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TURKEY'S WESTERN CONNECTION: THE USA, EU, NATO AND STRAINING RELATIONS

In 2018 we may continue to witness tensions in international relations. However Turkey's relations with West and the EU are expected to evolve along a normalization course.

Turkey, a country lying on the margins of Europe in between two continents, has been a member of Western organisations established in the aftermath of the Second World War. The EU is an exception in this regard since Turkey has become a member of almost all other organizations encompassing Europe, i.e. NATO, OECD, Council of Europe and OSCE. In fact, prior to the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the Ottoman Empire had already been proclaimed as a member of the Concert of Europe in 1856 at the Paris Congress. The destination of the young Turkish Republic and its leader Atatürk was always towards the West as may be evidenced in the modernizing reforms passed in the first years of the Republic. All in all, it could be said that Turkey has become a part of the West in a strategic sort of way though culturally and historically it had been designated as non-western.

Turkey's status as part of the West has been in jeopardy recently owing to changes in the global state system, internal changes in Turkey and changes regarding relations with the West. The West as a geopolitical term embodies the USA, the EU and its Member States as well as primary organizations such as NATO and Council of Europe. Turkey experienced political crises with the Netherlands, Germany and the USA lately. While relations with the EU took a turn for the worse following the July 15 attempted coup, relations with the USA worsened due to the Fethullah Terror Organization (FETÖ) and People's Protection Units (YPG) issues. While Turkey accused the USA of being the force behind the FETÖ organization and supporting and arming the YPG in Syria which is regarded as a terrorist organization by Turkey, anti-USA sentiments intensified among politicians, media and general public. The suspension of



visa procedures at the US consulates in Turkey came as the climax of the straining relations with the USA. Fortunately, processing of visa application resumed as of the 6th of November. The trial of Reza Zarrab and Hakan Atilla in the USA created a renewed tension in the relations since Turkey was accused of breaking the embargo against Iran proclaimed by the UN Security Council. Despite statements by President Trump concerning his amicable approach to his Turkish counterpart, we have yet to witness improvement in Turkey-USA relations. The current strain in the relations points to deeper and structural problems between Turkey and the USA and crystallizes over the issue regarding the future of Syria and Iraq.

Regarding the approach of public opinion to relations with the USA, the results of a recent survey by Zogby Research Services provide interesting results. According to the survey, while 46 percent of the

respondents in Turkey viewed having good relations with the USA as important, this percentage increased to 100 percent in 2017. All the respondents found that having good relations with the USA are important. Hence it may be appreciated that diplomacy and reason is bound to prevail in foreign relations especially with a prominent global power such as the USA. However conflicting positions with regard to the situation in Syria and Iraq, Turkey's internal politics and the role that it may play in the Middle East may result in renewed tensions and bottlenecks between Turkey and the USA.

A further crisis took place in NATO when it was found out that the images of Atatürk and Erdoğan were used in a military exercise conducted by NATO in Norway. The images were used to represent the enemy in the war game. Turkey rightly protested this flagrant denial of Turkey's role in NATO and its ally status. NATO Secretary General personally

apologized for this grave mistake. The incident was overcome in a relatively short period of time. Still, Turkey's probable withdrawal from NATO was openly debated in the media. The overriding logic that resulted from these debates was that it would not be rational for Turkey's security interests to leave NATO just on the spur of the moment.

Finally, Turkey's relations with the EU continued to proceed on a slippery path. Negotiations for the modernization of the Turkey-EU customs union which were expected to begin during 2017 were not started since the Council of the EU could not arrive at a consensus regarding giving a mandate to the Commission to conduct negotiations with Turkey. Especially Germany, having experienced serious problems in its relations with Turkey and also being extremely critical of the current political situation in the country voiced its opposition to the start of negotiations. During

the election campaign, Chancellor Merkel stated that she would debate the issue of suspension of Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU in the Council meeting to be held in October. Although such a decision did not materialize, the EU Council felt the need to send a "responsible" warning to Turkey regarding its EU aspirations. IPA funds within the pre-accession assistance provided by the EU to Turkey were cut by 105 million. Although this does not constitute a significant portion of the overall funding for 2014-19 period, it was still symbolically important since it was an indicator that worse could follow this move by the EU. 2018 will most probably be a year when we will continue to witness tension in relations with the West and the EU. However, it is also expected that economic and political significance of EU relations for Turkey and the importance of Turkey's Western vocation will result in more moderate and rational policies in this regard.



IKV'S SEMINARS REGARDING THE TURKEY-EU AGENDA

IKV organised seminars entitled "Turkey's EU Agenda: The Changing Face of Production and Trade" at Çanakkale Commodity Exchange on 1 November, Manisa Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 8 November, Rize Commodity Exchange on 13 November, Tekirdağ Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 15 November, Eskişehir Commodity Exchange on 28 November, Kahramanmaraş Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 29 November. IKV delegation also visited Ankara Commodity Exchange on 30 November with the same purpose.

In the seminars, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas made a presentation entitled "Turkey's EU Perspective, the EU Market and Position of Turkey". IKV Strategy and Business Development Director M. Gökhan Kilit explained the modernisation of the Customs Union and its effects on the business world in detail. Lastly, IKV Research Director Çișel İleri presented the EU funds from which the business world can benefit. Following the Q&A sessions, IKV publications were given to the participants. IKV Brussels Representative Haluk Nuray was also present in the seminars at Çanakkale and Manisa and gave a presentation entitled "New Rules and New Actors in Global Trade".

IKV CHAIRMAN'S VISIT TO TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS



On 17-18 November IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and a delegation from Kocaeli Chamber of Industry paid a visit to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) for a series of high-level exchanges with key Turkish Cypriot officials. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu was accompanied by IKV Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, IKV Strategy and Business Development Director M. Gökhan Kilit and IKV Junior Researcher Emre Ataç. On the first day of his visit, Chairman Zeytinoğlu had separate meetings with Vice President Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce Ozan Dağlı

and Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Industry President Mustafa Kaymak. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu was also received by the Minister of Economy and Energy Sunat Atun.

On the second day of his visit, Chairman Zeytinoğlu was received by the President of TRNC Mustafa Akıncı. The current state of the UN-sponsored Cyprus reunification talks along with possible scenarios for the future of the process were the main items on the agenda. During the meeting IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu highlighted that it was crucial for the TRNC to develop sound economic and trade relations with the rest of the world and that

the Turkish business community holds significant responsibility in increasing investments in the TRNC. Finally, IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu called on the international community to take concrete steps to put an end to the unlawful and unacceptable isolation to which the Turkish Cypriots are being subjected. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu also underscored that the non-resolution of the Cyprus question has been used against Turkey's EU membership bid. Zeytinoğlu stated that the EU's move to admit a divided island with the Greek Cypriot Administration as its sole representative was a huge strategic

mistake which not only perpetuated the division of the island, but also inevitably made the EU party to the problem.

During the meeting President Akıncı stated that since September 2016 they were confronted with a Greek Cypriot leadership which was unwilling to compromise and far away from a realistic and credible position. Akıncı stated that a solution was rendered impossible due to the unwillingness of the Greek Cypriot leadership and the fact that the Greek Cypriot community was not prepared for a settlement based on power-sharing. Noting that the need to resolve the Cyprus question was still there, Akıncı stated that a settlement would not be possible without a transformation in the mentality of the Greek Cypriot side. Referring to the 2018 elections in the south, Akıncı indicated that the election period was crucial for the Greek Cypriots to contemplate on what they really wanted for the future. Noting that the TRNC would continue to favour a solution-oriented policy, President Akıncı argued that it would not be realistic expect any positive developments in the talks till the completion of the election period in the south and added that the situation would need to be re-evaluated based on the election results.

IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTINOĞLU EVALUATED EU'S DECISION TO REDUCE PRE-ACCESSION FUNDS



IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement following the European Council's decision to reduce Turkey's pre-accession funds. As stated by IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu, the decision was taken with political motives and reflects the EU's dilemma over Turkey's

membership process. He continued as follows:

"According to the agreement reached between the Council and the EP regarding the EU's 2018 budget, it was settled that the EU would cut 105 million euros from Turkey's pre-accession funds and

suspend an additional 70 million euros. This agreement is going to be finalised after the Council's and EP's formal approvals on 30 November 2017. As the main aim of this financial assistance is to prepare Turkey as a candidate country for the EU membership, it is clear that this budget cut will affect the pre-accession process negatively. During a period in which Turkey needs to progress in alignment with the EU values and standards most, even if it is limited, we are contemplating that the decision to reduce pre-accession assistance is an unfortunate development."

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu remarked that the regression of Turkey's vested rights during the EU accession period would lead to a negative perception, even if it is symbolic. He added that:

"Accession period has been progressing through the mutual commitments of the EU and Turkey. Hence, each development

that causes any limitations on the foreseen framework and regressions would remove the parties from the accession aim. Although the cut in pre-accession assistance has no significant impact in reality, it might affect the process in a negative way both symbolically and psychologically."

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu reminded that Turkey has used a very low percentage of the pre-accession funds yet, and continued his words as the following:

"With the impact of the deceleration in Turkey's membership negotiations, it is seen that there is a delay in usage of the pre-accession funds. Only 360 million euros out of 4.45 billion euros has been disbursed to projects. The remaining funds from the period prior to 2014 are still being used. Therefore, the acceleration of the efficient usage of the EU pre-accession funds carries a great importance. Considering that there is approximately two-year

period ahead and the presentation, approval and implementation period of the projects take a long time, it could be realised that there is a short time frame for these funds to be used."

Ayhan Zeytinoğlu touched also upon the importance of keeping Turkey's aim of membership alive, and he lastly expressed that:

"The reforms that were carried out in the beginning of the 2000's to progress in the EU membership and to fulfil the necessary criteria have resulted in an increase in not only foreign investments in Turkey but also Turkey's recognition and reputation at an international level. During this period in which Turkey has been having tough times in both within and beyond the borders, keeping the EU membership aim alive would make a positive impact to actualise the structural reforms and to achieve improvements regarding democracy, freedom and the rule of law."

WE COMMEMORATE THE FOUNDER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

We commemorate the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk, with gratitude on the 79th anniversary of his passing. Protecting his legacy and carrying it a step forward are the primary duties of each citizen of the Republic of Turkey. We will continue glorifying our Republic and elevating it to the level of the contemporary civilizations in the light of the science and reason. We are going to work for prosperity and freedom of our country and society without deviating from the universal values, with a respect to law, democracy, and human rights. We are going to keep Atatürk's works and thoughts alive.



IKV VICE-CHAIRPERSON IN MACAU AND ODESSA



IKV Vice-Chairperson Prof. Haluk Kabaalioglu visited Macau and Odessa and made speeches on the future of Turkey and EU relations. He gave seminars to law students and researchers in the Law Faculty of Macau University and Odessa National University of Law during October.

IKV SECRETARY-GENERAL ATTENDED THE BOSPHORUS SUMMIT



On 30 November IKV Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Cigdem Nas attended the 8th Bosphorus Summit as a panellist. The Summit was held under the title "Design of the Future: The New Test of Globalisation-The World that we

want". The panel on the Future of Europe was organized and moderated by Prof. Gul Gunver Turan, President of Turkey-EU Association and European Movement Turkey. Panellists were Pier Virgilio Dastoli, President of

European Movement, Italy, Assoc. Prof. Cigdem Nas, IKV Secretary General, Dr. Paul T. Levin, Director of Stockholm University, Institute for Turkish Studies, and Sir David Logan, former British Ambassador to Turkey and Chair of British Institute at Ankara. Panellists debated the issue of the future design of Europe in the face of multiple challenges. IKV Secretary-General noted in her speech the interdependent relationship between Turkey and the EU and stressed that despite all odds, Turkey's EU membership remained as the only feasible option for the future of the relations.

IKV VICE-CHAIRPERSON ATTENDED 26th QUALITY CONGRESS

IKV's Vice-Chairperson Prof. Haluk Kabaalioglu attended the 26th Quality Congress organized by Turkey's Quality Association. The Congress took place in Istanbul between 21- 22 November with the theme of "Leadership of Transformation". Prof. Kabaalioglu attended the panel titled "Transforming Face of Europe:

Transformation and its Effects" which was moderated by Assoc. Prof. Burak Kuntay of Bahcesehir University. The following themes were debated during the panel: EU reform and Brexit process, rise of populism and results of recent elections in Europe, Turkey-EU relations, global competition and Europe's response, refugee and migration challenge and

effects on the Schengen area, future of the Eurozone. Prof. Kabaalioglu explained in his speech that Turkey is a vital country in European architecture with its security-provider role, economic dynamism and social and cultural diversity. He emphasized the importance of keeping Turkey's accession process alive and accelerating EU reforms in Turkey.

TIMELINE NOVEMBER 2017

November -IKV organised seminar entitled "Turkey's EU Agenda: The Changing Face of Production and Trade" at Çanakkale Commodity Exchange	1	
	2	
	3	Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu met with German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel in Antalya
	4	
	5	
	6	COP23 Climate Change Conference was held in Bonn
	7	
IKV organised seminar entitled "Turkey's EU Agenda: The Changing Face of Production and Trade" at Manisa Chamber of Commerce and Industry	8	Turkey was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO for the 2017-2021 period
	9	
	10	Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ömer Çelik participated in the Helsinki Policy Forum
IKV hosted a seminar entitled "Institutional and Legal Regulations in the Process of the Modernisation of the Turkey-EU Customs Union" with collaboration of Istanbul Bar Association	11	
	12	IKV organised seminar entitled "Turkey's EU Agenda: The Changing Face of Production and Trade" at Rize Commodity Exchange
	13	
	14	
November -IKV organised seminar entitled "Turkey's EU Agenda: The Changing Face of Production and Trade" at Tekirdağ Chamber of Commerce and Industry	15	European Commission published a progress report including the developments since September 2017 on the EU's migration agenda
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November- IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and a delegation from Kocaeli Chamber of Industry paid a visit to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)	17	
	18	November-IKV and Turkey-EU Association discussed the future of Turkey-EU relations in Hatay
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	20	
IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu paid an official visit to Brussels	21	
IKV's Vice-Chairperson Prof. Haluk Kabaalioglu attended the 26th Quality Congress organized by Turkey's Quality Association	22	
	23	Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu attended the 10th Meeting of the Turkish-Italian Forum in Rome
	24	
	25	
	26	President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos
IKV organised seminar entitled "Turkey's EU Agenda: The Changing Face of Production and Trade" at Eskişehir Commodity Exchange	27	
	28	Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım paid a visit to London
IKV organised seminar entitled "Turkey's EU Agenda: The Changing Face of Production and Trade" at Kahramanmaraş Chamber of Commerce and Industry	29	
	30	November-IKV Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Cigdem Nas attended the 8th Bosphorus Summit
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IKV DELEGATION PAID A VISIT TO BRUSSELS

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and an accompanying delegation paid an official visit to Brussels on 22-24 November. Within the scope of the visit, a panel entitled "Refugee Cooperation between Turkey and the EU and Turkey's EU Accession Process" was held at the IKV Brussels Office on 22 November. The opening speeches of the meeting were delivered by IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the EU Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı, Deputy Head of Turkey Unit at the European Commission Patrick Paquet and Member of the EP Miltiadis Kyrkos. Representatives from the EU institutions including the European Commission, the EP, the European Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS) attended the meeting along with the participants from Brussels based think tanks, NGOs and press.



The experts and researchers from Turkey and the EU touched upon refugee cooperation and Turkey-EU relations. The current conditions of the Syrian people under temporary protection in Turkey, the EU's contributions

and humanitarian funding concerning the refugee crisis and common interests as well as cooperation areas were discussed. At the panel, it was identified that despite some problems, refugee cooperation between Turkey and

the EU is under way. It was also highlighted that the main aim of Turkey-EU cooperation should be membership after all.

On the second day of the Brussels visit, IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu met with authorities

from the Turkey Unit of European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the Members of the EP.

IKV Chairman gave information regarding Turkey's EU process and highlighted the need for reviving the EU negotiations in line with the aim of full membership. He criticised the EU's decision to reduce pre-accession funds and noted that the negotiations for the modernisation of the Customs Union could help create a positive agenda between the parties.

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu also noted that IKV would be organising several events in Brussels along with the other EU capitals in near future. He also highlighted IKV continues intensely to work for Turkey to take the place it deserves within the EU structure.

IKV DISCUSSED THE FUTURE OF TURKEY-EU RELATIONS IN HATAY

IKV and Turkey-EU Association (Türkiye AB Derneği-TURABDER) organised a panel to discuss the future of Turkey-EU relations that was hosted by Antakya Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 18 November. The panel brought the relevant academics, representatives of the business circles and NGOs and other related stakeholders together. IKV Research Director Çișel İleri and IKV Junior Researcher Merve Özcan were also present at the panel discussions.

The opening speeches were delivered by President of Antakya Chamber of Commerce and Industry Hikmet Çișin and by former Ambassador of Turkey to Qatar and the OECD and TURABDER member Mithat Rende. During

his speech, Çișin underlined the regional problems of Hatay and gave information on the latest situation of Syrian population under temporary protection in Turkey. Along the same line Rende, touched upon the regional problems and the current state of Turkey-EU relations.

Then, the panel entitled "Turkey-EU Relations in the Light of Recent Geopolitical Developments" began. The panel's moderator Prof. H. Gül Günver Turan, President of TURABDER expressed that the recent developments in Turkey-EU relations have been affecting not only Turkey but also the EU Member States. The first panellist, the former Ambassador Yusuf Buluç, shared his views regarding the recent tension with NATO and



gave insight on both Turkey-EU and Turkey-NATO relations. The second panellist Secretary General of TURABDER Ela Taşkent explained the history of the NGOs in the EU, the role they may play in global

turbulences and their importance for the EU integration.

Later on, the European Stability Initiative (ESI) researcher and TURABDER member Erkut Emcioğlu took the stage as the third

speaker. He enunciated Turkey-EU relations within the context of the negotiation process and the Turkey-EU Negotiation Framework by paying special attention to the blocked 23rd chapter "Judiciary and Fundamental Rights" and the 24th chapter "Justice, Freedom and Security". Moreover, by touching upon the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), he shared some statistics on the utilisation rate of Turkey from the funds. Lastly, IKV Research Director Çișel İleri made a presentation on the topics including the current trade figures between Turkey and the EU; the benefits of the Customs Union for Turkey and the needs for its modernisation. After the Q&A session, the panel ended up with the evaluations of Prof. H. Gül Günver Turan.

IKV DISCUSSED THE INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL REGULATIONS ON THE MODERNISATION OF THE CUSTOMS UNION

IKV hosted a seminar entitled "Institutional and Legal Regulations in the Process of the Modernisation of the Turkey-EU Customs Union" with collaboration of Istanbul Bar Association on 11 November. The opening speeches of the seminar were delivered by IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and EU Law Commission Co-Chairman of Istanbul Bar Association Cem Murat Sofuoğlu.

The moderator of the seminar's first session was IKV Vice-Chairperson Prof. Halûk Kabaaloğlu. At the beginning

of the session, IKV Brussels Representative Haluk Nuray recited the chronological perspective of the actualisation process of Turkey-EU Customs Union. Ankara University's Research and Application Centre of European Communities (ATAUM) Director Prof. Sanem Baykal stressed on a probable monitoring system that would enable functioning of the dispute settlement mechanism by touching upon the legal framework of the Customs Union. The EU Law Commission Co-Chairman Sofuoğlu stated during his speech that in addition to the modernisation of the Customs Union, legal infrastructure

should be modified as well.

The second session proceeded by the moderation of the EU Law Commission Co-Chairman of Istanbul Bar Association, Ertuğrul Yeşilaltay. Deputy Director General for EU Affairs from the Ministry of Economy Fatma Canan Nilüfer Dora made a presentation regarding the modernisation process of the Customs Union. Then, IKV Strategy and Business Development Director M. Gökhan Kilit touched upon the impacts of the prospected modernisation process on the agricultural sector. Seyhan Paksoy from the EU Law Commission of



Istanbul Bar Association underlined both the level to which Turkish industry has reached and the importance of production and

exportation. The seminar concluded with the final remarks of IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas.

ISTANBUL LOJISTIK AGAINST HUNGARIAN TAX AUTHORITIES: TURKEY'S COURTROOM VICTORY

The highest court of the EU concluded that the Hungarian tax on motor vehicles is equivalent to customs duty which had already been prohibited by the Association Agreement between Turkey and the EU.

Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) has made a historical decision in favour of a Turkish company on 19 October 2017. The company is called *Istanbul Lojistik* and carries goods from Turkey to the EU countries overland. In 2015, Hungarian tax authorities announced that a heavy goods vehicle belonging to *Istanbul Lojistik* had not paid the tax on motor vehicles while carrying textiles from Turkey to Germany. Then, the company was charged not only the tax in question which was 60,000 Hungarian Forint (HUF), which is about 200 euros, but also the penalty amounting to 600,000 HUF, approximately 2,000 euros. This incident lighted the fuse of a two-year judicial process.

In the first phase, by claiming that the imposed tax on Turkish trucks have an equivalent effect to customs duty, *Istanbul Lojistik* brought an action against the Hungarian tax authorities at a local administrative court with the

support of Ministry of Economy, Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM) and International Transporters' Association (UND). By asserting that the issue exceeds his authority, the Hungarian judge escalated the case to the CJEU and the first trial was held on 19 January 2017 in Luxembourg. At the trial, Hungarian authorities stated that taxes were imposed on transportation and thereby services rather than goods, so they are not incompatible with the Association Agreement and Turkey-EU Customs Union. However, the representatives of the European Commission Legal Services advocated that the issue had to be handled in accordance with the Customs Union and its main principle, free movement of goods. Afterwards, the written opinion of CJEU Judge Henrik Saugmandsgaard Øe on 6 April admitting the identical impact of the Hungarian taxes on Turkish heavy goods vehicles with the customs duty gave hope to Turkey



for the final decision of the CJEU which was announced on 19 October 2017.

As concluded by the CJEU, although Hungarian tax authorities did not levy taxes directly on goods, they excised taxes on border-crossing goods by vehicles

registered in Turkey, so the taxed item here is not services. Any unilateral tax on goods that cross borders was evaluated to be equal to customs duty. That is to say, even if not having the same name, they result in the same effect and all of these charges have been banned

by the Association Agreement. Now, it is highly wondered how the CJEU's decision will affect not only the quota issue in road transport which is one of the most common problems of Turkish transporters but also the modernisation process of Turkey-EU Customs Union.

THE PROGRESS REPORT ON EU'S MIGRATION AGENDA SAYS FURTHER WORK IS STILL NEEDED



European Commission published a Progress Report covering the developments since September 2017 on the EU's migration agenda on 15 November. The Progress Report touches upon different areas such as progress made in the Turkey-EU Deal, relocation and resettlement schemes, efficiency of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

According to the Report, the total number of irregular crossings along the main migratory routes have decreased by 63 percent in 2017; showing that the collective efforts of the Member States and the EU institutes keep ensuring concrete results. On the budgetary

side, allocation of 3 billion euros worth of financial aid to Turkey and almost 2 billion euros approved aid to African countries have been going under way. The report underlines that addressing the root causes of migration have been the main target of the Agenda on Migration. Yet, as expressed by the Commission, the Greek authorities still need to step up the efforts and provide adequate resources to ensure effective returns to Turkey.

Concerning the resettlement and relocation schemes; so far over 34,400 pledges have been received and over 31,500 persons have been relocated showing

almost all Member States respect their obligations except Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. But the report says return rates at EU level remain unsatisfactory. After the publication of the report, Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans expressed that the European Migration Agenda remains the top concern of the EU and it should remain so. Also the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos said the EU is exiting crisis mode gradually and they are managing migration in a spirit of partnership and shared responsibility.

EU-TURKEY COUNTER-TERRORISM CONSULTATIONS TOOK PLACE IN ANKARA

EU-Turkey Counter-Terrorism Consultations took place in Ankara on November 28. During the consultations, both sides reiterated their strong will to enhance bilateral cooperation to combat terrorism that affects both the EU and its Member

States, and Turkey. Furthermore, both parties agreed to explore ways of enhancing collaboration on information sharing, law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and countering financing of terrorism, among other subjects. Both the EU and

Turkey will continue to work together to contribute to counter terrorism efforts in international fora, such as the United Nations, Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Global Coalition to Counter Da'esh.



TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACCELERATOR PROJECT WAS FINALISED

The closing event of the Technology Transfer Accelerator (TTA-Turkey) Project was held on 14 November in Istanbul with the participation of Minister of Science, Industry and Technology Faruk Özlü, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the EU to Turkey Gabriel Munuera Vinals and Vice President of the Scientific and Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) Mehmet Şahin Gök. TTA-Turkey Project is an initiative designed by the European Investment Fund (EIF) in cooperation with the Ministry of Science,

Industry and Technology, the Delegation of the EU to Turkey and the Directorate General of Regional Policy of the European Commission. The project aims to commercialise applied research by investing in intellectual property based projects, start-ups, companies and SMEs which are established to transfer the knowledge and skills of universities. The project is implemented through two different steps. The first one is the establishment of two technology transfer accelerator funds for the commercialisation

of research through investments in technologies and start-ups. The second is to support TÜBİTAK and Technology Transfer Offices all over the country so that they can play a successful role in industry-university cooperation and in commercialisation.

Launched in 2014, TTA Project was supported by the EU for the past four years in Turkey with a total budget of more than 50 million euros. TTA Turkey Project is co-financed by the EU and the Republic of Turkey under the Instrument for

Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds and managed by EIF on behalf of the Ministry under the Competitive Sectors Programme. So far, under the TTA-Turkey Project 50 investments are made for the commercialisation of research in the fields such as technology development, intellectual property, micro and nano-electronics.

The outcome and the results of the TTA-Turkey Project were announced and assessed during the conference for the closing of the Project. Minister Özlü, in his

opening speech at the conference pointed out the importance of the new technologies for Turkey and the capacity to produce this technology which is of crucial importance for increasing the value added of goods exported from Turkey. Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey Gabriel Munuera Vinals emphasised that projects like TTA reduce the differences between the development levels of countries and stated that they expect the increase of such projects.

30th ANNIVERSARY OF ERASMUS WAS CELEBRATED IN ERZINCAN AND ESKİŞEHİR



The 30th year anniversary of Erasmus programme was celebrated in Erzincan on 6 November and in Eskişehir on 28 November. In the organisations which were carried out by the Ministry for EU Affairs in collaboration with the EU Delegation to Turkey and Turkish National Agency, the opportunities Erasmus Programme has to offer were presented. Higher

education students, academicians, programme beneficiaries and experts from local authorities attended the events.

The 30th anniversary of Erasmus+ coincides with another milestone of European integrity; 60th anniversary of The Treaty of Rome. Both anniversaries have the same goal: uniting the Europeans. For this reason, Erasmus+ is a means of achieving the integrity

and cooperation that lies beneath the EU founders' philosophy of European integration. During the events Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry for EU Affairs Ahmet Yücel also touched upon this matter and stated that Erasmus programme helps Turks integrate with Europeans in spite of the rise of the far right, xenophobia and anti-Islamism in the EU. Until the end of the year, celebrations will

continue in whole Europe and Turkey. Following anniversary event will take place Izmir.

Erasmus+ started as a student mobility programme in 1987, and has been enriching the lives of millions of participants. Since 2004 Turkey has also been participating in this programme and 427 thousand Turkish citizens have benefitted from it up until now.

IPA MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETINGS WERE HELD

IPA I (2007-2013) and IPA II (2014-2020) Monitoring Committee meetings were held under the co-chair of the Deputy Head of Turkey Unit

of the European Commission Patrick Paquet and the Deputy Undersecretary Ahmet Yücel on 20 November at the Ministry for EU Affairs. Officials from

the European Commission, the EU Delegation to Turkey, Undersecretariat of Treasury, Central Finance and Contracts Unit and from other related

institutions participated in the meeting. During the meeting, various aspects such as programming, implementation, management, control, monitoring and

evaluation of financial assistance have been assessed and recommendations for effective utilisation of funds were presented.

TURKEY WAS ELECTED TO THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD

Turkey was elected to the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the 2017-2021 period. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Turkey's election to the body in a

written statement on 8 November. "Believing in UNESCO's ideals; Turkey will continue to contribute to UNESCO's work as a member of the Executive Board" the statement said. Members to the UNESCO Executive Board are elected for a

four-year mandate, during which they discuss and negotiate key decisions.

Turkey won a place in the 58-country executive board of the organisation as a result of the vote which took place during the 39th

session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris on 8 November. Turkey's membership to the Board was backed by 134 countries. Turkey has served in the UNESCO Executive Board for 27 years in total, with the last term ending in 2005.



PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN RECEIVED EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER AVRAMOPOULOS

On 27 November President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos at AK Party headquarters. During the meeting President Erdoğan had a chance to discuss with Commissioner Avramopoulos issues pertaining to security and counter-

terrorism cooperation between the EU and Turkey. The migration crisis and EU-Turkey relations were also on the agenda of the meeting.

The European Commissioner was in Turkey to address the 8th annual Bosphorus Summit titled "The Design of Future- the New Challenge of Globalisation". In an interview with the Turkish

media, Avramopoulos described Turkey as a key ally for the EU, and the EU as a key ally for Turkey. He stressed that Turkey should continue its approach to the EU and European democratic values. The Commissioner's visit to Ankara comes only a few weeks away before Erdogan's visit to Athens to improve bilateral relations.



PRIME MINISTER BINALI YILDIRIM MEETS WITH HIS BRITISH COUNTERPART THERESA MAY

Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım paid a visit to London to meet with Theresa May and British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson on 27 November. Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ömer Çelik, Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci, Minister of

Interior Süleyman Soylu and Minister of National Defence Nurettin Canikli accompanied Yıldırım during his London visit. During the meeting held at Downing Street in London Yıldırım exchanged views with his counterpart on deepening cooperation in the economic,

trade and defence sectors.

Commenting to the press, Prime Minister Yıldırım stated that his visit was intended to seek ways in how to carry Turkey-U.K. relations further. Also during the brief press conference Theresa May said relations with Turkey is

very important for the U.K. Furthermore she underscored that both countries are dealing with various global issues jointly and are struggling together on terror. Theresa May added that the trade volume between two countries reached up to 20 billion dollars.



FOREIGN MINISTER MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU MET WITH GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER SIGMAR GABRIEL



Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu met with German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel in Antalya informally on 4 November. Minister Çavuşoğlu and his German counterpart discussed Turkey-Germany relations and mutual expectations.

As it is known the tensions have risen into one of the worst ever crises between Turkey and Germany, which is home to a large Turkish minority. Berlin has repeatedly expressed

scepticism about the future of Turkey's EU membership bid. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged a cut in EU funding linked to Turkey's membership talks to signal the bloc's unhappiness over the crackdown in the wake of the failed July 2016 coup. Ties between Ankara and Berlin have been strained since the defeated coup in Turkey last year as Turkish politicians criticize their German counterparts for failing to show strong solidarity with

Ankara against the attempted military takeover. Ankara has also criticized Berlin for ignoring outlawed groups and terrorist organizations like the PKK and Fethullah Terror Organization (FETÖ) led by Fethullah Gülen, which continue to operate in Germany. Despite disagreements, both sides have expressed interest in dialogue to improve relations between the two countries.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ÇAVUŞOĞLU'S VISIT TO ITALY

Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu attended the 10th Meeting of the Turkish-Italian Forum which was held on 23 November in Rome. At the Forum, Çavuşoğlu delivered a speech and then met with his Italian counterpart Angelino Alfano

in order to discuss the future of bilateral relations. Following the one-to-one meeting, both Ministers held a joint press conference and shared their mutual ambition to deepen cooperation in regional issues. Later that day Minister Çavuşoğlu visited NATO Defence

College in order to deliver a lecture entitled "Why NATO Solidarity Still Matters?" The Lecture was attended by a number of Ambassadors and Embassy representatives from the Diplomatic corps based in Rome. Çavuşoğlu's lecture covered Turkey's vision on global peace and security.



NOVEMBER AGENDA OF MINISTER FOR EU AFFAIRS AND CHIEF NEGOTIATOR ÖMER ÇELİK

Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ömer Çelik participated in the Helsinki Policy Forum that took place in Van from 10 to 12 November. Çelik delivered a speech at the session entitled "Opportunities and Challenges in Our Region: Need for a Sustainable Framework Based on Regional Ownership" and pointed out Turkey's crucial role vis-à-vis the greatest migration crisis since

World War II. Minister Çelik also reminded that Turkey relieved the pressure on Europe and hosted more than 3 million Syrians and 400,000 Iraqis. At the end of his speech Çelik emphasised the need for international coordination to tackle terrorist movements, and the risks posed by the fragmentation of states both in the region and in Europe.

A week later Minister for EU

Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ömer Çelik went to Canada to attend the 9th Halifax International Security Forum held on November 18. He was accompanied by Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Hulusi Akar and Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey in Ottawa Selçuk Ünal. Halifax International Forum is dedicated for strengthening strategic cooperation among

democracies and is recognized as the leading gathering of democratic leaders committed to global security and prosperity. Prior to the Forum, Minister Çelik met with NATO Secretary General Jen Stoltenberg and talked about the drill incident which took place in Norway. As it is known, Turkey withdrew its 40 soldiers from NATO's Trident Javelin exercise in Norway after a civilian Norwegian

official depicted President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as an "enemy collaborator" and Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as a "hostile leader" during a computer-assisted exercise of the drill. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg conveyed his apologies and assured that such incident would not happen again. Stoltenberg stressed that Turkey is a "valued NATO ally, which makes important contributions to security."

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN'S VISIT TO TURKEY

Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Fathallah Sijilmassi paid an official visit to Turkey on 20-21 November. As known, UfM consists of the 28 EU Member States and 15 South and East Mediterranean countries including Turkey. The

purpose of Secretary General for the UfM's two-day visit was to meet with Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Ahmet Yıldız and to have some contacts with relevant ministries and organisations with the aim of seeking the ways to enhance the cooperation

opportunities between Turkey and the UfM. At a press conference following his visit, Fathallah Sijilmassi attracted notice on the global challenges including climate change and forced migration and stated that these require global solutions and

intergovernmental organisations such as the UfM can play significant role in this process. Furthermore, he underscored that Turkey has a leadership position at the UfM due to its current economic growth and potential to accelerate it further.

Lastly, he expressed that the details of organising some conferences in order to bring international institutions from private sector, public bodies and financial authorities of the UfM countries together in Turkey were touched upon at his meetings.

COP23 CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN BONN: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The COP23 Climate Change Conference was held in Bonn between 6-17 November under the presidency of Fiji. Despite some setbacks, fight against climate change continues steadily.

Melis BOSTANOĞLU,
IKV Junior Researcher

The 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 23) took place in Bonn from 6 to 17 November. The ultimate purpose of the conference led by Fiji was to launch nations to increase their work programmes on climate action according to Paris Agreement terms and to take the lead for a global climate action initiative which is more productive, efficient and coordinated for all actors. Especially at a time when the frequency and severity of sudden-onset natural disasters are increasing, finding the right solution is of a vital importance for a liveable world. As the studies estimate, climate change, if left unaddressed, is expected to cause almost 260,000 deaths by the year 2100. Therefore putting Paris Agreement into practice is of primary importance. Paris Agreement, the first universally acclaimed agreement on climate change, was adopted by 191 countries in December 2015 and it was put into force on 4 November 2016. The main aim of the agreement is to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, and to limit global warming to well below 2°C in the long term. However, the main question is how much is it possible?

Climate Change and the Paris Agreement

According to researches, the primary cause of climate change is the using of fossil fuels, primarily coal, and due this the concentration of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. According to terms of Paris Agreement, reducing the emissions and switching over to renewable energy is the way to meet the goal of preventing climate change. When in force, all parties of the agreement are obligated to reduce their emissions. This obligation means more commitment to reducing emissions or absolute reducing for developed countries while it means reducing in the light of their capacities for the developing countries. However, well-planned this agreement seems,



there are some setbacks preventing meeting the goals.

Germany's Dilemma

Despite being known as a pioneer in the fight against climate change, Germany burns coal for coal-fired plants, as they provide 40 percent of their electricity from these plants. In the case they do not shut down their coal-fired plants, it does not seem like greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by 40 percent by 2020 as they had originally planned. German Chancellor Merkel, had talks about forming a coalition with Greens whom insist that all of the coal-fired plants should be closed down in a short time, however they resulted in failure. If the talks had positive outcome, it was planned that Germany would have a quicker transition period to renewable energy sources, however as the coalition process failed, the future of climate change seems a bit bleak for Germany for now.

Trump's Approach to Climate Change

Donald Trump, the US president who is responsible of fundamental changes in his country, decided to withdraw from the Paris Agreement for reasons such as climate change is

non-existent and it is only a burden for America's economy. As it can be seen, not having enforcement mechanism makes it harder to achieve emission reduction goals. This decision will not only affect climate change negatively but it will also affect America's position in the world as a leader country for climate change as China has signed the Agreement and now has the chance to lead world on climate change. However, it does not mean it is the end for America as it is impossible to withdraw from the Agreement formally until 2020 and "We Are Still In" coalition, which consists of states, cities and organisations of America, is still pushing ahead to meet emissions reduction targets.

Paris Agreement and Turkey

In Paris 2015, Turkey agreed to sign the agreement if Turkey's status were defined among the developing countries and therefore should be receiving climate change finance instead of having to pay. At this year's G20 Summit, President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan told reporters that Turkey may be less inclined to ratify the Paris Agreement in the wake of the Trump's withdrawal decision, as it could jeopardise funds promised to developing countries. Moreover, Energy

and Natural Resources Minister Berat Albayrak's statement regarding the goal of producing more coals at the 7th International Natural Gas Congress, which was interestingly being held on the same day as COP23, shows that the country has no intention of reducing coal usage anytime soon. While most European countries are shutting down their thermal power plants, Turkey's incentive of using more coal shows that the agreement will be on hold indefinitely.

Is There Still Hope?

UN Environment's Emission Gap Report shows that national pledges only bring a third of the reduction in emissions required by 2030 to meet climate targets. However, it is still very early to say it is a hopeless case. By deploying technologies, reducing emission is quite possible. Especially the increase in renewable energy in China and India has helped emissions remain stable since 2014. Besides, some new goals were also mentioned in this year's Conference of Parties. In his opening speech, Fiji President Frank Bainimarama stated that his country is going to "help building a Grand Coalition for decisive, coordinated action by governments at every level, by civil

society, the private sector and all citizens on earth". Furthermore, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa announced that a "rule book" which contains the guidelines for implementation fundamentals will be published by the next year's conference. Along with the Talanoa method which keeps track of who is doing what, this book could remove some ambiguities and make the decision process faster. While the aftermath of America's withdrawal raised some questions in people's minds regarding the aid fund, German Environment Minister Barbara Hendriks's pledge to raise Germany's contribution to the fund by 50 million euros also had everyone breathe a sigh of relief. Lastly, German climate negotiator Jochen Flasbarth's attempts to resolve the dispute over climate regime between Turkey and the UN could have been an important step to disposing of the worries of Turkey about receiving funds, however there is still no progress in that area as two parties could not come to an understanding as yet. Therefore it is accurate to say that the authorities have to work harder and faster for this agreement to come to fruition until the deadline.