Ukrainian refugees. President Erdoğan also expressed his wish that Poland would continue to support the improvement of relations between Turkey and the EU.

Lastly, President Erdoğan had talks with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on 22 March in Ankara. While praising Turkey's leading role in the efforts to solve tensions in Ukraine, Prime Minister Rutte reiterated Turkey's political and military importance for NATO and the EU. On the other hand, President Erdoğan relayed Turkey's call for the EU to open new chapters in the accession negotiations and launch the talks for modernising the Customs Union.



NATO LEADERS CONVENED AT EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS

NATO leaders gathered at the Extraordinary NATO Summit held in Brussels on 24 March 2022 to step up support for Ukraine and decide on the next steps to boost the deterrence and defence of the alliance in the face of Russia's military campaign against Ukraine. In the joint statement issued after the meeting, NATO leaders condemned Russia's war on Ukraine and urged the Kremlin to immediately stop the war and withdraw its military forces from Ukraine. Indicating that Russia's war against Ukraine shattered peace in Europe, the allies took steps to redefine NATO's long-term deterrence and defence in light of the gravest threat to Euro-Atlantic security in decades and agreed to establish four multinational

battlegroups in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. In addition, a decision was reached to extend the mandate of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, whose term was set to expire on 1 October 2022, for an additional year. The leaders also expressed concern over China's recent public statements and called on Beijing to refrain from providing support to Russia.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who participated in the Extraordinary NATO Summit, held various bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit including with French President Emmanuel Macron, Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Speaking at the press conference following the

summit, President Erdoğan referred to Turkey's strategic partnership and deep-rooted multi-dimensional relations with Ukraine as well as the importance it attaches to being in constructive dialogue with Russia and indicated that Turkey was in close contact with both parties to put an immediate halt to the war. Stating that Turkey's bringing together Russian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers in Antalya together with Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu's meetings in Moscow and Lviv were each a turning point, President Erdoğan expressed Ankara's belief that a final solution should be based on a mutually acceptable reliable formula and stressed that Ukraine's sovereignty and independence should be the top priority.

LANDMARK VISIT BY ISRAELI PRESIDENT HERZOG MARKS A RESET IN TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS



Israeli President Isaac Herzog paid a two-day official visit to Turkey on 9 and 10 March 2022. This marked the first official visit in 14 years by an Israeli leader since the then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert came to Turkey in 2008. In this respect, the visit is considered as a historical step towards improving the relations between the two countries. The fact that Herzog's plane was decorated with inscriptions of the words "peace", "future", "cooperation" both in Turkish and Hebrew was seen as a gesture of good will.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan held *tête-à-tête* and inter-delegation meetings, followed by a joint press conference. President Erdoğan stated that President Herzog's historic visit would be a new turning point in Turkey-Israel relations and expressed his belief that the coming period would bring new opportunities in terms of regional cooperation as well as bilateral relations between the

two countries. President Erdoğan specifically stated that Turkey was ready for cooperation in projects to be carried out in the fields of energy and energy security.

Referring to Turkey and Israel being regional allies in the past, Israeli President Herzog noted the potential between the two countries and stated that cooperation was the key to solving regional problems. President Herzog also expressed Israel's appreciation for Turkey's diplomatic mediation effort between Ukraine and Russia.

The visit is quite significant in terms of turning a new page in Turkish-Israeli relations which have been strained over the past years. In particular, the idea of transferring Israeli gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe via Turkey is expected to provide impetus to Turkey-Israel relations. This would be a key achievement not only for bilateral relations but also for peace and energy security in the region.

WORLD'S LONGEST SUSPENSION BRIDGE INAUGURATED IN TURKEY

Turkey inaugurated the world's longest suspension bridge connecting Europe and Asia on the 107th anniversary of the Çanakkale Naval Victory.

The 1915 Çanakkale Bridge, also known as the Dardanelles Bridge, was inaugurated on 18 March 2022 to mark the 107th anniversary of Çanakkale Naval Victory at the Battle of Gallipoli. The Çanakkale Bridge is the fourth bridge linking the European and Asian coasts in Turkey and the fifth crossing to connect Asia and Europe after the 15 July Martyrs Bridge, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge, Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, Marmaray Rail Tunnel and the Eurasia Tunnel. It is the first bridge to connect the two continents over the Dardanelles Strait.

Building works on the Çanakkale Bridge project began in March 2017 and required an



investment of 2.5 billion euros. The project was carried out by Turkish and South Korean companies, with more than 5,000 workers involved in its construction. The bridge has a unique structure; it is shaped to symbolise an artillery shell as

a tribute to the Çanakkale Naval Victory, with spires which are 318 meters high and a main span of 2,023 kilometres.

During the opening ceremony, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that Turkey

built the world's longest mid-span suspension bridge, leaving Japan behind to occupy the first place. President Erdoğan underlined that this project will contribute 5.3 billion euros to Turkey's economy, 2.4 billion euros in national

income and create employment for 118,000 people. He also added that this bridge will enable Turkey to further cement its position as an international logistics hub connecting Europe, the Middle East, Northern Europe and Central Asia.

Travelling across the Dardanelles Strait which is usually a 30-minute ferry ride but takes longer due to long queues and sometimes storms will now be much shorter; it will only take 6 minutes crossing the new bridge. The bridge is expected to carry 45,000 vehicles across its six lanes each day and support both tourism and commercial activity in the region.

TOBB AND US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



On 15 March 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between TOBB and the US Chamber of Commerce at the ceremony held in Ankara. TOBB President Hisarcıkloğlu, Senior Vice President of the US Chamber of Commerce Myron Brilliant, US Ambassador to Turkey Jeffrey Flake and Deputy Trade Minister Mustafa Tuzcu were present at the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, TOBB President Hisarcıkloğlu pointed out that the 100 billion dollar Turkey-US trade target was realistic and compatible with the production potential of the two allies. TOBB President Hisarcıkloğlu also voiced his expectation for a free trade agreement or a similar preferential trade agreement to be signed between Turkey and the US. Calling on the US authorities to take Turkey off the "Section 232" list and decrease tariffs on Turkish steel products, Hisarcıkloğlu indicated that the US contracting market should be opened to Turkish companies. Hisarcıkloğlu also stated that with the memorandum of understanding, Turkey and US will also have agreed on the areas of cooperation for 2022 and highlighted health, energy, information technologies, digital economy, tourism and infrastructure as areas of cooperation.

Meanwhile, Executive Vice President and Head of International Affairs at the US Chamber of Commerce Myron Brilliant stated that Turkey had a very good chance to have investments in Russia diverted to its own market by improving its business infrastructure and digital framework. He indicated that Turkey could attract investments from not only US companies, but also Japanese and European companies pulling back from the Russian market.

US Ambassador to Turkey Jeffrey Flake started his speech by thanking the Turkish government and people for seeking diplomatic solutions to the Russia-Ukraine war. Stating that some American companies doing business in Russia were considering shifting their operations to Turkey, Ambassador Flake encouraged American companies to think about the Turkish market and added that this could be an opportunity for Turkey to attract more foreign investors. Highlighting a stable and sustainable business environment as a crucial condition for attracting and keeping foreign investment, he expressed the hope that cooperation between TOBB and the US Chamber of Commerce could contribute to reaching this goal.



TURKEY-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CONVENED AFTER A THREE-YEAR HIATUS

Turkish and European parliamentarians came together in Brussels on 17 and 18 March 2022 for the 79th Meeting of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The previous meeting of the JPC was held in Ankara on 19 December 2018. In their first meeting in over three years, Turkish MPs and MEPs discussed Turkey-EU relations, the state of play in Turkey's EU accession negotiations, foreign and regional policies including cooperation regarding the crisis in Ukraine, democracy in Turkey and the EU as well as cooperation in economy, trade and the Green Deal.

Turkey-EU JPC Co-Chair Emrah Karayel welcomed the reconvening of the Committee after a three-year hiatus. Stressing the importance of the modernisation of the Turkey-EU Customs Union for the future of Turkey-EU relations, he indicated that it would be a "good starting point" for a new type of enhanced relationship between the two sides. Moreover, Karayel criticised that accession negotiations were highly politicised for the domestic political

concerns of several Member States. Indicating that Turkey's importance for the global supply chain has increased with the European Green Deal, he said that Turkey was ready to do its part in alignment with EU standards and the Ukraine crisis.

Meanwhile, Turkey-EU JPC Co-Chair Sergey Lagodinsky underscored that inter-parliamentary cooperation was the "backbone of bilateral relations" and that both sides frankly shared their views on their differences and mutual expectations for the future in the meeting. Furthermore, he added that the reconvening of the JPC has served notably the efforts to fortify the bridge between Turkey and the EU. Lagodinsky also emphasized their desire for increased coordination between Turkey and the EU in the process of green transition and to intensify dialogue on climate change, health, migration, counterterrorism and the economy. The co-chairs announced that the next meeting of the JPC would be held in 2022 and "as soon as possible".

TURKEY-EU WATCH

EUROPEAN COMMISSION VICE-PRESIDENT SCHINAS ATTENDED THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON HEALTH AND MIGRATION IN TURKEY

A high-level meeting on health and migration was organised with the cooperation of World Health Organization (WHO) and the Turkish Ministry of Health in İstanbul on 17-18 March 2022. WHO Regional Office for Europe hosted the event with the support of two other WHO Regional Offices, that of Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. The idea was to encourage participatory dialogue and collaboration between regions with extensive experience in relation to migration with the aim to help create a joint vision addressing the health and well-being of refugees and migrants as well as host communities. In order to strengthen existing connections, form new partnerships and build consensus on new and emerging priorities, the meeting brought together health ministers and representatives of 53 member states as well as representatives of refugees and migrant groups and other health



partner organisations to discuss strategic priorities for health and migration beyond 2022.

During his speech, WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge defined migration as "an enduring, enriching and vital part of our societies, an essential ingredient in how we - as communities and people - thrive

and develop." European Commission Vice-President responsible for coordinating migration and security policies, Margaritis Schinas, who was among the high-level attendees of the meeting in İstanbul, emphasized the importance of the title of the WHO Conference which says "Health for all, no matter where you come from" in his message.

Schinas praised health and healthcare for refugees as a success story in EU-Turkey cooperation and expressed "gratitude for the vital role of Turkey in hosting and addressing the needs of millions of refugees" and said that joint efforts will continue to achieve common goals. In his video message, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan emphasized that Turkey

"provided healthcare access, without exception, for every refugee" and noted that during the pandemic Turkey provided medical equipment and critical material support to 160 countries and 12 international organisations that requested help. Turkey's Health Minister Fahrettin Koca noted that healthcare services have been provided to temporary protection status holders in Turkey through financial support since 2016. He underlined the importance of the projects carried out with the technical support of WHO and emphasized that SIHHAT Project conducted with EU funding has become "a dominant project in the field of migration health" with its many achievements.

Finally, WHO European Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge awarded Turkey for its success in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic on the sidelines of the meeting at the end of which a statement was published.

ART AND BUSINESS AT THE HEART OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENTS IN TURKEY



In Turkey this year, March 8 International Women's Day was marked by an emphasis on awareness in art, equal representation in production and management.

Iranian visual artist and writer Shirin Abedinirad's "Collective Reflection" exhibition opened at the Kızlar Monastery, located in Trabzon in the Black Sea region. The exhibition remained open to visitors until 11 March. Organised with the initiative of the İstanbul Branch of the Turkish Association of University Women (TÜKD), the exhibition consists of three different works of art made of mirrors. These works of art placed in different locations in the monastery focus on drawing attention to human values, rights and the importance of women in society.

Abedinirad stated that besides being a sacred place, the Kızlar Monastery was a very important place where women had religious education, produced and earned their living by giving a reference to the etymological meaning of monastery as "to live alone". She said that the "Women of Mina" Project, founded by 11 productive women who support the TÜKD, continues to empower women like the founding purpose of the monastery. Highlighting the importance of the need for encouraging women to become stronger, Abedinirad also stated that it is enough for women to look at themselves in the mirror "to stand on their own feet".

On the other hand, another development to empower women

took place in the finance and business domain. A loan agreement of 100 million dollars was signed to facilitate women's access to finance and employment areas in Turkey. The main aim of the agreement is encouraging gender equality practices in institutions. The Industrial Development Bank of Turkey (TSKB), the World Bank Group, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) will be financing the businesses with a certain number of female employees, female executives in the board of directors or senior management positions and which hold a valid gender equality certificate.

In her official statement regarding the agreement, TSKB CEO Ece Börü stated that women are among the vulnerable groups due to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. Börü also noted that the participation of women in the economy will create a leverage effect underlining the need to accelerate the inclusion of women in the solution-generating group and to ensure equal representation in both production and management for the whole society. IFC Turkey and Central Asia Director Wiebke Schloemer stated that increasing women's participation in the business world is not only a moral imperative but also very important in terms of creating a sustainable and inclusive economy.

UK TO PROVIDE A 2.1 BILLION EURO LOAN FOR ANKARA-İZMİR HIGH-SPEED ELECTRIC RAILWAY



At the UK-Turkey Green Finance Conference which took place in London on 17 March 2022, the UK announced that it would guarantee a 2.1 billion euro loan to finance the construction of the Ankara-İzmir electrified high-speed rail line in Turkey. It is UK's biggest-ever sustainable, civil infrastructure deal and the UK's first railway transaction in Turkey in over 160 years. The Swiss bank Credit Suisse and the British financial services firm Standard Chartered, with support from UK Export Finance (UKEF), will structure the loan. The financing will also comply with Green Loan Principles and sustainability standards.

The 503 km-long new electric-powered high-speed railway line will connect the major port city of İzmir to the capital

Ankara. The project, which will offer a sustainable and lower-carbon alternative to the current routes between Ankara and İzmir, is also designed to facilitate Turkey decarbonise its transport sector and achieve its COP26 commitments.

Stating that Turkey attributes considerable importance to the environmental and social procedures, Turkey's Treasury and Finance Minister Dr. Nureddin Nebati said that Turkey successfully finalised the landmark financing of the project under the green loan structure. Similarly, British International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan highlighted Turkey's role as a vital trading partner for the UK and said that the infrastructure deal was strongly sustainable.

TURKEY-EU STATEMENT SIX YEARS ON: A BALANCE SHEET

While the Turkey-EU Statement has been hailed as a success story in stemming irregular migration to the EU, its implementation has been marked by the EU's failure to deliver on its part of the deal, making the renewal of the statement more urgent than ever.

Ebru DALĞAKIRAN
IKV Researcher

As a “temporary” and “urgent” measure, the Turkey-EU Statement was announced on 18 March 2016 to stop and control the irregular migration influx from Turkey's shores to Europe, which was at the peak number in summer 2015. As of March 2022, the Turkey-EU Statement is in its sixth year, and it seems that permanence has replaced temporariness although neither the parties nor the refugees are satisfied with the results so far. In this article, the state of play regarding the implementation of the statement will be evaluated from the perspectives of the parties including the EU, the Turkish Government, and refugees stuck in hotspots.

A Glance into the Turkey-EU Statement

The Turkey-EU Statement, signed between the EU Member States led by Germany and the Turkish Government on 16 March and began to be implemented on 18 March 2016, is a cooperation that is not legally binding. Basically, the main points agreed upon in the statement included the following: Turkey shall take measures to prevent emergence of any new irregular migration routes from Turkey to Europe. Migrants crossing irregularly from Turkey to the Greek islands shall be returned to Turkey. For each Syrian returned from the islands, EU Member States shall accept a Syrian refugee who is waiting for the asylum application in Turkey (1:1 scheme). When irregular crossings are sustainably reduced, voluntary returns are to be supported by the EU Member States. In exchange for the EU demands, Turkey's gains included the following: The EU shall give 6 billion euros in total to Turkey to support humanitarian needs for Syrians



in Turkey. The visa liberalisation roadmap shall be accelerated to lift the visa requirements for Turkish citizens. Turkey and EU shall work together for the upgrading of the Customs Union. Turkey and the EU shall agree on the revitalisation of the accession process by opening new chapters.

The statement was criticized severely by civil society organisations in Turkey as well as in the EU. They firstly accused the EU of the externalisation of migration policies to third countries, and it has also been repeatedly claimed in several reports that Turkey was not a safe third country to accommodate refugees within its borders. The other criticism had to do with the view that the statement violates the non-refoulement principle. Although the statement was welcomed as a “win-win” formula by both the EU and Turkey in 2016, after five years, in 2020, the demands to renew the statement started to be voiced both on the part of Turkey and the EU.

The EU's Satisfaction with the Tangible Results (!)

The number of border crossings from the Aegean Sea to the Greek islands in 2015 stood at 856,000. The border crossings decreased to 173,000 in 2016 and to 30,000 in 2017. However, number of irregular migrants crossing the borders began to increase in 2018. On the

other hand, the number of irregular migrants returned from Greece to Turkey was only 2,140 and the number of those resettled under the statement was approximately 32,472 in 2021. While Turkey is still hosting 3.7 million Syrians, resettlements to the EU seem to be a drop in the ocean. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell expressed the EU's satisfaction with the implementation of the statement with the words “It has been very much criticized, but this statement has produced tangible results.”

Turkey's Main Disappointments and the Expectations from a Renewed Statement

Although there was a sharp decline in the number of irregular migrants crossing the borders following the 2016 Turkey-EU Statement, the commitments of the EU under the statement still have not been fulfilled. According to the statement, the commitments of the EU were: (i) implementing the 1:1 scheme, (ii) financial assistance to refugees in Turkey, (iii) launching the Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme, and (iv) cooperating with Turkey in Northern Syria to provide safety for the voluntary returns of Syrians. Nevertheless, as raptly stated by Turkish Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Faruk Kaymakci,

the EU only implemented the 1:1 commitment. Furthermore, the total amount of financial aid, which Turkey also saw as inadequate, was not fully transferred in the specified period. Furthermore, neither the EU Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme and nor Turkey-EU cooperation in Northern Syria have been implemented.

In addition, Turkish citizens have not been granted visa liberalisation and no new chapters have been opened in Turkey's EU accession process. Last but not least, the Customs Union modernisation process has not been launched. From the EU's perspective, criticisms concerning Turkey's adherence to EU standards were seen as a fundamental reason for the delay.

Due to the abovementioned reasons, Turkey expects the renewal of the statement. Turkey firstly demands increasing cooperation in Northern Syria to enable voluntary returns of Syrians. The second demand includes strengthening Turkey's border management capacity, especially in the Turkish-Iranian borders, which is risky for the influx of Afghan refugees. The third demand has to do with implementation of joint projects in refugee source regions like Afghanistan and Africa. Turkey demands a fair burden-sharing in terms of financial cost of resettlement.

Lives of Refugees in Limbo

The Turkey-EU Statement clearly envisaged the return of migrants arriving on Greece's shores irregularly. Implementation of the statement with the hotspot approach of the European Commission in 2015 caused the long-term detention of asylum seekers in the Greek Islands. Although the poor reception and detention conditions on the islands are written in several documents, the COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the conditions in the reception centres. Turkey declared in 2020 that it would not accept returns from Greece due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, migrants are stuck in the islands. The EU Member States also failed to share responsibility and show solidarity. Although the Commission's new Pact on Migration has introduced a new solidarity mechanism, the EU continues to implement its containment policies and externalise migration management.

All in all, while the crisis situation in migration management presented an opportunity for the revival of Turkey-EU relations, the EU just pursued migration management outside its borders through financial aid. Refugees, on the other hand, still try to survive in limbo. Thus, it is obvious that externalisation of the EU's migration policies to non-EU neighbour countries is a neither humane nor sustainable policy track. Nevertheless, despite repeated criticisms and warnings by Ankara to cancel or suspend the statement, the statement remains valid for the EU.

On the other hand, into the sixth year of the statement, the deaths of the migrants in the Aegean Sea still make the news while Europe has welcomed 3 million Ukrainian refugees within just one month of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In contrast with the chaotic handling of the refugee influx from Syria, in the Ukrainian case the EU Member States and the EU institutions have shown unprecedented solidarity and hospitality, which indicates how well the asylum mechanism could actually work.