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IMPLEMENTATION REPORT ON EU-TURKEY JOINT ACTION PLAN

The European Commission released on 10 February 2016 its implementation report regarding the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan which had been activated on 29 November 2015.



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (left), EU Council President Donald Tusk (right)

The overarching aim of the plan is to enhance cooperation between the parties in order to support the ever growing flow of refugees from Syria whom are under temporary protection in Turkey as well as to coordinate operations aimed at preventing irregular migration flows into the EU. With the implementation of the Joint Action Plan, migration flows are expected to decrease.

Furthermore, the parties recognise the utmost importance to continue to work on the implementation of the Joint Action Plan with the aim of strengthening its effectiveness. The Commission stresses the need to coordinate joint efforts in order to achieve tangible results rapidly in that respect as regards the prevention of irregular migration flows. The Commission reminded that more than 880,000 people have arrived from Turkey to Greece since the first semester of 2015. Moreover, it was revealed that the EU is working in close cooperation with Turkish authorities to effectively reduce the scale of irregular flows stemming from the Aegean Sea. As such, the Commission indicated that thanks to the successful cooperation between the parties, there has been a steady decrease in the number of arrivals since October 2015. Indeed, whilst in that month, there were above 200,000 arrivals from Turkey, this number had

dropped to below 100,000 in January 2016. Nonetheless, these numbers still remain high. The Commission thus underscored the need to further work together in order to continue to reduce the migration flows.

Commission: Turkey Committed to the Alignment of Turkish and EU Visa Policy

The Commission highlighted the commitments and the progress achieved by both parties. In that respect, the Commission explains that Turkey has committed itself notably to continue to ensure that migrants are properly registered and provided with the appropriate documents on a compulsory basis. Turkey pursued its efforts in further facilitating the access of Syrian nationals in Turkey under temporary protection to public services such as education, health and employment. Regarding the fight against irregular migration, the Commission highlights that Turkey has committed itself to step up cooperation with its neighbours (Bulgaria and Greece) in order to prevent further flows of irregular migrants as well as to readmit irregular migrants who are not in need of international protection and that have been intercepted coming

from Turkish territory.

Furthermore, Turkey also committed itself to pursue the progressive alignment of Turkish and EU visa policy, especially for countries representing a significant source of illegal migration. As for what has already been achieved, the Commission has noted that Turkey has accelerated its work towards the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Roadmap, including the Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement which is expected to enter into force for third country nationals as of 1 June 2016. Furthermore, the Commission also commended the efforts achieved by Turkey with respect to preventing irregular departures as well as drafting legislation on personal data protection in order to facilitate further cooperation with Frontex, Europol and Eurojust along with law enforcement agencies of the Member States. It also further referred to the introduction of visa obligations for Syrian nationals travelling to Turkey by air and sea from a third country as well as the permission which has been granted to them under temporary protection in order to work in Turkey.

As for the commitments made by the EU, the Commission notably underlined that the EU has vowed to increase its financial assistance to

support Turkey in meeting the criteria of the Visa Liberalisation roadmap as well as to mobilise new sources of funding aimed at helping Turkey cope with the challenge represented by the presence of Syrian nationals under temporary protection. Another important point which has been mentioned is that cooperation should be enhanced between the parties in terms of exchange of information in order to effectively combat smuggling networks. As for what has been achieved by the

EU, the report indicated that a 3 billion euro facility for refugees has been tabled and adopted and that work has been further undertaken towards the full activation of the Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement regarding third country nationals as of 1 June 2016. Moreover, the report also alluded to the adoption by the Commission of a Recommendation for a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey for persons displaced by the conflict in Syria. **PAGE 2**

THE APPROVAL OF THE REFUGEE FACILITY FOR TURKEY

The European Commission announced on 3 February 2016 that the agreement on a financial assistance amounting to 3 billion euros to Turkey regarding the refugee action plan was accepted. The amount which was to be deducted from the EU budget was at first settled to 500 million euros but was later raised to 1 billion euros. The contribution of Member States increased to a total of 2 billion euros. Germany, the United Kingdom, France,

Italy and Spain are the largest contributing countries.

Without doubt, this constitutes an important first step in enhancing the cooperation for the refugee crisis in terms of facilitating the access of Syrian refugees to education, health and social services through this 3 billion euros fund. Since this is a common concern of humanity, stronger and more effective cooperation should be pursued in the future in this area.

Table: Contributions of Member States to the Fund (in million euros)

Member State	Contribution	Member State	Contribution
Germany	427,5	Ireland	22,9
UK	327,6	Romania	21,6
France	309,2	Czech Republic	20,4
Italy	224,9	Hungary	14,7
Spain	152,8	Slovakia	10,5
Netherlands	93,9	Bulgaria	5,9
Sweden	61,3	Croatia	5,9
Belgium	57,6	Lithuania	5,2
Poland	57,0	Slovenia	5,2
Austria	45,6	Luxembourg	4,3
Denmark	38,4	Latvia	3,5
Finland	28,4	Estonia	2,8
Greece	25,1	Malta	1,1
Portugal	24,4	TOTAL	2 billion €



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FROM THE FIRST PAGE What Is Next?

The report also indicated the next steps which are scheduled to take place. In that respect, it pinpointed to four concrete steps as follows:

- ▶ Effective deployment of funding from the 3 billion euro Facility for Refugees in Turkey to provide assistance to Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey;
- ▶ The need for Turkey to make significant progress in preventing further irregular departures of migrants and refugees from its territory;
- ▶ Strengthen efforts against migrant smuggling especially in coastal areas, notably through joint land-based operations;
- ▶ Increase bilateral cooperation as regards to the readmission of irregular migrants between Turkey and Greece and continue to focus and prepare the full implementation of the Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement with respect to third country nationals.

IKV'S VISION WAS DISCUSSED AT A WORKSHOP

IKV organized a workshop on 20 February 2016 with the aim of reviewing its strategic targets and vision for the upcoming period. Members of the Board of Directors and the team of experts participated to this workshop entitled "How to adapt IKV to a Rapidly Changing Environment?"

During the morning session of the workshop, with the help of a SWOT analysis, the participants discussed which aspects should be put forward and which should be developed in order to achieve the strategic goals set by IKV. The latest national and international economic and political developments that could have an impact on the Foundation's working areas were also discussed. Views were exchanged regarding the vision that IKV should follow in the upcoming period.

In the afternoon session, the workshop continued where working groups discussed in detail how IKV would reach its strategic priorities. For this purpose, the working groups assessed IKV's institutional capacity, its communication instruments and its vision and impact.

IKV ASSESSED TURKEY'S POTENTIAL AS A EUROPEAN-REGIONAL HUB

Turkey's potential as a European and Regional hub was assessed during a joint IKV-CIDOB-ELEC Conference in Istanbul on 5-6 February 2016.



ELEC President Carles Gasoliba, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey H.E. Hansjörg Haber, Spanish Consul General in Istanbul H.E. Pablo Benavides Undersecretary of the Ministry for EU Affairs Engin Soysal (from left)

Turkey's position and potential as a European and Regional energy, finance, logistics and transport, production and services hub were assessed at an international conference led by IKV. The event, co-organized by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) and the European League of Economic Cooperation (ELEC) with the support of La Caixa Foundation featured a great number of participants including government officials, private sector representatives and academia.

Opening speeches by CIDOB and ELEC President Carles A. Gasoliba; IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu; Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey H.E. Hansjörg Haber and Undersecretary of the Ministry for EU Affairs, H.E. R. Engin Soysal conveyed messages focusing on the influential role that Turkey plays in Europe and the Mediterranean region. Speakers underscored that Turkey increased its competitiveness and manufacturing capability through expertise gained in the EU market. Adding that socio-economic development and technological progress also made it possible for Turkey to take advantage of its geographic location. Experts warned that urgent reforms and further progress especially in the area of democratic rights, rule of law, education and innovation are still required if Turkey wants to become fully effective as a European and regional hub. While Turkey's EU membership objective relies on a strategic and sustainable approach based on reforms,

transformation and communication, a joint assessment of future risks and opportunities is of paramount importance, according to guest speakers.

Energy Hub

The event was conducted within the framework of four discussion panels. The first panel, moderated by IKV Board Member and Dean of Faculty of Law at Yeditepe University, Prof. Halûk Kabaalioğlu dealt with Turkey's potential as an energy hub. The second panel, chaired by Director of Multilateral Trade Relations Centre (TEPAV) H.E. Ambassador Bozkurt Aran, focused on the potential for Turkey to develop itself into a financial hub and perform better in international rankings. The third panel, moderated by IKV Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, focused on Turkey's potential as an infrastructure, communication and logistics hub. Lastly, participants assessed Turkey's potential as a production and services hub during a panel chaired by Eduard Soler i Lecha from CIDOB.

As to the question of becoming an energy hub, Sohbet Karbuz from the Paris-based *Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie*, stated that Turkey could become an energy hub but lack of gas storage capacity is part of the problem that Turkey faces at the moment. Success factors for gas hubs include: transparency, deregulatory gas markets, interconnectivity, non-discriminatory access to storage, flexibility and access to multiple gas supplies, and political will. General Manager of Aygaz Natural Gas Wholesale Trade, Ridvan Uçar, a

strong believer in Turkey's potential to become an energy hub, stressed the importance of choosing to become a trading hub between Europe and the Middle East. Project Manager at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean Olgu Okumuş presented energy efficiency and renewable energy as key elements that Turkey should strive to develop.

Financial Hub

Concerning the potential in becoming a financial hub, Fabian Briegel, Economist at the Rabobank, stressed that strong cooperation between companies is required for Turkey to become a hub. IKV Board Member, Chairman of the Turkish Economy Bank and former Governor of the Turkish Central Bank, Yavuz Canevi, insisted on the need to take necessary actions with regard to pursuing compliance with EU standards and the accession process while undertaking required reforms. Chief Economist for Cross Emerging Markets at BBVA Research Alvaro Ortiz pinpointed that Turkey's financial sector proved to be strong. Nevertheless, he argued that there is still room for improving the business environment and the business law system in Turkey.

Infrastructure, Communication and Logistics Hub

As for considerations about Turkey becoming an infrastructure, communications and logistics hub, Deputy Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean H.E. Ambassador Yiğit Alpogan gave a presentation about their various

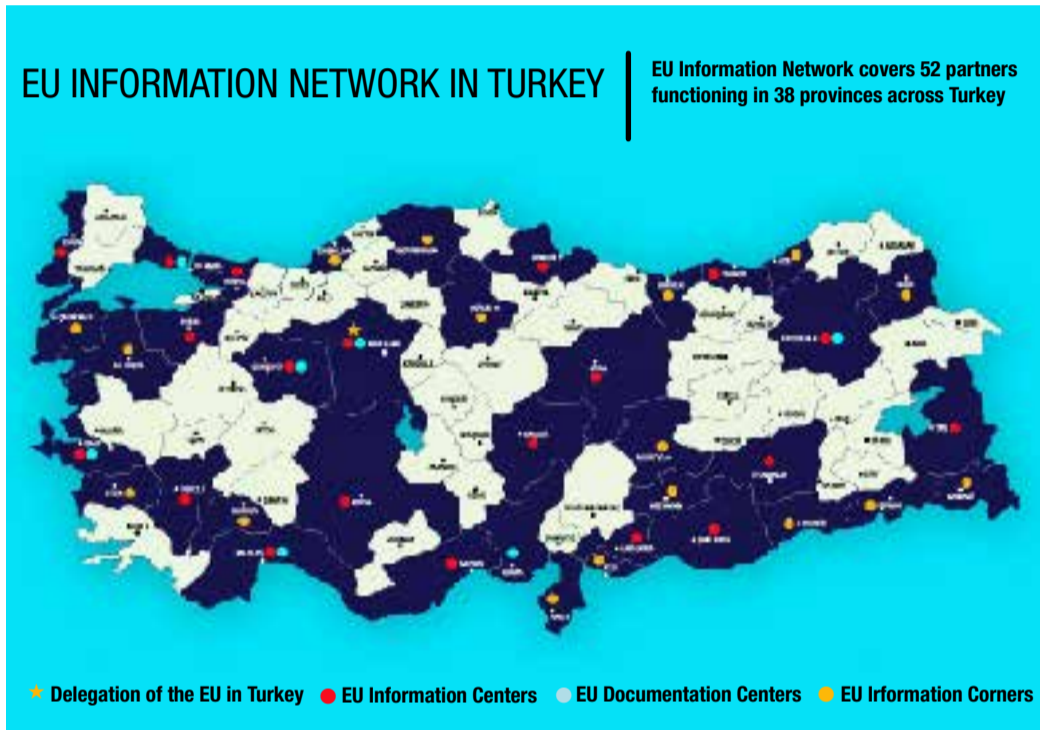
South-South connections and hub projects planned by 2025. Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Transporters' Association Evren Bingöl spoke about the border problems linked to quotas and fees faced by Turkey, and how transit barriers damage trade with the EU.

Production and Services Hub

Assessing Turkey's production and services hub potential, H.E. Ambassador Antonio Martins da Cruz, former Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs indicated that it is impossible to become a hub or even a corridor in a context of political tensions in neighbouring countries. Threats to Turkey's ambitions include: the refugee crisis, terrorism, and the removal of sanctions to Iran. Turkey's burgeoning relations with Africa was acknowledged to be a very important move opening new avenues for enlarging the country's potential as a hub. H.E. Ambassador Aran stated that Turkey was presented as the largest industrial hub between Italy and China and was urged to seize opportunities to adapt itself to the future of international trade. IKV Brussel Representative Haluk Nuray explained that Turkey and the private sector would need to adapt to the new demands of a fast changing environment within the next 5-10 years. Key factors of becoming a production and services hub include increasing competitiveness while offering cost-effective yet high-quality products and services.

IKV TAKES PART IN THE EU INFORMATION NETWORK PROJECT

IKV is taking part in the "Support to the EU Information Centres Network Project" and is hosting the Istanbul EU Information Centre Network.



EU Information Centres Network has been functioning in Turkey since 1996 with the aim of informing audiences in the country about what the EU is and how Turkey and EU are working together. The EU Delegation has developed a comprehensive information network across the country to serve the information needs of local people. The network currently operates in 20 provinces of Turkey providing information about the EU locally and organizing communication activities and cultural events such as conferences,

meetings, exhibitions and concerts. This network works closely with schools, non-governmental organisations, SMEs, universities and political decision makers as well as directly with the general public to ensure that people have access to up-to-date and accurate information on all EU-related themes.

A New Role to IKV

IKV which already hosts one of the earliest European Documentation Centres in Turkey is taking part in the "Support to the

EU Information Centres Network Project" by taking in charge of Istanbul EU Information Centre Network.

IKV Istanbul EU Information Centre opened a stand during the seminar entitled "Turkey's Role as a European and Regional Hub? Implications for Euro-Mediterranean Relations" held on 5-6 February 2016 and thus organized its first event in Istanbul. With this Centre, IKV will provide information about the EU locally and organize various activities and cultural events.

IKV CHAIRMAN'S VISIT TO ISTANBUL GOVERNOR



Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, Vasip Şahin, Çiğdem Nas (from left)

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu accompanied by Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and Researcher Gökhan Kilit visited Istanbul Governor Vasip Şahin on 25 February 2016. The delegation briefed Governor Şahin about the activities to be carried out by IKV in 2016. The latest developments on Turkey-EU relations, especially related to the Customs Union and the visa liberalisation process were discussed. During this meeting, they explored the possible future areas of cooperation.

TIMELINE FEBRUARY 2016

1	
2	IKV Chairman attended launch meeting of EU Information Centres (2-3 February)
3	Minister for EU Affairs Bozkır's visit to Paris and Brussels (3-5 February)
4	
5	IKV Conference on Turkey's position as a European and Regional hub (5-6 February)
6	Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu attended Gymnich meeting (5-6 February)
7	
8	Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu's visit to Hungary (8-9 February)
9	German Chancellor Merkel's visit to Turkey
10	
11	Minister Bozkır's visit to Bucharest
12	Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu attended Munich Security Conference (11-12 February)
13	
14	
15	
16	IKV Secretary-General attended kick-off meeting of Directorate General for Migration Management
17	
18	IKV Secretary-General participated to visa meeting in Manisa
19	Terrorist attack struck Ankara centre
20	IKV's vision discussed at a workshop
21	
22	President Erdoğan met with Italian Foreign Minister Gentiloni
23	Launch of a survey on main obstacles in Turkey-EU service trade
24	
25	IKV Chairman's visit to Istanbul Governor Vasip Şahin
26	IKV Chairman's visit to Istanbul Development Agency
27	Announcement of Turkey's National Action Plan for EU Accession
28	
29	

IKV SECRETARY-GENERAL ATTENDED A VISA INFORMATION MEETING IN MANISA

IKV Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated to the visa information meeting for Local Schengen Group Business Community which was hosted by Manisa Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 18 February 2016. These visa information meetings have been held in different cities with the cooperation of TOBB and the Delegation of the EU with the aim of informing business people and public opinion about the Schengen visas and the visa liberalisation dialogue. The difficulties related to the application process to Schengen visas have been the main topic discussed at the meeting.

In his opening speech, Chairman of Manisa Chamber of

Commerce and Industry Adnan Erbil stressed that the facilitation of the visa applications would further improve bilateral relations in parallel to the bilateral trade volume. Besides, Jörg Dieter Kösting from the EU Delegation gave introductory information about the Readmission Agreement which was signed between Turkey and the EU in December 2013 and informed participants regarding the future of the visa liberalisation dialogue.

In this meeting, IKV Secretary-General Nas presented the outcomes of the Visa Hotline Project which was conducted by IKV in cooperation with TOBB and ECAS. She also gave brief information about the background and different



MIGRATION CRISIS TOP PRIORITY IN MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE'S AGENDA

The Munich Security Conference which was chaired by Ambassador H.E. Wolfgang Ischinger was held on 12-14 February 2016. For the 52nd time, Munich hosted some of the key decision and policy-makers in the fields of international relations, security studies and global governance. 30 Heads of State and Government and over 70 Foreign and Defense Ministers attended the 52nd Munich Security Conference to debate current crises and future challenges to the international system. The

conflict in Syria and the migration crisis were the main topics on the agenda of the Conference. More general discussions also took place on issues such as climate and energy security, the future of the EU and NATO, China and the international order.

With regard to the future of the EU and NATO, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini shared their prospective remarks with the participants during the sessions.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg emphasized that NATO Member States have agreed on deploying a Maritime Unit to the Aegean for the purpose of assisting in tackling the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe within the framework of cooperation with their EU counterparts. Furthermore Secretary-General Stoltenberg added that NATO has decided to intensify intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations at the Turkish-Syrian land border.

The main focus of High

Representative Mogherini's statement was the conflict between Ukraine and Russia together with the migration crisis. She brought up the EU's vision with regard to the relations with Russia as a partner for prosperity and security. However she added that the EU would not compromise on international principles and values. Concerning the situation in Syria and the migration crisis, High Representative Mogherini emphasized the need to work harder to stop the immense

human suffering in Syria.

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu also shared Turkey's position and presented his assessments regarding the migration crisis during the panel discussion entitled "Refuge Refused? The EU and the Migrant Crisis". Lastly, remarks of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and United States Secretary of State John Kerry on the migration crisis and Syrian conflict have been widely reflected in the press and social media.



TURKEY INVESTMENT FUND WAS ESTABLISHED

The Turkish Treasury and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) launched the Turkey Investment Fund (TIF) on 15 February 2016.



Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Şimşek and TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu

Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Şimşek and TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu signed the protocol on the establishment of the fund. TIF is considered to be "the fund of funds" that serves as investment for other funds financing the new technological initiatives. TIF aims at developing financing for Turkish SME's innovative initiatives.

It is foreseen that the fund will invest in SMEs which have the potential to develop innovative technologies, products and services that will create higher added value for the Turkish economy. The initial volume of TIF is set to be at 150 million TL of which 80 million will be granted by TOBB, 20 million will be contributed by KOBİ A.Ş and the remaining amount will be provided by the Treasury. The fund size is expected to grow to 250 million TL with the contribution of domestic and foreign investors over the next two years. First steps

of the fund were taken by the Young Entrepreneurs Council and the Venture Capital of TOBB in 2011 and it is finalised by the Treasury.

During his speech at the ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister Şimşek pointed out that Turkey needs to establish a solid ecosystem to boost the digital economy and that TIF will be a crucial constituent of this system. He also noted that the government will restructure the Turkish Development Bank in order to create new financing for innovative ideas and R&D projects.

TOBB President Hisarcıkıoğlu noted that TIF is a new generation support model for innovative companies and the digital economy in Turkey. He expressed that the public sector should use its resources to help develop the internet ecosystem and at the same time venture capital funds should choose the right companies to invest in this ecosystem.

TURKEY'S NATIONAL TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN WAS LAUNCHED

With National Transport Master Plan, Turkey aims at further developing its transportation sector with EU financial assistance and know-how.

Turkey launched its new National Transport Master Plan on 17 February 2016 with the support of the EU. The Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communication Binali Yıldırım and the Head of the EU Delegation in Turkey Hansjörg Haber launched a master plan in line with EU standards.

With this National Transport Master Plan, Turkey aims at further developing its transportation sector with EU financial assistance and know-how. It is foreseen that Turkey's current transport planning methodology will shift into a more sustainable position focusing more on people's needs and their

social benefits. The plan will be implemented throughout Turkey for above 20 years in a wide range of areas such as aviation, railway, road and maritime transport. The overarching aim of the EU is to contribute to the establishment of a fast, safe, sustainable and technologically innovative transport network in Turkey. Moreover, with this plan, Turkey's infrastructure is expected to be more integrated with the trans-European networks.

The importance of ensuring sustainability in transport has been highlighted both by the EU and Turkey. Indeed, both parties have recognised that it represents the main priority of the financial cooperation for

the period 2014-2020. In that respect, approximately half a billion euros in EU grants have been set aside for Turkey in order to further upgrade road safety, prevent accidents, diminish congestion, significantly cut CO₂ emissions and help in improving transport planning processes.

The EU will strengthen its cooperation with Turkey in transport issues with the aim of building a human-centred transport environment. In that context, the EU has notably stressed that it will continue to help Turkey complete projects planned at improving railways such as a new railway connection between Istanbul-Halkalı and the Bulgarian border at Kapıkule crossing point.



Çiğdem Nas, Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, Abdülmecit Karataş, Gökhan Kilit (from left)

IKV DELEGATION'S VISIT TO ISTANBUL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

An IKV Delegation composed of IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and Researcher Gökhan Kilit visited Istanbul Development Agency's Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Abdülmecit Karataş on 25 February 2016. IKV Delegation, which was briefed regarding the agency's assistance programs, revealed the activities that IKV is planning to achieve during the year 2016. IKV has a membership of the Development Council within the framework of Istanbul Development Agency.

TERRORIST ATTACK IN ANKARA

Turkey continues to face serious terrorist threats. Just one month after the terrorist attacks taken place in Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, a car bomb was detonated in the administrative centre of Ankara near the Turkish Parliament, numerous Ministries and the headquarters of the General Staff on 17 February 2016, causing the loss of 29 people.

While the attempts within the Turkish Parliament to issue a joint declaration condemning the terrorist attack in Ankara failed, these attacks had a broad repercussion in the EU. The European Council held on 18-19 February 2016 began with a joint statement strongly condemning the terrorist attack in Ankara. In this

joint statement, while expressing their solidarity to the Turkish people and authorities, the EU Heads of State or Government and the leaders of EU institutions stressed that these acts of terrorism were unacceptable. In addition, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the

European Commission Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn also presented a joint statement condemning this terrorist attack.

As IKV, we strongly condemn the terrorist attack which took place in Ankara and extend our

condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and wish a fast recovery to those injured. This terrorist attack has shown once again its cruel and inhumane face. We condemn all acts of terrorism and renew our call to the international community to join hands and form a united front against terrorism.

TURKEY-EU HIGH LEVEL ENERGY DIALOGUE TOOK PLACE

During the second meeting of the Turkey-EU High Level Energy Dialogue, EU and Turkish representatives discussed a variety of issues of common interest such as the integration of Turkish energy market to the EU and energy efficiency.

The second meeting of the Turkey-EU High Level Energy Dialogue took place on 28-29 January 2016 with the participation of the European Commissioner for EU Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete and Minister for Energy and Natural Resources Berat Albayrak. The first meeting of this High Level Energy Dialogue was held on 16 March 2015 which paved the way for strengthening bilateral relations in the energy sector. The security of energy supplies and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) were the main topics on the agenda of the second meeting.

As it is known, as the biggest project on natural gas pipeline in

Turkey's history, TANAP constitutes an important pillar of the Southern Gas Corridor which is a fundamental instrument for the EU in terms of energy diversification. It is foreseen that TANAP will transmit around 16 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year of which 10 billion cubic meters will be destined for the EU.

During the meeting, EU and Turkish representatives discussed the integration of Turkish energy market to the EU, energy efficiency, renewable energy, electricity market and network connectivity, nuclear safety as well as ways to tackle climate change and the developments in the aftermath of COP 21.

It is important to underline



Commissioner for EU Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete and Minister for Energy and Natural Resources Berat Albayrak

that Turkish and EU authorities discussed the opening of the chapter on Energy to negotiations for further progress in Turkey's EU accession process. Commissioner Cañete confirmed that a renewed screening process started on the concerned chapter and that it would be completed in the first quarter of 2016. Since the accession negotiations are of a key importance for Turkey-EU relations, the main potential of the cooperation in the field of energy between the parties can only be fulfilled with the opening of the

chapter on Energy to negotiations.

In the press conference held following the meeting, Commissioner Cañete confirmed that the completion and expansion of the Southern Gas Corridor was discussed. He reminded that the EU has a high level energy dialogue only with four countries, which indicates the importance of Turkey for the EU's energy security. Commissioner Cañete also underlined Turkey's role as an energy hub in the region and the challenges both Turkey and EU would face from the main changes

occurring in the energy sector. It was also announced that Minister Albayrak invited the Commissioner to the World Energy Congress, which will be held on 9-13 October 2016 in Istanbul.

Furthermore, it is also of a great importance that the Turkey-EU High Level Dialogue should not only focus on energy supply security but also to energy efficiency, nuclear safety, renewable energy and the liberalisation of energy markets in accordance with the multidimensional nature of energy policy.

THE EU SCORES LOW GRADE FOR RULE OF LAW IN TURKEY

As efforts to deal with the refugee crisis started to dominate Turkey-EU relations, the EU's interest in Turkey's democratic standards and human rights record began to wane.

The European Council on Foreign Relations released its 6th annual edition of the European Foreign Policy Scorecard on 28 January 2016, assessing the EU's, its Member States' and institutions' performance on 68 foreign policy issues in six issue areas namely; "Multilateral issues"; "Russia"; "Wider Europe"; "Middle East and North Africa"; "United States"; "Asia and China". The European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2016 highlights the EU's diminishing ability to influence its neighbours and the neighbourhood's growing impact on the EU.

The Scorecard 2016 examines the EU's relations with Turkey in four themes namely; "Bilateral relations with Turkey"; "Rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in Turkey"; "Relations with Turkey on regional issues" and "Turkey and the refugee crisis". According to the study while the EU's overall performance in its relations with Turkey scored a "C+", its support for rule of law, democracy

and human rights in Turkey scored a "D+", making it the second lowest-scoring component among the 68 issues examined in the scorecard.

The study indicates that the refugee crisis forced the EU to intensify its engagement with Turkey and to adopt a more pragmatic approach vis-à-vis the Turkish government to guarantee its cooperation in stemming migration flows. It is argued that this led the EU to re-energise the accession process while softening its tone on human rights and rule of law. According to the study, as the efforts to deal with the refugee crisis started to dominate Turkey-EU relations, the EU's interest in Turkey's democratic standards and human rights record began to decrease. Moreover, it is emphasized that while the Commission's latest progress report highlighted the shortcomings regarding freedoms and rule of law, no references were made in the Turkey-EU Summit declaration to

the Copenhagen criteria or civil and political rights.

Concerning bilateral relations with Turkey, an area where the EU scored a "B" in 2015, compared to "C+" in 2014, the study confirms the transformation of Turkey-EU relations undergone in 2015 as a result of the refugee crisis and Turkey's role as a host and transit country. In this context, the study highlights the recent intensification in high-level exchanges and the Turkey-EU Summit in which EU leaders agreed to re-energise the accession process to move forward with the visa liberalisation process and to give Turkey 3 billion euros in aid to deal with the refugees. The study underscores that the EU's ability to deliver on its commitments on accession will be determined largely by whether there is a breakthrough in the ongoing reunification talks in Cyprus.

Regarding relations with Turkey on regional issues, in which the

EU maintained its "C+" grade, the study states that Turkey joined the international coalition against ISIS, however its main focus has been on supporting the anti-Assad forces and fighting terrorist groups. Noting that intelligence cooperation between France, Germany, the UK, and Turkey regarding foreign fighters and potential ISIS recruits intensified in 2015, it is argued that cooperation became particularly important following the terrorist attacks in Paris. According to the study, the recent deterioration in Turkish-Russian relations following the Turkish government's downing of a Russian fighter jet has further complicated the efforts to find a solution to the Syrian crisis. In addition, it is noted that the peace process broke down as the fighting resumed between the terrorist groups and the government forces. The study also underscores the progress made during the second half of 2015 in the UN-sponsored reunification talks



in Cyprus. Turkey's support for the resumption of the talks and its efforts are noted positively in the study.

The 2016 edition of the Scorecard which features a special category on the migration crisis and Turkey makes the observation that the refugee crisis shifted the balance of power between the EU and Turkey and changed the dynamics of the relationship into a more transactional one. The EU's grade in this category is "B-". It is stated that despite the agreement on the joint action plan on refugees, EU leaders have called on Turkey to do more to stem the flow of refugees to Europe.

CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL'S VISIT TO TURKEY

Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Turkey on 8 February 2016 to discuss the refugee crisis and other regional issues. During her visit to Turkey, Chancellor Angela Merkel came together with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Prof. Ahmet Davutoğlu.

At a joint press conference with Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Prof. Davutoğlu stressed the importance of the high level dialogue recently held between Turkey and Germany while tackling the regional crisis. Prime Minister Davutoğlu stated that the Turkish government would inform the EU about the future of the aid package covering 3 billion euros and how Turkey will manage it for further actions and projects in the near future.

Prime Minister Davutoğlu announced that Turkey and Germany plan to carry out a consultation mechanism including ten priorities to overcome regional problems. These priorities are as follows: a joint diplomatic initiative against Russia; working together with the Prime Ministry Disaster and

Emergency Management Authority in Turkey and boosting further coordination between Turkish and German aid foundations to act together in borders; managing joint actions with German police officers; establishing information network to prevent human trafficking; further cooperation with Frontex; calling NATO to lead a mission for reducing illegal migration flows and ensuring NATO's involvement in the refugee crisis; promoting mechanisms to encourage Syrian refugees to stay in their home country; submitting projects relating to the use of 3 billion euros to the EU; working together with the Turkish Coast Guard Command; ensuring stronger relations between the Directorate General for Migration Management of Turkey and its counterpart in Greece.

Furthermore Prime Minister Davutoğlu underlined that managing the refugee crisis that effect both Turkey and the EU could only be overcome by building closer consultation between the parties. Moreover, he added that Turkey would fulfill all requirements to



Chancellor Angela Merkel came together with Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu

serve the needs of Syrian refugees. However, he stressed that Turkey is not in a position to deal with this crisis on its own.

At the joint press conference, Chancellor Merkel said that they discussed the issue of a joint consultation and an action

plan relating to tackling illegal migration between Turkey and Greece. Key messages by Chancellor Merkel pinpointed that the importance of visible improvements for an information network to prevent human trafficking and illegal flows is of

vital importance. Russia's position in Syria was another topic that was discussed between the parties. In this regard, Chancellor Merkel expressed her concern with respect to the current situation in the city of Aleppo which is facing a human tragedy.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ÇAVUŞOĞLU ATTENDED GYMNICH MEETING



Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu attended the informal meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of EU Member States and Candidates (also known as "Gymnich") upon the invitation of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Bert Koenders since his country is currently holding the EU Presidency. The meeting was held in the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam on 5-6 February 2016.

During the meeting, the latest developments regarding the situation in Syria and the ongoing migration crisis were discussed in depth. Furthermore, the EU's relations with Iran were also taken on board following the nuclear agreement which has been signed with Iran. At the occasion of this meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu also met with High Representative Mogherini. The current state of Turkey-EU relations, cooperation with respect to the ongoing refugee crisis and the situation in Syria were among the items discussed during this bilateral meeting.

MINISTER FOR EU AFFAIRS VOLKAN BOZKIR'S OFFICIAL VISITS

Visit to Paris

Minister Bozkır held an official meeting in France with the Secretary of State for European Affairs Harlem Désir on 3 February 2016. During the meeting, both leaders exchanged views on sensitive issues such as illegal migration flow at the border with Greece and the fight against terrorism as well as Turkey-EU relations in general. Afterwards, Minister Bozkır met with the Members and Chair of European Affairs Committee of the Senate and National Assembly as well as members of the French Parliament. Minister Bozkır also came together with French businessmen at dinner hosted by the Turkish Embassy in Paris during Turkey's EU accession negotiations and bilateral relations were assessed.

Visit to Brussels

Following his visit to Paris, Minister for EU Affairs Bozkır went to Brussels on 4 and 5 February 2016 to hold official talks with EU Commissioners. During his visit, he met with the European Commission's Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue Valdis Dombrovskis and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development



Secretary of State for European Affairs Harlem Désir (left), Minister for EU Affairs Volkan Bozkır (right)

Neven Mimica. They exchanged views on all aspects of Turkey-EU relations, cooperation on migration, the economic dialogue and international collaboration in regard to the development agenda.

Visit to Bucharest

Minister Bozkır visited Bucharest on 11-12 February 2016. During his visit, Minister Bozkır was received by President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament Valeriu Ştefan Zgonea and Prime Minister Dacian Cioloş. During his stay, Minister Bozkır also met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Lazăr Comănescu. Afterwards, Minister Bozkır also met with the Chairs and

Members of the Committee for Foreign Policy and the Committee for European Affairs. Minister Bozkır came together with President of the Senate Calin Popescu Tariceanu and Secretary of State of the Ministry of European Affairs George Ciamba. Leaders exchanged views on bilateral relations between Turkey and Romania. Similar to the topics discussed earlier during Minister Bozkır's visit to Belgium and France at the beginning of the month, the fight against terrorism, migration and Turkey's EU membership negotiation process were also on the agenda of this meeting.

EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL CARD: WHAT'S IN IT FOR TURKEY?

The EU continues to take significant steps to ensure full functioning of the Internal Market. One of the recent developments regarding the free movement of people and of services has been the entry into force of the European Professional Card (EPC).

Büşra Çatır, IKV Junior Researcher

EPC, as described by the European Commission, is an electronic certificate issued via the first EU-wide fully online procedure for the recognition of qualifications. In other words, it is the electronic proof that a professional has passed administrative checks and that her qualifications have been recognised by the host country and for the conditions for temporary provision of services. The European Commission adopted on 24 June 2015 the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/983 on the procedure for issuance of the EPC and the application of the alert mechanism pursuant to the Professional Qualifications Directive.

The Professional Qualifications Directive, which was amended in 2013 and entered into force in 18 January 2016, sets the rules for EU citizens for temporary mobility, establishment in another EU country, systems of recognition of qualifications and for professionals who want to pursue the same profession in another Member State without facing any discrimination on the basis of citizenship. To that end, the EPC which entered into force along with the Revised Professional Qualifications Directive presents a significant initiative towards strengthening the free movement of people and services within the borders of the Union.

By simplifying the procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications, the EPC contributes to the cutting of the red tape. The EPC is available for European professionals who want to work in another Member State and to benefit from job opportunities outside their home country. Initially, the implementation of the EPC procedure is limited to some professions of which the rate of mobilisation is considered to be higher than other professions. These professions are nurses responsible for general



care, doctors, pharmacists, physiotherapists, engineers, mountain guides and real estate agents. Although other professionals will have to follow the classic procedures of professional qualifications recognition, the number of professions that could use the EPC is expected to increase in the future which would further facilitate the simplification of the procedures with regard to professional qualifications as well as the free movement of people. It is also important to note that this will provide an important model for other professionals.

EPC and Turkey

The EPC which became available recently to the European professionals should attract the attention of Turkish authorities as well. Although Turkey's efforts with regard to the recognition of professional qualifications continue

within the scope of the accession negotiations, the revision of the Customs Union which is for the time being seen as a more effective mechanism due to problems encountered in Turkey's accession process, brought the importance of the issue to the forefront. While Turkey and the EU agreed to revise and modernise the Customs Union in May 2015, it is expected that services sector along with agriculture and public procurement would be included in the scope of Turkey-EU Customs Union. The preparation period initiated within this framework is expected to be completed at the end of 2016 and to be followed by the negotiations.

The relationship between the EPC and the revision of the Customs Union might become crucial depending on "the level of liberalisation" that the parties will agree following the negotiations as Turkey would have to implement

the EU legislation related to the right of establishment and free movement of services. If Turkey and the EU agree to adopt an internal market association as in the case of the European Economic Area (EEA) established between the EU, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland, Turkey will have to implement all the EU legislation in this area. This also means that the EPC will enter into force in Turkey and will be available for Turkish professionals. In this respect, Turkey should also accelerate its efforts with regard to the issue as the EU which continues to take steps for strengthening the free movement of people and services in line with the requirements of the digital age. If the aforementioned scenario is applied in the process of the revision of the Customs Union, an EU citizen who wants to pursue a profession will be able to work in Turkey through the procedure

applied by the EPC by having the same rights with the Turkish citizens. Similarly, Turkish citizens enjoying the same rights with their European counterparts will be eligible to work in EU Member States by applying online to the EPC for recognition of their professional qualifications. It is important to note that the requirements set for carrying out professions are regulated by EU Member States which could incur different rules and requirements for performing the profession in different Member States. For this reason, it is vital for Turkey to strengthen the education system in general and vocational training in line with the developments of the current age. It is also important to note that the trends and demands of the labour market should be followed closely both in Turkey and the EU so as to contribute the development of the education system.