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PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN'S GERMANY VISIT: TIME FOR A RESET IN TURKISH-GERMAN TIES

President Erdoğan's official visit to Berlin was an important step to rekindle bilateral relations between Turkey and Germany.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to Germany on 27-29 September 2018 upon the invitation of German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The visit was an important step to repair the relationship and to re-establish mutual confidence following the tensions and problems experienced in the last two years in Turkey-Germany relations.

In fact, the diplomatic traffic between the two countries has already been busy in September. At the start of the month, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas paid an official visit to Turkey and met President Erdoğan as well as his counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. Following that Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Fatih Sönmez visited Berlin in order to meet Finance Minister Olaf Scholz and Economy and Energy Minister Peter Altmaier.

During his three-day visit to Germany, President Erdoğan was welcomed with an official ceremony by President Steinmeier, attended official state dinner and met Chancellor Angela Merkel at a working luncheon and breakfast. On the last day of his visit, he gave a speech at the official inauguration of the DITIB Central Mosque in Cologne.

Erdoğan and Merkel, who came together twice in two days, discussed economic and global developments, the Syria crisis and irregular migration. During the joint press conference with Chancellor Angela Merkel following their meeting, President Erdoğan stated that German Economy and Energy Minister Peter Altmaier, along with a large delegation of businesspeople, will pay a visit to Turkey in October, and said: "We are in favour of preserving and further strengthening this momentum we have achieved through mutual high-level visits."



Regarding Turkey-EU relations and the visa liberalisation process, President Erdoğan announced that Turkey aims to fulfil the six remaining criteria in the visa liberalisation roadmap as soon as possible. Moreover, he highlighted that providing visa liberalisation, launching the negotiations for the modernisation of the Customs Union and revitalising accession negotiations are to the benefit of both Turkey and the EU and underlined that Turkey attaches great importance to Germany's support which is one of the leading countries in Europe.

Regarding the Syria crisis,

President Erdoğan reminded that during the acute period of the refugee crisis, Turkey and Germany undertook responsibility and made serious sacrifices to ease the process. He expressed that Turkey and Germany share a common approach with regard to supporting a rules-based system in order to balance the increasingly protectionist trends in trade. President Erdoğan criticised using trade sanctions for political objectives, since it will damage global trade as well as international security, he added that he values deep economic ties with Germany and wants to further improve them on the

basis of a win-win approach.

During the press conference, German Chancellor Merkel underlined her country's interest in an economically stable Turkey and said: "We want to further improve our cooperation in the fight against terrorism."

In fact, Turkey and Germany have many reasons to work together. In addition to more than three million people of Turkish origin living in the country, Germany is Turkey's main economic and trade partner with a bilateral trade volume of 37.6 billion euros. Therefore the two-day visit of German Economy Minister Peter

Altmaier with a 30-person business delegation is another important step to strengthen ties between the two countries. Peter Altmaier, during the joint press conference with his counterpart Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, noted: "In the past years, the two countries suffered difficulties in their relations, but we are determined to develop bilateral ties." It was also prominent that Altmaier and Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan were scheduled to convene for the first time a joint commission seeking ways to improve trade, industry, tourism and infrastructure projects between the two countries.



TOBB AND IKV CAME TOGETHER WITH EU AMBASSADORS AT A WORKING LUNCH

On 19 October 2018, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and IKV brought together ambassadors of EU Member States at a working lunch organised in cooperation with the EU Delegation to Turkey at the TOBB Twin Towers in Ankara. During the working lunch, which was hosted by TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu, Turkey-EU relations were the main topic on the agenda. The opening speeches of the event were delivered by TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Christian Berger.

In his opening speech, TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu reconfirmed the business world's support for Turkey's EU membership process. Underscoring that in its history of over 50 years, the greatest achievement of the EU has been the "enlargement" process, Hisarcıkıoğlu said: "The enlargement process has extended democracy, stability, security and prosperity throughout the European continent. Therefore, enlargement provides gains not only for the countries participating in the Union, but also for the countries within the EU. We, as the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey, as the business



world, support Turkey's EU accession process for this reason. We think that the revitalisation of the process is important for both Turkey and the EU."

Indicating that the scope of Turkey-EU relations has been narrowed down as of October 2018, Hisarcıkıoğlu stated: "The joint statement made following the Turkey-EU Leaders' Meeting on 29 November 2015 was comprised of the following issues: The acceleration of accession talks, the opening of new chapters, modernisation of Customs Union, visa liberalisation, Turkey-EU High-Level Economic Dialogue, the fight against terrorism, Turkey-EU summits- two

annual summits per year, migration and Syrian refugees, a high-level energy dialogue, a high-level political dialogue. These and similar topics, which would bring Turkey closer to EU membership, were on the agenda at the time. At the Varna Summit on 26 March 2018 however, the list of topics, unfortunately, has been reduced. Refugees, the fight against terrorism, rule of law in Turkey, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea, as well as Syria, were taken up in the list. As Turkey and the EU are economic partners, this situation is extremely sad for the business world."

Taking the floor following

the TOBB President, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu gave information regarding the research and projects carried out by the foundation. After having emphasised that IKV aims to raise awareness on the conducted projects, Ayhan Zeytinoğlu expressed that huge amount of effort is made for this purpose.

Reminding some important developments related to Turkey's EU accession process, IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu expressed his hope that some issues that prevent new chapters from being opened would not constitute problems. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu underscored

that IKV wants an immediate solution to the obstacles in the face of the modernisation of the Customs Union.

Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Christian Berger, in his speech, indicated that Turkey and the EU have been collaborating on a variety of issues ranging from the environment, to refugees and chambers. Ambassador Berger underlined the need for further dialogue between Turkey and the EU during this period.

Berger stated that economic growth in the EU has been continuing and there has been a rise in demand for imports, consumption expenditures and employment. Reminding that youth unemployment has been reduced to 14.8 percent, Ambassador Berger drew attention to the fact that the EU has recorded the highest employment rate.

Highlighting that European companies have continued their investments in Turkey, Ambassador Berger shared the information that 22,000 European companies have foreign direct investments in Turkey. Underlining the fact that there should be some points guiding the parties in bilateral relations, Berger pointed out that there have been improvements in bilateral relations between Turkey and some EU Member States.

"THE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH GERMANY WOULD REFLECT POSITIVELY ON TURKEY'S EU PROCESS"



IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu in a statement released prior to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Germany on 27-29 September, expressed that the positive climate between Turkey and Germany would reflect on the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Zeytinoğlu stated:

"We welcome the conciliatory breeze blowing in the relations instead of the tensions experienced

in the recent years between Turkey and Germany. By coming together with his counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Erdoğan will discuss issues related to the economic and global agenda, which are crucial for both countries. The development of deep-rooted relations between Turkey and Germany is certainly extremely important for both sides. From an

economic perspective, bilateral trade between Turkey and Germany has reached 36.4 billion dollars in 2017. In the last 15 years, the total amount of direct investment from Germany to Turkey has been 9.15 billion dollars. When we take the first seven months of this year in consideration, we can see that our foreign trade volume has exceeded 22 billion dollars and that Germany maintains its position as Turkey's most important trading partner with a share of 9.4 percent in our total foreign trade. Along with the economic dimension of Turkey-Germany relations, the importance of political and cultural ties and population of people of Turkish origin living in Germany are unquestionable."

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu stated that the visit taking place at the right time with a busy agenda is crucial for advancing Turkish-German ties: "Today, we face a global agenda which draws Turkey and Germany together more than ever. The Syria crisis, the US sanctions on Iran, migration, the fight against terrorism and the

escalating trade wars oblige Turkey and Germany to act together. A quote from President Erdoğan's article published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on the eve of his arrival in Germany that says "The dramatic developments in the world make it indispensable for both Germany and Turkey to open a new page in bilateral relations, to leave aside their differences and to focus on their common interests" summarises this situation clearly. In terms of Turkey-EU relations, I think the restoration of bilateral ties with the Netherlands and Germany will reflect positively on Turkey's EU process. The next step should be launching of negotiations for the modernisation of the Customs Union which would create a win-win scenario for both Turkey and Germany. As you know, with the modernisation of the Customs Union, we aim to overcome our current problems and to strengthen our economic and commercial ties by expanding and deepening integration into new areas such as agriculture, services, public procurement and investments. In

addition, concrete success will be achieved if necessary steps are taken in the visa liberalisation process. As a matter of fact, the decisions taken at the last Reform Action Group meeting are proof that our country continues to focus on this issue. I would like to underscore two points: First, we must remember the important steps taken in 2004-2005 and that the EU reforms have been effective in improving the investment climate in Turkey. The creation of this positive investment climate is in our hands. Second, as expressed by our President and Foreign Minister full membership to the EU continues to be our primary objective. In that case, Turkey should implement the decisions taken during Reform Action Group meeting and take the first steps to demonstrate its determination."

Recalling that the Turkey-EU deal is the result of Turkey and Germany's collective efforts, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu emphasised once again the importance of acting in unison in terms of the future of our region and the EU.

İKİV AGENDA

İKİV DISCUSSED GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE EU PROCESS IN GAZİANTEP



On 23 October 2018, İKV in association with the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce EU Information Centre organised a panel entitled "Turkey in a Changing World: Global Transformation and the EU Process".

During the first session of the panel, which was moderated by İKV Deputy-Chairman Prof. Halûk Kabaalioğlu, TEPAV Center for

Multilateral Trade Studies Director Ambassador Bozkurt Aran delivered a speech on the changing balances in global economy while TEPAV G20 Studies Center Director Sait Akman talked about the new rules and actors in global trade. In the second session of the panel, İKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas delivered a speech on the state of play in

Turkey-EU relations in the light of global developments, whereas İKV Strategy and Business Development Director Gökhan Kilit spoke on the modernisation of the Customs Union and its possible impacts on agriculture and İKV Research Director Çisel İleri elaborated on EU funding opportunities that the business community can benefit from.

TURKEY'S NEW PERMANENT DELEGATE TO THE EU VISITED İKV



Turkey's incoming Permanent Delegate to the EU Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay paid a courtesy visit to İKV on 9 October 2018, shortly before taking office in Brussels. Ambassador Bozay came together with İKV

Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and İKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas. Latest developments and potential opportunities for cooperation were discussed during the visit.

TIMELINE OCTOBER 2018

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu attended the Strategic Dialogue on the Western Balkans.	1	İKİV Secretary General spoke at the panel organised by SETA.
	2	
Dutch Foreign Minister Blok paid a two-day visit to Turkey.	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	Turkey's Permanent Representative to the EU Ambassador Bozay visited İKV.
President Erdoğan paid an official visit to Hungary.	9	İKİV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu spoke at TPQ's roundtable meeting.
	10	
	11	İKİV Chairman Zeytinoğlu participated in the Ankara Logistics Summit.
	12	
Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu visited the UK.	13	
	14	
Commissioner for Migration Avramopoulos visited Turkey.	15	
	16	
CoE Commissioner for Human Rights Mijatović paid a three-day visit to Turkey.	17	
	18	
EU leaders met in Brussels to discuss migration and internal security.	18	
	19	TOBB hosted EU ambassadors at a working lunch jointly organised with İKV.
	20	
	21	
	22	
	23	İKİV organised a panel entitled "Turkey in a Changing World: Global Transformation and the EU Process" in Gaziantep.
	24	
	25	İKİV organised a conference on international investments and trade.
Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders' meeting	26	
	27	
Leaders of Russia, Turkey, Germany and France will come together in Istanbul to discuss the conflict in Syria.	28	
	29	
	30	
	31	

IKV EU INFORMATION CENTRE CELEBRATED CLIMATE ACTION WEEK WITH A FILM SCREENING AND PANEL

IKV Istanbul EU Information Centre organised a movie screening and panel on 24 September 2018 on the occasion of EU Climate Action Week. The opening speeches of the event were delivered by IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey Gabriel Munuera Viñals. Within the scope of the event, the film entitled “Grain”, which has received numerous awards in international festivals and highlights the negative consequences of climate change, was screened. Following the screening of the film, a panel session took place with the participation of Screenwriter and Film Director, Semih Kaplanoğlu.

In his opening speech, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu underscored that the EU and Turkey have to collaborate in the fight against

climate change and work together to eliminate the impacts of climate change. “We must develop common strategies to combat the negative impacts of climate change and to adapt to its unimaginable consequences”, Zeytinoğlu added.

Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Turkey Gabriel Munuera Viñals highlighted that Turkey and the EU have a deep-rooted history of cooperation in the field of environment and climate change and reminded that Chapter 27 on “Environment” has been opened for negotiations in 2009. “The EU’s support for the environment and climate change fields from a wide range of water and waste management to infrastructure, from biodiversity conservation to chemical management has exceeded 1 billion euro”, Viñals stated.



IKV CHAIRMAN DELIVERED A SPEECH AT TPQ ROUNDTABLE MEETING

On 9 October 2018, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu spoke at the roundtable meeting entitled “Differing Visions for Turkey-EU Engagement” organised by the Turkish Policy Quarterly. IKV Chairman shared his views on the modernisation of the Turkey-EU Customs Union and the state of play in the EU accession talks.



IKV CHAIRMAN PARTICIPATED IN ANKARA LOGISTICS SUMMIT



IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu participated in the Ankara Logistics Summit held on 11-13 October 2018. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu delivered a speech

in the session entitled “Public and Private Sector Cooperation in Future Logistics” and shared his insights on Turkey-EU relations and the Customs Union.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL DELIVERED A SPEECH AT A PANEL ORGANISED BY SETA



On 1 October 2018, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas delivered a speech at the panel entitled “The Fault Lines in the EU”, organised by SETA Foundation in Istanbul. Speaking at the panel moderated by Foreign Policy Director and Editor-in-Chief of Insight Turkey magazine Muhittin

Ataman, IKV Secretary General assessed the latest developments in Turkey-EU relations. Other panellists included Professor of European Politics at Sheffield University Simon Bulmer and the Dean of Medipol University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Prof. Ali Resul Uşul.

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN ADDRESSED THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

President Erdoğan has advocated for reforming the structure of the Security Council at the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, stipulating the motto "The world is bigger than five".

On 23-26 September 2018, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan accompanied by Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak and Minister of Trade Ruhsar Pekcan visited New York on the occasion of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly.

The theme of this year's General Assembly meeting was "Making the UN Relevant to All People: Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable Societies". In his speech at the opening of the 73rd session of the General Assembly, President Erdoğan said that the UN has moved away from meeting the expectations of humanity for peace and welfare, particularly as the Security Council only serves the interests of its veto-right-holding members. Stressing that Turkey will continue to be on the side of the oppressed Palestinian people and the protection of the historical legal status of Jerusalem, he called for comprehensive reform to the structure and functioning of the UN, adding that budget reform alone will not address UN's problems.

On the side-lines of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, President Erdoğan held bilateral meetings with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres as well as heads of state and government of several countries. During his visit to New York, President Erdoğan also met with representatives of business circles of the US, Muslim and Turkish communities and delivered a speech at the "9th Turkey Investment Conference" organised by Turkey-US Business Council (TAK) and attended the separate events of TURKEN Foundation as well as Turkish American National Steering Committee (TASC).



COMMISSIONER AVRAMOPOULOS MADE POSITIVE REMARKS DURING HIS VISIT TO TURKEY

During his visit, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos reaffirmed that Turkey and the EU have always been and should remain partners.



Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos paid an official visit to Turkey on 15 October 2018 to discuss the primary issues on his agenda with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu. Prior to his Turkey visit, Commissioner Avramopoulos underlined in an interview that he has always believed in Turkey's European path, and the moment is there for Turkey to come closer to Europe. "Turkey and the EU have always been and should remain partners", Commissioner Avramopoulos added.

In the context of his

visit, Avramopoulos was received by President Erdoğan. Following the forty minute-long closed door meeting in the Presidential Complex, the Commissioner and his delegation came together with Interior Minister Soylu. Pointing that Turkey has been implementing a successful migration policy, Minister Soylu expressed the detention of irregular migrants trying to cross from Turkey to Greece has risen from 10 percent to 54 percent in the last five years. In turn, Avramopoulos replied that the EU would continue supporting Turkey politically, operationally and financially in its difficult humanitarian mission.

TURKISH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED A NEW PLAN TO TAME ESCALATING INFLATION

On 9 October 2018, Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak announced a new set of measures to tame inflation. As known, the Turkish economy has been going through a tough period especially since August in the wake of the US sanctions of particularly doubling tariffs on imported steel and aluminium from Turkey. The Turkish economy has found itself in the middle of a chaotic atmosphere with escalating inflation and the sharp devaluation of the Turkish lira. As a matter of fact, inflation which was around 10-12 percent in the first five months of 2018 jumped to 15.3 percent in June, 17.9 percent in August and lastly 24.5 percent in September. Furthermore, the devaluation of Turkish lira especially against the dollar has become dramatic with a loss of value by more than 40 percent. Fortunately, the lira has begun to appreciate by small amounts thanks to some important developments including the announcement of New Economic Program, the release of Pastor Andrew Brunson and the Central Bank's decision to raise interest rates by 625 basis points.

As stated by Minister Albayrak during the press conference on 9 October, the fluctuations in exchange rates are on the way to come to an end, so it is now the time to combat with price increases. The upward trend in inflation has raised concerns since it reached its highest level in the last 15 years. Therefore, taking some concrete steps in collaboration with the public and private sector was urgently needed. Hence,

Minister Albayrak promised an "all-out-war" on inflation by demanding the support of Turkish private sector stating that "the fight against inflation and price stability is not a fight that can be conducted by the state and its institutions alone". In accordance with the plan announced by Minister Albayrak, inflation is planned to drop beginning from the end of October by means of the following steps.

Firstly, firms that are eager to be involved in the all-out-war on inflation will reduce their prices by at least 10 percent. Secondly, prices of electricity and natural gas are not going to increase until the end of 2018. Thirdly, banks would give 10 percent discount to high-interest loans that have been given after 1 August. Fourthly, in order to ensure price cuts in fruit and vegetables, some amendments in the relevant law are going to be made. What is more, the upper limit in increase rate of rents will be determined in accordance with producer prices instead of highly volatile consumer prices that are sensitive to changes in exchange rates and commodity prices. Last but not least, a special logo for the all-out-war on inflation to identify the companies that have voluntarily applied 10 percent cuts has been introduced and consumers are encouraged to purchase the goods bearing this logo. Finally, a website has been launched for this campaign to ensure that citizens are able to follow the companies supporting the plan to tame escalating inflation.



TURKISH COURT RULED TO RELEASE AMERICAN PASTOR BRUNSON

The case of Evangelical Pastor Andrew Craig Brunson has caused a diplomatic crisis between Turkey and the US, setting the tone in the relations since July 2018. Pastor Brunson, who has been living in Izmir for 23 years and serving as a pastor in Izmir, was detained for nearly two years with charges of involvement in the 15 July coup attempt.

The Trump administration has asked Turkey for the unconditional release of the pastor but Turkish courts have rejected to release him saying evidence was still being collected and moved him to house arrest. Following the house arrest decision, the Trump administration has decided to impose sanctions over the detention of the pastor on espionage charges and tweeted to pronounce doubling tariffs on aluminium and steel on 10 August. Trump's attitude of using financial sanctions to punish the Turkish court's decision on pastor Brunson case was extraordinary in every respect as it has inflamed diplomatic and political tensions between two key NATO allies.

Moreover, Trump's sanction policy on Turkey over the case of Pastor Brunson has received widespread criticism from the EU and its Member States with numerous EU leaders showing solidarity with



Turkey. Turkey and the EU condemned the Trump administration for slapping financial sanctions as a way to impose their view on deteriorating diplomatic and economic relations.

On 12 October 2018, the Second High Criminal Court in Izmir decided to release the American Pastor Brunson, ruling to lift all judicial restrictions, including his house arrest and travel ban. It is expected that the Court's decision would breathe fresh air to the Turkey-US relationship which has been strained over the last months because of the pastor case at a time when Turkish currency has sharply deteriorated.

MEPS VOTED TO CANCEL 70 MILLION EUROS FORESEEN FOR TURKEY



The European Parliament, in a controversial move on 2 October 2018, decided to cancel 70 million euros in pre-accession funds allocated to Turkey citing rule of law conditions. The related report by Romanian MEP Siegfried Muresan was adopted during the EP Plenary session in Strasbourg with 544 votes, 28 against and 74 abstentions.

According to an EP press statement, the EP and the Council in November 2017 had decided to place in reserve 70 million euros in pre-accession funding for Turkey under the condition that Turkey made measurable

improvements concerning the rule of law, democracy, human rights and press freedom according to the Commission's annual report on Turkey. However, since the Commission's Turkey Report had concluded that Turkey has been moving away from the EU, MEPs argued that the condition has not been met and therefore decided to cancel the 70 million euros foreseen for Turkey. MEPs supported Commission's proposal to transfer this amount to the European Neighbourhood Instrument to cover actions linked to the Central Mediterranean migratory route and to fulfil part of the EU pledge for Syria.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN PAID AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO HUNGARY



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to Hungary on 8-9 October 2018 upon the invitation of his Hungarian counterpart János Áder. Following the meeting with Hungarian President Áder, President Erdoğan came together with Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán. During the joint press conference held at the Hungarian National Assembly following his meeting with Orbán, President Erdoğan underlined the importance of Hungary's support, especially on the way to EU membership. President

Erdoğan stated that a much closer cooperation with Hungary with a view to contributing to Africa's development efforts is aimed. Being two countries with roots reaching back to Asia, President Erdoğan also made a reference to the Turkic Council in which Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán participated as an observer as an example of strengthening relations between Asia and Hungary. Touching upon the restoration of the Tomb of Gül Baba, President Erdoğan emphasised that both countries enjoy excellent relations in numerous areas,

including culture, and specified the establishment of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council in 2013, which is due to be hosted by Hungary next year, as the most significant step in the cooperation between Turkey and Hungary. During the meeting in which Turkish-Hungarian cooperation in areas including economy, politics were also discussed, President Erdoğan underlined that two countries achieved 2.6 billion dollars in bilateral trade volume in 2017, and that their shared goal is to raise that amount to 5 billion dollars.

ROMANIAN PRIME MINISTER DĂNCILĂ VISITED TURKEY

On 15 October 2018, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă, who was on an official visit to Turkey. Following their bilateral meeting, President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Dăncilă attended the working dinner between the delegations and held a joint press conference. Speaking at the press conference, President Erdoğan indicated that Romania's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU, set to begin in January 2019, would be an important opportunity for Turkish-Romanian relations

and underscored the desire to establish a close working relationship with the EU. Drawing attention to the fact that the two countries marked the 140th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, President Erdoğan underscored that Turkish-Romanian relations have been elevated to the level of strategic partnership since 2011. President Erdoğan also applauded Romania for its cooperation in security and the fight against terrorism and stated that economic and commercial relations make up a significant dimension of the relations

between two countries. The parties also pronounced their objective of raising the bilateral trade volume, which was approximately 6 billion dollars last year, to 10 billion dollars. Romanian Prime Minister Dăncilă praised Turkey's contribution to Europe's security and its role in managing the refugee crisis. She also underlined the robustness of the strategic partnership between Turkey and Romania. In the context of the visit, Prime Minister Dăncilă accompanied by a delegation of ministers came together with TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu.



TURKISH AND FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTERS DISCUSSED SYRIA



Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu travelled to Paris on 30 September 2018 in order to meet with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian. During their meeting at the *Quai d'Orsay*, the two Foreign Ministers focused on the situation in Syria in the aftermath of the Sochi agreement reached between Turkey and Russia on 17 September 2018 for establishing a demilitarised zone in the Idlib region. The ministers shared their views on the importance of a

negotiated political solution for the hopefully next pacification process in Syria. During the one and a half hour meeting, French Foreign Minister Le Drian expressed his support for the Sochi agreement and Turkey's position. Moreover, Çavuşoğlu and Le Drian discussed and reaffirmed their support for the new Libya roadmap presented by the UN Secretary-General's special envoy Salamé calling for Libya to move towards secure, credible and inclusive elections as soon as possible.

FOREIGN MINISTER ÇAVUŞOĞLU VISITED THE UNITED KINGDOM

On 13-15 October 2018, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu visited the UK. During his two-day official visit, Çavuşoğlu met with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Jeremy Hunt. The discussions focused on the implementation of Strategic Security Partnership Mechanism and all aspects of Turkey-UK relations, particularly trade and commercial investment. Regional developments, including the EU and the Brexit process as well as the latest situation in Syria were also discussed during the meeting. According to a statement by the British Foreign Office, Hunt raised the situation in Syria, stressing the importance of ensuring the safety of civilians in Idlib and commended Turkey for hosting over 3.6 million refugees. Prior to meeting his British counterpart, Minister Çavuşoğlu delivered a speech at the Chatham House roundtable titled "Europe in a Changing World Order: Cooperation vs. Confrontation".



At the roundtable Minister Çavuşoğlu underlined the need to ensure peace, welfare and security together and stressed that Turkey is a key partner for Europe in the prevention and solution of crises. Minister Çavuşoğlu also met with Turkish citizens and representatives of NGOs in the UK.

Minister Çavuşoğlu stated that Turkish citizens in the UK serve as a bridge of friendship between Turkey and the UK and during the Brexit process Turkey will follow closely that the rights of the Turkish community stemming from the Turkey-EU Association Law are respected.

TURKISH-DUTCH RELATIONS: FROM BREAKING POINT TO NORMALISATION

Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok's visit on 3 October has been a concrete expression of the ease in the tense atmosphere in the relations prevailing for the last two years.

Sema GENÇAY ÇAPANOĞLU,
IKV Senior Researcher

The strained relations between Turkey and the Netherlands have entered into a normalisation phase following the consensus reached between the parties last July. And diplomatic relations, which had been reduced to the level of *chargé d'affaires*, were restored as the parties decided to re-appoint ambassadors in September.

The first breaking point in the Turkish-Dutch relations was triggered with the prevention by the Dutch authorities in its territories the Turkish politicians from holding campaigns prior to the constitutional amendment referendum in Turkey. The Dutch authorities prevented Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu's visit to the Netherlands by cancelling the flight permit of the plane carrying him on 11 March 2017. Just after this incident, the Dutch government also prevented Family and Social Affairs Minister Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya from entering the premises of the Turkish Consulate in Rotterdam, blocking her from addressing the Turkish community in the Netherlands. Tensions further increased this year in February when the Dutch Parliament took a controversial decision and recognised the 1915 incidents as genocide.

Meanwhile, populist rhetoric of the extreme right-wing groups in the Netherlands has escalated ahead of the 15 March 2017 general elections in the country. In fact, this does not appear to be a coincidence and explains the reason behind the political crisis with Turkey.

Steps for the Normalisation of the Turkish-Dutch Relations

As a result of the general elections held in the Netherlands last year, Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his centre-right party, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) has been re-elected. The leader of the far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) Geert Wilders, who has adopted an anti-Islamist, anti-



EU and populist rhetoric, fell behind the VVD. Therefore, the election results in the Netherlands brought positive outcomes for the EU and Turkey at the same time.

As a consequence, the tense relations entered into a normalisation phase with the reconciliation of the two parties in July. The first step was taken on 11 July 2018 on the margins of the NATO Summit in Brussels where the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and the Netherlands had a meeting. This was followed by the Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok sending a letter addressed to his Turkish counterpart, reaffirming his willingness to normalise relations. Upon this letter, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu had a phone conversation with Blok during which they agreed to pave the way for strengthening the relations bilaterally and reinstate mutually their ambassadors. Çavuşoğlu invited Blok to visit Turkey in efforts to determine a roadmap that

would put bilateral relations back on track and re-establish the dialogue and trust between the two countries.

The Last Step on the Normalisation of Turkish-Dutch Relations

The visit of the Dutch Foreign Minister Blok to Turkey on 3 October 2018 was a sign of reassurance of peace and trust in the bilateral relations. During the meeting, the two Foreign Ministers discussed Turkish-Dutch relations and Turkey-EU relations as well as issues of regional and international significance. Possible steps to be taken in the coming period following re-appointment of ambassadors were also assessed.

Foreign Ministers Çavuşoğlu and Blok held a joint press conference after the meeting where the two parties agreed to leave a two-year long bilateral dispute behind by turning a "new page" in Turkish-Dutch ties and by intensifying cooperation in the field

including migration, the fight against terrorism and emphasised the significance of fostering economic cooperation.

As regards Turkey-EU relations, Çavuşoğlu recalled that the Turkey-EU Statement of 18 March 2016 on migration had been signed during the Dutch Presidency of the European Council and he voiced his appreciation for the Dutch government's contribution to this process and expressed that they will increase collaboration in this respect.

Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok's visit was a sign of the normalisation of the relations between Turkey and the Netherlands. Pointing out to the strong relations between the two countries, Dutch Foreign Minister Blok noted the importance of democracy and the protection of the rule of law. As regards the economy, Blok underscored that despite the current difficulties, Turkey still offers a lot of opportunities to foreign investors as it has been the case in the last decade. Blok also announced that a joint economic council would soon meet to discuss ways to increase bilateral trade with Turkey.

In fact, the revitalisation of the Turkish-Dutch relations could have a significant potential. Currently, the 400-thousand strong Turkish community in the Netherlands constitutes the largest foreign population in the country. The FDI volume with the Netherlands being the largest FDI provider for Turkey and the foreign trade volume between the two countries reaching 7.6 billion dollars show the importance of the bilateral economic relations between the two countries. We hope that the positive atmosphere created with the restoration and the normalisation of the ties between the two countries will be reflected in every aspect of the relations. Çavuşoğlu's announcement of his intention to visit the Netherlands as a response to his counterpart's visit and the willingness of the two parties for working together in this period reveal that bilateral relations are open to development in the future.