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

EU LEADERS AGREE TO RE-ORIENT PRE-ACCESSION FUNDING FOR TURKEY

Following an intense debate on Turkey-EU relations at the European Council meeting, EU leaders agreed to task the European Commission to present proposals to re-orient pre-accession aid for Turkey.



EU's stormy relations with Turkey were among the numerous topics on the agenda of the EU leaders during the European Council meeting on 19 October. Included on the agenda upon the initiative of Germany, EU leaders held a debate on Turkey. During the meeting, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for the diversion and reduction of the funds linked with Turkey's bid to join the EU.

Commenting to the press following the first session of the European Council meeting, German Chancellor Merkel stated that the Commission will look into ways to reduce pre-accession aid for Turkey in a responsible way. Germany's move in the Council meeting was reportedly backed by Belgium and the Netherlands. EU governments seem to be divided on Turkey's EU membership prospects with Austria demanding a complete halt

to accession talks and countries such as the UK, Sweden and Poland maintaining their strong support for Turkey's EU membership bid. In the Council meeting, EU leaders agreed to task the European Commission to explore ways to reduce and re-orient pre-accession funds for Turkey. The Commission is expected to present its proposals to this end by the end of this year. Turkey was set to receive 4.4 billion euros pre-accession aid for the 2014-2020 period.

The topic came up in the discussions on the EU's 2018 budget during the European Parliament's plenary session on 24-25 October. In a resolution on the EU's 2018 general budget, MEPs decided to withhold part of the pre-accession funds, to be released once Turkey has made improvements in the fields of rule of law, democracy, human rights and press freedom.

Turkey-EU relations, which were

re-energized after the outbreak of the refugee crisis in 2015, have sharply deteriorated following the Fethullah Terror Organization (FETÖ) coup attempt in July 2016. The state of emergency measures introduced by Ankara came under increasing criticism on part of the EU which failed to comprehend the gravity of the situation. Meanwhile, the EU has been criticized by Ankara for failing to show solidarity with the Turkish people in the fight against terrorist organisations such as the PKK and FETÖ. Turkey-EU relations have been further complicated owing to the fact that 2017 has been an electorally challenging year both in Turkey and key EU Member States home to a substantial Turkish diaspora such as the Netherlands and Germany. The latest episode of tension between Turkey and the EU erupted in the run up to the German federal elections. Seeking re-election for the fourth

time, Merkel during her campaign had promised to take up the issue of Turkey's EU membership bid in the European Council meeting in October.

The step to re-orient pre-accession funding to Turkey marks a softening in Berlin's tone which prior to the federal elections was dominated by messages in favour of ending Turkey's EU accession talks. With this decision however EU leaders, very well aware of Turkey's unparalleled value as a strategic partner and the huge potential for cooperation in a wide range of areas such as foreign policy, counter-terrorism and migration to name a few, opted for keeping communication channels with Turkey open. The decision, which was not reflected in the official council conclusions, aims to convey to Ankara the EU's disapproval of the rule of law and human rights situation in Turkey, but leaves the door for

membership open. With this in mind, as stated in the press release issued by IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoglu on 20 October, if the period till the presentation of the European Commission's 2018 enlargement package, which is due in April 2018, is used for undertaking the necessary political reforms, there is a real chance that ties with the EU can be restored and re-energized.

The EU should keep the dialogue channels with Turkey open and show greater understanding to Turkey's sensitivities whereas Turkey should re-focus its attention on the political reform process. As indicated in the IKV press release, given its indispensable importance for Europe's security, EU leaders and institutions cannot risk losing Turkey. Therefore maintaining the EU membership perspective for Turkey is in EU's interest, just as joining the EU is in the interest of Turkey.



TURKEY EXTENDS STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR THREE MORE MONTHS

The Turkish parliament extended the ongoing state of emergency on October 17 for another three months. Following the advice of the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu – MGK*), a bill to extend the state of emergency was immediately submitted to the Turkish parliament. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) discussed the proposal and with ruling party, AKP's comfortable majority, state of emergency period extended for a fifth time. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) and opposition Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) voted in favour of the extension, while main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and People's Democratic Party (HDP) were against it.

During the state of emergency, the cabinet has the right to issue statutory decrees under the president of the republic without regard to routine procedures and restrictions in Article 91 of the country's constitution. The state of emergency has been extended four times, in October 2016, in January, April and July this year. All the extensions have come in three-month intervals. As it can be remembered the state of emergency was initially ordered by Parliament on July 21, and was imposed in the wake of the July 15 coup attempt. The failed coup attempt, which left 250 people dead and nearly 2,200 injured, was organized by followers of the Fethullah Terror Organization (FETÖ) led by Fetullah Gülen. Gülen has led a long-running campaign to overthrow the Turkish state through the infiltration of public institutions, particularly the military, police and judiciary, forming what the government has called the "parallel structure."

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS IN GLOBAL TRADE SYSTEM



A panel titled "Recent Developments and Trends in the Global Trade System" was organized in cooperation with the IKV and Friedrich Naumann Foundation on 31 October 2017. At the panel whose moderator was the Vice-President Prof. Haluk Kabaaloğlu, the opening speech was delivered by IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu. The panellists were Prof. Refik Erzan, Asst. Prof. Pinar Artrian and IKV Brussels representative Haluk Nuray.

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu started his speech by reminding IKV's important role in Turkey-EU relations for 52 years. Stating that countries such as the EU Member States, USA, South Korea, Ukraine and Canada are involved in trade agreements, IKV Chairman expressed that global trade is hardening due to the withdrawal of US from Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the interruption of negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) after protectionism advocate Donald Trump became President of the United States. Emphasizing the importance of updating the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU as soon as possible and the inclusion of

service trade within the scope of the Customs Union, Ayhan Zeytinoğlu put an end to his words as saying that the Customs Union modernisation is vital for Turkey in this critical period when we can hold more economic progress than political advancement.

The first speaker of the panel was Prof. Refik Erzan from Boğaziçi University Faculty of Economics. He began his speech by saying that the UK's Brexit decision and the election of Donald Trump as US President are the two important political consequences of globalization. Prof. Refik Erzan underlined the declining internal migration in the EU and USA in the last 30 years and the decreasing desire to shift the labour power as a result of the enrichment of the countries.

Prof. Refik Erzan indicated that for a long time economists have pointed out that Free Trade Agreements (FTA) are bad for the reason that they cause trade distortions. Furthermore Prof. Refik Erzan said that despite foreign direct investments (FDI) have declined in 2016, it has risen this year. He also predicted that China would be the most influential country in globalisation process in the coming

years. Erzan concluded his speech by stating that all the problems of globalisation could be solved in the digital era however this also could increase the income differences between countries.

The second speaker of the panel was WTO Chair Asst. Prof. Pinar Artrian from Bilgi University. Artrian initially stated that there are two major issues that foreign trade actors and the WTO face. She pointed out that these are e-commerce and artificial intelligence. Asst. Prof. Pinar Artrian emphasized that these two areas should be managed efficiently by the WTO. Continuing her words by making some evaluations on who will be the new leader in global trade as a result of US protectionist policies, Asst. Prof. Pinar Artrian stated that in addition to China, we should not ignore Canada with Trudeau's leadership, the EU with the possible Macron-Merkel collaboration and Saudi Arabia with the interesting but unofficial US backing.

After Artrian, IKV Brussels representative Haluk Nuray took the floor. Nuray began his speech by stating that the liberal economic system was gradually ending up and

because of that with the change on production, consumption, physical and legal infrastructures, the world trade was in a transition period. Indicating that as a result of China's medium and long-term plans to take up the United States on globalisation race, Nuray underlined that Turkey may experience the problem of "easternization" similar to the westernization problem it had experienced before. Moreover Nuray pointed out that due to the changing legal infrastructure, trade agreements have changed the shape and that not only China, but the entire Asia, has had an impact on this change.

At the end of the panel, Ambassador Bozkurt Aran made a general assessment about the panel. He indicated that the world's global trade entered a sharp corner with Trump and Brexit and it would take its course depending on its exit from this corner. Underlining the question of whether China will have the capacity to replace the United States as a new leader in the global system, Bozkurt Aran voiced China's deprivation of an allied commercial system in which the US has.

WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE TO REVIVE THE EU PROCESS

Following the EU Leaders Summit which was held on 19 October, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu evaluated the attitude adopted towards Turkey:

"German Chancellor Merkel made statements regarding the suspension of the negotiation process with Turkey during the European Council meeting. However, there was no majority in the European Council to support this discourse. No formal process was triggered to suspend Turkey-EU accession negotiations. It is a favourable result. On the other hand, it has been decided that the EU funds given to Turkey will be reduced. We can perceive this message as follows:



It's a warning from the EU to Turkey. We did not suspend the negotiations officially but we are not pleased with the current state of affairs. For now we are confining ourselves to cut

some amount of the funds."

IKV Chairman emphasised that the next six months will be of critical importance for the improvement of Turkey-EU relations and added:

"The EU and some of the Member States are responsible for the current state of relations with Turkey. But at this stage, we need to leave the previous mistakes aside and consider what can be done in the future. Therefore, the period of the next 6 months is critical. Until the European Commission's next Progress Report which is expected to be published in April, there lies a critical chance for Turkey to revive the EU process. As we always reiterate, we can revive the EU process by making reforms for Turkey and Turkish people, including the rule of law to the adoption of good governance principles. The revitalisation of the EU process is also of critical importance in terms of stability and development. If we can

take positive steps which could affect the Report expected to be published in April, with the help of diplomatic efforts, we can put the relations with the EU which have been injured on the right track."

Finally, IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu assessed the attitude of the EU:

"The EU leaders and institutions know that Turkey is critical for the European security. Europe cannot take the risk to lose Turkey. Similar to the EU process' utmost importance for Turkey, it is also important for the EU to preserve close cooperation with Turkey. In this respect, it will be beneficial for us and our European friends to accelerate our relations with the EU by maintaining the participation perspective."

IKV CELEBRATED EU CLIMATE ACTION WEEK

On 24 October IKV Istanbul EU Information Centre and Küçükçekmece Municipality organised an elaeagnus tree planting event within the scope of the EU Climate Action Week at the garden of Küçükçekmece Wedding Hall. IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, Küçükçekmece Deputy Mayor Recep Şencan, NGO representatives and climate volunteer students participated in the activity that intended not only to emphasise the importance of individual action for raising awareness of climate change and environmental protection but also to enhance local dialogue platforms.

EU Information Centres in Turkey organised countrywide events to discuss climate change and to raise awareness of the issue between



16 and 27 October. The main message of the events, "Everyone can make a difference", summarises that individual and local actions would help the Paris Agreement to achieve its goals. IKV EU Information Centre aims

to enhance knowledge regarding the objectives and acquirments of the EU climate policy and to bring key stakeholders from the public sector, business world and civil society together within a framework of a related productive dialogue.

IKV ATTENDED 8th ETHICS PLATFORM MEETING

On 10 October IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and IKV Researcher Ahmet Ceran attended 8th Ethics Platform meeting organized by Council of Ethics for Public Officials of Turkey. The 8th Platform meeting chaired by the Council President Köksal Toptan with the participation of the Council members and public sector/NGO representatives put the current best ethical examples within the public sector and legislative status of the Platform on the agenda. IKV shared a declaration of intent to become a member of the Platform during the meeting.

The Platform for Ethics was established with the aim of strengthening ethical awareness



among the society, public institutions and NGOs by helping to develop, guide, coordinate and monitor ethical strategies and contributing to the development of the ethical culture by cooperating with the relevant institutions and organizations. With the Platform a mechanism of collaboration has been established between in the public institutions,

non-governmental organizations, professional organizations having public institutions status, and trade unions for the development of ethical culture. Periodically, the institutions and organizations of the Platform for Ethics come together and evaluate the work carried out in the direction of ethical culture development.

HEAD OF THE EU DELEGATION TO TURKEY AMBASSADOR BERGER PAID A VISIT TO IKV

Head of EU Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Christian Berger accompanied by Head of Trade and Other EU Policies Department Balazs Gargya and Sector Manager for Internal Market and Industrial Policy Ela Yazıcı İnan paid a visit to IKV on 12 October and conducted a meeting with IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu. During the meeting, recent developments in Turkey-EU relations were discussed. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu gave information

to Ambassador Berger about the planned activities of IKV in the forthcoming period. Ambassador Berger and Chairman Zeytinoğlu

discussed the critical situation in Turkey's EU accession process and exchanged views regarding the future of Turkey-EU relations.



TIMELINE OCTOBER 2017

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| 1 | ○ Catalonia's Government has staged a referendum on leaving Spain |
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| 5 | ○ Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu visited Paris |
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| 10 | ○ IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and IKV Researcher Ahmet Ceran attended 8 th Ethics Platform meeting |
| 11 | |
| 12 | ○ Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Berger Paid a Visit to IKV |
| 13 | ○ U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he will not certify Iran's compliance with the terms of a multilateral nuclear deal |
| 14 | |
| 15 | ○ General Elections held in Czech Republic. "Czech Donald Trump" Andrej Babiš party ANO won 78 out of the 200 seats in the Czech parliament |
| 16 | ○ IKV Evaluated the Scenarios on the Future of Turkey-EU Relations |
| 17 | ○ Turkish Parliament extended the state of emergency for an additional 3 months |
| 18 | ○ Portugal's Minister of Foreign Affairs Augusto Santos Silva paid an official visit to Turkey |
| 19 | ○ Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ömer Çelik paid a visit to Estonia |
| 20 | ○ General elections held in Austria. Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) won 62 seats in the Austrian parliament |
| 21 | |
| 22 | ○ The European Council Meeting held in Brussels to discuss migration, digital Europe, defence, and external relations |
| 23 | |
| 24 | ○ IKV Celebrated EU Climate Action Week |
| 25 | |
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| 31 | ○ A panel titled "Recent Developments and Trends in the Global Trade System" was organized in cooperation with the IKV and Friedrich Naumann Foundation |

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL DELIVERED A SPEECH AT BOSPHORUS INSTITUTE'S SEMINAR

IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas delivered a speech on 19 October at the 8th Annual Seminar of Paris Bosphorus Institute (*Institut du Bosphore*). The seminar's main theme was "Turkey, France and the EU: Change Settings?" Effects of globalisation, future of the European integration and Turkey-EU relations were the priority issues touched upon at the seminar. During her speech at the panel on Turkey-France-EU relations, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas evaluated the future of Turkey-EU relations and the role of France in these relations with the country's newly elected President Emmanuel Macron, who is pointed as one of the names to build the future of the European integration in the light of current debates.



After having mentioned the importance of Turkey-France relations, Assoc. Prof. Nas indicated that the countries' bilateral relations are based on a historical background and strong

economic, social and cultural ties. Moreover, she underlined France's special role in normalising Turkey-EU relations. Furthermore, Assoc. Prof. Nas not only underlined the current

fluctuations in the world but also remarked the foresights of shifting economic balances from Europe to emerging economies. Turkey and the EU have become more

significant for each other in such an environment, she added. Assoc. Prof. Nas underlined the EU's need to be restructured and integrated at intellectual level; therefore, she highlighted the importance the EU's two strong states, France and Germany's enhanced cooperation. Within this context Assoc. Prof. Nas mentioned that while Germany plays a pioneering role in economy, France has profound role in terms of political perspective for the EU's reshaping and integration.

Lastly, after having underlining the recent inconveniences in the Turkey-EU accession negotiations, Assoc. Prof. Nas emphasized that civil society has an intermediary and contributing role in improving relations.

THE SCENARIOS ON THE FUTURE OF TURKEY-EU RELATIONS WAS EVALUATED BY IKV SECRETARY GENERAL IN ESKIŞEHİR

On 16 October IKV attended an event which was organised by Turkey-European Union Association (TURABDER) and Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TURKONFED) in Eskişehir. The aim of event was to bring students of Anadolu University and Eskişehir Osmangazi University, relevant faculty members and other stakeholders together in order to discuss Turkey-EU relations. IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, IKV Research Director Çiğdem İleri and IKV Junior Researchers Selvi Eren and Merve Özcan attended the event.

EU and Migration, Customs Union and Economic Relations, Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, Justice, Freedom and Security, Women and Their Future were the main themes of the morning session. These themes were addressed at roundtable discussions correspondingly. During lunch, Mayor of Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality Prof. Yılmaz Büyükerşen shared his thoughts regarding the future of the EU and the state of affairs between Turkey and the EU as keynote speaker.

In the afternoon session, a panel entitled "Scenarios on the Future of the Turkey-EU Relations" was realised.

The opening remarks were delivered by TURABDER President Prof. H. Gül Günver Turan. Panellists of the session were IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, from İstanbul Bilgi University President of International Political Science Association Prof. İlder Turan, former Ambassador of Turkey to Qatar and the OECD Mithat Rende and Assoc. Prof. Deniz Şenol Sert from Özyeğin University. The session chair was the Board Member of TURKONFED Aydın Bandırma. Prof. Turan explained the role of the EP in the EU's institutional structure and elaborated on

structural changes regarding the EP since its establishment. Afterwards, Ambassador Rende evaluated the current developments in Turkey-EU relations and emphasised that Turkey should make no concessions from the membership prospect.

Subsequently, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas expressed the possible future scenarios for the EU which is currently in an existential change and reform process. She focused on the current proposals regarding the EU's future including French President Macron's proposals and

argued that Turkey's relations with the EU and its status as a candidate country should also be taken into account in the plans for the future of Europe. Finally, Assoc. Prof. Deniz Şenol Sert informed participants regarding the latest situation of Syrian population under temporary protection in Turkey and refugees in the EU by making a presentation on the sustainability of readmission mechanisms. The panel continued with the Q&A session and came to conclusion with collective photo shooting and certificate distribution to the students.



THE GOVERNOR OF KOCAELI PAID A VISIT TO IKV

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu received Governor of Kocaeli, Hüseyin Aksoy on 19 October. During the meeting, IKV Chairman

provided information about IKV's main activities and publications related to various fields of research in Turkey-EU relations.

EU-FUNDED HOME BASED CHILDCARE SERVICES HELP WOMEN STAY IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The EU-funded project to support women employment through home based child care subsidies was concluded in Ankara on 20 October with the attendance of Minister of Labour and Social Security Jülide Sarieroğlu, Head of the Social Security Institution Mehmet Selim Bağlı, and the Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Turkey Mr. Gabriel Munuera Vinals.

The labour force participation of women in Turkey is 34.3 percent

whereas the EU average is 67 percent. Therefore, in order to give Turkish women equal opportunity to work and to help Turkey catching up to EU standards, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Social Security Institution of Turkey and the EU have partnered up to create this project of 42 million euros. Its main purpose is to help women with low wages to participate and stay in the labour market, especially mothers who want to

return to work after giving birth, and the caregivers they have entrusted their child to. Since 2015, with the help of this project, working mothers with a child up to 2 years old, earning up to twice the minimum wage per month with a caregiver in their employment have received 320 euros employment subsidy payments per month. Overall, this project improved the lives of 15,232 caregivers and 11,327 working mothers.

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET PROGRAMME REACHED 1 MILLION REFUGEES IN TURKEY

The EU funded programme, Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), aiming to help refugees in Turkey, currently reached one million refugees. This programme, as the largest ever humanitarian aid operation funded by the EU, was launched by the European Commission in September 2016. ESSN is implemented by the World Food Programme and the Turkish Red Crescent in collaboration with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management and General Directorate of Civil Registration and Nationality, under the coordination of AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency).

The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey was set up in 2015 in response to the European Council's call for significant additional funding to support refugees in Turkey, with a budget of 3 billion euros for



2016-2017, 1 billion euros from the EU budget and 2 billion euros from the EU Member States. The registration of refugees for the

programme started in November 2016 and the first financial transfers began at the end of December the same year. The EU and its partners

will continue to pursue the project with the aim to reach 1.3 million refugees by the end of this year. Essential items in local shops.

EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides visiting Turkey on 17 October 2017 met with Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu. They exchanged views on Humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees, fight against illegal migration, irregular migration and human trafficking. Commissioner Stylianides participated the same day to the event the event organised at Ulucanlar Culture Centre in Ankara on the occasion of the debit cards distributed under the ESSN programme by Turkish Red Crescent and the United Nations World Food Program reaching 1 million refugees in Turkey. Speaking at the event Stylianides noted that life-changing results were achieved by this EU's biggest ever aid programme. He pointed out that Turkey continues to host the largest refugee population in the world.

30th ANNIVERSARY OF ERASMUS WAS CELEBRATED IN GAZIANTEP



On 16 October 2017, 30th year anniversary of Erasmus programme was celebrated in Gaziantep. In the organisation which was 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 event.

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. The Deputy Minister Ali Şahin also touched upon this matter and underlined that Erasmus+ programme represents the fundamental philosophy of European integration which is "living and studying together". Until the end of the year, celebrations will continue in whole of Europe and Turkey. Other anniversary events will take place in Erzincan, Eskişehir and İzmir.

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 427,000 Turkish citizens have benefitted from it up until now.

EU DEFENDS IRAN DEAL DESPITE TRUMP

On October 13 U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he will not certify Iran's compliance with the terms of a multilateral nuclear deal, accusing the Islamic Republic of "not living up to the spirit" of the agreement. Trump also announced a tough new strategy toward Iran. This strategy will be based on countering Iran's support for terrorism and, more specifically, fresh sanctions on the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC); revitalizing traditional US relationships in the Middle East (addressing Iran's ballistic missile

program; and denying Iran a path to a nuclear weapon).

As it can be remembered Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China) and Germany struck the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2015.

Trump's decertification decision means that the US Congress has sixty days to consider re-imposing sanctions on Iran that were lifted under the terms of the JCPOA.

Meanwhile, United States'

European partners have pledged their commitment to the Iran nuclear deal after Donald Trump withdrew his support for the landmark agreement. Theresa May, Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel released a joint statement affirming their support for the deal. High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini also said the agreement was working well and continues to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Mogherini underlined that the U.S. had no right to unilaterally terminate the Iran nuclear accord.



CONTROVERSIAL CATALONIA INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM HEATED UP THE DISPUTES

Catalonia's Government has staged a referendum on leaving Spain that was deemed illegal by the Spanish Government. EU will abide by the decisions of Spain's Parliament and Constitutional Court.

Catalonia's Government has staged a referendum on leaving Spain deemed illegal by the Spanish Government on 1 October. The results were later announced by the Catalan Government as 90 percent of more than 2.25 million voters were in favour of independence, with a turnout of 42.3 percent.

Catalonia is one of Spain's wealthiest and most productive regions with an autonomous status. Enhanced autonomy calls coming from the regional government have been prevented by Spanish Constitutional Court in recent years and at the end, the Constitutional Court suspended

the self-determination referendum law passed by the Catalans just before the referendum day. Despite the Court ruling and hard reaction from the central government in Madrid, the Catalans went to the polls.

During the controversial voting day, law enforcement bodies of the central government displayed power to prevent Catalans participating the referendum. Many observers, media outlets and the opposition considered Madrid's preventive efforts excessive use of force resulting the injury of 900 people and called for guaranteed fundamental rights.

European Commission and

leaders of many EU Member States shared their comments after the heated referendum day. First official statement from the Commission came on 2 October stating the vote in Catalonia was not legal and this internal matter of Spain has to be dealt with in line with the constitutional order of Spain. Prime Minister of Spain Mariano Rajoy declared Madrid's intension to sack Catalonia's regional government, replace its ministers and call for early elections. Yet the tension remains to be high with the continuing massive protests of Catalans; hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets of Barcelona.



SMALL COUNTRY'S BIG TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE: EUROPE'S DIGITAL FUTURE ON THE TABLE AT TALLINN

The EU's first summit wholly dedicated to digital issues, Tallinn Digital Summit, brought EU leaders together to discuss the impacts of digitalisation on governments, economy, industry and society.



Estonia, one of the smallest countries of the EU with its 1.3 million population, took over the Presidency of the EU Council on 1 July 2017 and has made creating a digital Europe and ensuring free movement of data one of its priorities. Within this scope, the EU's first digital summit was held in Tallinn on 29 September. The summit had two working sessions: the future of government and the future of economy and society.

At the first session of the Tallinn

Digital Summit the EU leaders have agreed upon the alignment of public sector with digital era. In this context, "once-only principle" which enables people and companies to share their information with public bodies only once has been approved. Furthermore, the leaders have decided to make the EU world leader on cyber security by 2025. During the second session, the completion of Digital Single Market by 2018, alignment of national laws with digital era and acceleration of digital transformation in industry

were touched upon. In parallel with the joint initiative prepared by Germany, France, Italy and Spain prior to the summit, the leaders have reached an agreement to tax digital companies' earnings in accordance with the place of value creation rather than companies' headquarters. Lastly, the EU leaders have agreed to not only adapt labour market and education system with reference to digitalisation but also assure their citizens' acquirements of basic digital literacy.

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN'S VISIT TO POLAND

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to Poland on October 17, as the guest of his counterpart President Andrzej Duda. During the visit President Erdoğan and President Duda had a bilateral meeting and a co-chair meeting between delegations was also realized. President Erdoğan also met with Prime Minister Beata Szydło of Poland as well as speakers of both houses of the Polish Parliament, the Senate and Sejm.

Before joining the Turkey-Poland Business Forum, Erdoğan and Polish President

Andrzej Duda held a joint press conference in which the two leaders elaborated on political, cultural and economic ties. Both leaders pointed out the mutual potential to increase the current 6 billion dollars bilateral trade volume. Erdoğan emphasized that the total population of Turkey and Poland is around 118.5 million and referenced the joint intention to raise the trade volume between Turkey and Poland to 10 billion dollars within the next five years. He also stressed that the increase must be based on a win-win principle that benefits both

countries. Highlighting Turkey and Poland's political and economic cooperation, President Duda underscored the two countries' historical relationship and noted that Poland has always supported Turkey's desire to join the EU.

As it is known Turkey and Poland have over 600 years of friendship which they elevated to the level of strategic partnership in 2009. Turkey attaches great importance to improving cooperation with its ally Poland in every field. President Erdoğan's visit to Poland will further enhance the bilateral relations so as to benefit the whole region.



MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU VISITED PARIS

Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu visited Paris on 5 October. During his visit Minister Çavuşoğlu met with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France Jean Yves Le Drian. In a bilateral meeting with his French counterpart, Jean Yves Le Drian, Minister Çavuşoğlu discussed Turkish-French relations, the current regional and international developments. French minister Drian expressed his views to his Turkish counterpart on the initiatives to be taken to reach a political solution to the Syrian



conflict, notably through the establishment of an international contact group. He also discussed the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan after

the September 25 referendum and its regional repercussions.

Following the bilateral meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu gave an

interview to the press. He expressed that he was confirmed with his counterpart Le Drian and that they share common stance, emphasising that France and Turkey took common steps both in Baghdad and in Erbil. He reiterated that there is no difference in the position of France and Turkey since the beginning of the referendum in Iraq.

In strengthening ties between UNESCO and Turkey, Minister Çavuşoğlu also met with UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova at UNESCO Headquarters. Minister Çavuşoğlu and Bokova discussed

the issues of common interest and the necessity for deeper cooperation. Bokova highlighted Turkey's active engagement as member of several UNESCO intergovernmental bodies and its steady support to the Organization's activities over the years. Bokova thanked the Government of Turkey for its commitment in furthering the objectives of the Organisation, stressing on Turkey's active engagement as member of several UNESCO intergovernmental bodies and its support to the Organisation's activities over the years.

THE VISIT OF FOREIGN MINISTER NIKOS KOTZIAS OF GREECE TO TURKEY

Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias of Greece paid a working visit to Turkey on 24 October. During his visit, Minister Nikos Kotzias was received by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and had a meeting with his counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. Minister Çavuşoğlu and Minister Kotzias exchanged views on various aspects of the bilateral relations including the EU-Turkey agreement on refugee resettlement; the latest progress on the Cyprus issue; the escalation of Turkish air space violations in the

Aegean over the summer and the Greek court's recent decision not to extradite eight Turkish officers accused by Turkey of involvement in the coup attempt and of links to the Fethullah Terror Organization (FETÖ) blamed for orchestrating the attempt. The preparations for the Fifth Meeting of Turkey-Greece High Level Cooperation Council were also discussed during Kotzias's visit.

Following the meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu and Kotzias held a joint press conference. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu

urged Greece to not become a "safe haven" for plotters of last year's coup attempt, citing the 995 people who have applied for asylum since the failed putsch in Turkey last year. Minister Çavuşoğlu also said that despite the failure of recent talks to reunify Cyprus, the two countries were evaluating what steps to take next and that a solution to Cyprus would benefit everyone. Kotzias said improved ties between Turkey and Greece are to the benefit of both nations and reiterated support for Turkish membership in the EU.



MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF PORTUGAL SANTOS SILVA'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO TURKEY

Portugal's Minister of Foreign Affairs Augusto Santos Silva paid an official visit to Turkey on 18 October 2017. Minister Santos Silva has been received by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and had a

meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu.

During the meeting between two Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Turkey-Portugal relations and current issues were discussed. In

this regard, Minister Çavuşoğlu and Minister Santos Silva signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of diplomatic archives between Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Turkey and Portugal. Following the meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu underlined the importance of current excellent relations between the two countries at the joint press conference.

MINISTER FOR EU AFFAIRS AND CHIEF NEGOTIATOR ÖMER ÇELİK'S VISIT TO TALLIN

On 18-19 October, Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ömer Çelik paid a visit to Tallin, the capital of Estonia, to have some official meetings. The overall agenda of Ömer Çelik's two-day visit was to touch upon Turkey-EU relations, Estonian Presidency of the EU Council, fight against terrorism and bilateral cooperation opportunities between Turkey and Estonia. Minister Çelik firstly visited

the President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid, with whom he discussed Turkey-EU relations and the recent developments in the European politics. Prior to this meeting, Ömer Çelik signed Estonia's Presidency book of honour. Afterwards, Minister Çelik met with Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Estonia, Marko Mihkelson.

On the following day, Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Çelik had

conducted a one-to-one meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Sven Mikser, before they were accompanied by their delegations. Then, Minister Çelik delivered a speech entitled "Europe, Our Common Future: A Turkish Perspective" in a panel moderated by the former parliamentarian and diplomat Aap Neljas at the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute. During his speech, Ömer

Çelik evaluated the possibility of Turkey's EU membership as a win-win situation thanks to not only Turkey's political and economic gains but also potential developments in the EU's security, defence and economy. Moreover, Minister Çelik highlighted that Turkey is eager to cooperate with the EU in case of any requests. Minister Çelik concluded his visit to Estonia by attending the lunch that was organised in his honour by Sven Mikser.



FAR RIGHT ON THE RISE: GENERAL ELECTIONS IN AUSTRIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The far right politicians had a sounding victory in Austrian and Czech general elections held in October. This victory could be considered as another "political earthquake" in European integration.

Selvi EREN,
IKV Junior Researcher

General elections held on 15 October in Austria and on 20-21 October in Czech Republic brought to the fore the politicians who formed their political agenda on issues of immigration and European integration. In this sense Austrian and Czech elections proved that far right ideologies haven't lost their political power among European citizens. In fact the successes of Sebastian Kurz in Vienna and of Andrej Babiš in Prague represent a huge victory for populism in the EU.

The Victory of Populism

After the elimination of the populist and Eurosceptical threat in the Member States of the EU and with the victory of pro-European leaders, political optimism was spread across the Europe. With Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders defeated, everybody believed that Western liberal democracy has triumphed over the short-lived populist wave of Brexit and Trump. But this optimism lasted for a short time and gave way to the fear of extreme rhetoric's success because of the "political earthquake" in Central Europe.

In Austrian general elections the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), Social Democrat Party (SPÖ) and the Freedom Party (FPÖ) emerged as the major winners. ÖVP and FPÖ ran a campaign which attacked migration and the threat of "political Islam". The former Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz's party ÖVP won 31.5 percent of the votes in Austria's elections on October 15th. Conservative politician Kurz, who took over the leadership of the party in May, builds his political discourse on anti-Islam and anti-immigration. At the same time, the former Foreign Minister, who said he embraced the rhetoric of the extreme right and soft Eurosceptic FPÖ, is also drawing the image of a charismatic leader. The polls underline that the major success of ÖVP is due to Kurz's personal charisma, as well as his anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant political rhetoric.

When we examine the elections



held in Czech Republic on 20 and 21 October, we see that the right-wing extremists also got very high votes. Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO) formed by Andrej Babiš, called "Czech Donald Trump" due to being the second richest person in the country and similarities in political discourses, won 78 seats in the 200-member parliament. Babiš is the second-richest person in Czech Republic who owns *Agrofert*, a huge agro corporation which controls a good part of Czech agriculture as well as chemical industry. We should underline that the former Finance Minister, despite the fact that he was involved in corruption allegations, has a significant charisma and influence in the eyes of Czech citizens.

Similar Strategies Similar Results

The newly-elected Austrian *Nationalrat* consists of 183 seats in total and ÖVP won 62 of it. Noting that the centre right party had triumphed over the Social Democrats only twice since the end of World War II, Kurz called it a "historic victory." In the Austrian parliamentary it is necessary

to earn at least 92 seats in order to form a government, which is why the Kurz's party must form a coalition government with another political party. More than 10 years, the country was led by the coalition government of the center-left SPÖ and the conservative ÖVP. However, it is almost certain that the new government will be formed by an extreme right coalition. It is spoken that the center-left party SPÖ will stay as opposition despite the fact that it won second place with 52 seats and the extreme right party FPÖ will be the government partner. In this context, it is clear that the administration of the country is clearly directed towards the far right ideology and rising anti-immigration and anti-Islamic populist ideas seem to constitute a majority among citizens. Likewise, before election, the centre-left party SPÖ declared that if it's necessary, they could make a coalition with the extreme right FPÖ. It is necessary to emphasize that, this is an important indicator that the left ideology is also influenced by populist rhetoric.

On the other hand in the Czech Republic, the Freedom and Direct

Democracy Party (SPD) which led by Tomio Okamura became the fourth most voted party by taking 10.6 percent of votes. Tomio Okamura adopts populist and hard Eurosceptic view in the frame of Islamophobia. As it declared in the Guardian Newspaper, the Czech Republic stood out for a long time as an exceptionally stable democracy among the post-communist European states. In this sense, the rise of Babiš who involved in corruption of EU subsidies, and Okamura who adopts very sharp xenophobic rhetoric, reveals the dangerous dimensions of the political transformation in the country.

In this context, according to many analyses Babiš had a strategic success. These analyses underline that, Andrej Babiš created a considerable amount of voters by criticizing German Chancellor Angela Merkel's refugee policy and the EU integration process in his election campaigns. It is also said that he has benefited from the distrust and dissatisfaction with the mainstream parties that ruled the country since the dissolution

of Czechoslovakia at the beginning of 1993. For this reason, the new Czech leader represents perfectly the populist rhetoric that separates the facts into black or white identifying a scapegoat. However, it should be noted that the elements which oriented the political ideology to the extreme right in the country are different from the dynamics in other European countries; because the Czech Republic is one of the fastest growing economy and has the lowest unemployment rate among the EU member states.

As a result, we can say that far-right political discourse in Central Europe suggests that efforts to focus on the future of the EU have little impact on national politics and Europeans. White Paper's five scenarios, the ideas for change and transformation of Juncker and Macron still have to be tackled at national level, where they are in conflict with the growing protectionism and Euroscepticism. In this sense, the rapid and efficient action of the Union could minimize the capacity of extremist policies to threaten the future of the European integration.