**DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO TURKEY**

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**To:** EEAS MD Angelina EICHHORST, Acting COM NEAR DG Maciej POPOWSKI

**Subject: Turkey: Weekly update, 2 – 7 July 2022**

**Please note that over the summer period, the weekly update will be produced on a bi-weekly basis.**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

* ***HDP held its fifth Ordinary Congress on 03/07. Sitting co-chairs of the party, Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar were re-elected as the party's co-chairs along with a new Party Assembly.***
* ***Referring to the trilateral memorandum co-signed by TR, SE and FI, the President and relevant ministers underlined Ankara’s expectations from NATO acceding countries to extradite alleged PKK members and Gulenists.***
* ***Turkish customs authorities halted the Russian flagged cargo ship Zhibek Zholy carrying grain from the occupied Ukrainian port of Berdyansk on Sunday 3 July, upon UA request. However, on July 6th, the Zhibek Zholy was on the move again, which led to a sharp rebuke by the UA MFA, calling it an “unacceptable situation” and summoning TR’s Ambassador in Kyiv.***
* ***President Erdogan delivered statements that are more circumspect than earlier declarations on the possibility of a new TR incursion into northern Syria.***

**DETAIL**

**EU-Turkey relations**

**1. TR-Italy:** On 5/07, President Erdoğan and Italian Prime Minister Draghi co-chaired the TR-Italy third Intergovernmental Summit in Ankara. The joint declaration touched upon the enhancement of TR-Italy economic and trade relations, transport cooperation, defence industry, and further coordinate their efforts on regional issues such as Libya, Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Regarding EU-Turkey relations, both sides have agreed to take further steps in order to improve Turkey’s EU perspective, including eliminating existing obstacles in the implementation of the Customs Union's, coordinating their efforts regarding visa liberalisation dialogue, migration cooperation, counterterrorism cooperation, and the deepening of existing cooperation with regards IPA funded projects and EU programmes. On this occasion, the countries signed nine bilateral cooperation agreements.

**2. TR-Austria**: On 4/07, Foreign Minister Cavusoglu and Interior Minister Soylu met in Ankara their Austrian counterparts FM Schallenberg and Interior Minister Karner. They notably exchanged views about the developments in Ukraine, Turkey-EU relations as well as migration issues.

**3. Cyprus**: The Turkish MFA issued a statement in which it expressed its strong support to the new cooperation proposals submitted by TR Cypriot Community’s leader Tatar. The proposed measures focus largely on energy cooperation and suggest cooperating on hydrocarbon exploration, an electricity interconnector with the EU going through Turkey, joint solar energy projects and a shared use of the island’s water resources. It is understood that Turkey largely contributed to the drafting of these proposals, which reaffirm Turkey and Turkish Cypriot’s leader position regarding a two-state solution based on the principle of equal sovereignty.

**Domestic Politics**

**4. On 03 July, the HDP held its Fifth Ordinary Congress was held**. Mithat Sancar and Pervin Buldan were re-elected as co-chairs of the party. Both Sancar and Buldan spoke at length about the need for a new system for the future of Turkey. They repeatedly underlined the need for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue, for which the parliament should play a key role in achieving it. Opposition parties (CHP, DEVA, Gelecek, Saadet, Left Party, TKP, etc.) sent their representatives to the Congress. There were a few, yet visible, pro-Ocalan and PKK symbols during the congress. The Ankara Chief Prosecutor’s office launched an ex-officio investigation regarding these slogans on the grounds of “making propaganda of an illegal organisation” and announced the detention of four people on Sunday. Fourteen persons were detained across Turkey through this investigation in the following days.

**5. Imprisoned former HDP co-chair Demirtas urges HDP to cooperate with the CHP-led opposition bloc**. In his column published for the opposition T24 news website, Demirtas has called on HDP to “embrace the whole of Turkey” so that it becomes inevitable for all the opposition parties to cooperate for preserving democracy against Erdogan’s one-man rule in the period leading up to 2023 elections. *Comment: Even if HDP has been excluded from the CHP-led Nation’s Alliance, Demirtas knows that HDP may well be essential for the opposition bloc after the elections.*

**7.** **Istanbul Governorate’s asked mayor Imamoglu to seek permission from the MFA to meet with foreign missions**. On 05/07, Istanbul governor sent a letter to Imamoglu’s office requesting him to get permission from the MFA to meet with representatives of foreign missions.

**Migration**

**8.** **Migration figures**: According to Presidency for Migration Management (PMM), 7078 irregular migrants were apprehended in Turkey between 24 and 30 June. 3090 were from Afghanistan, 360 from Pakistan and 3 628 from other countries. During the same period, 2 265 Afghan nationals, 302 Pakistani nationals and 733 people from other nationalities were returned from TR to their home countries. The number of Afghan nationals deported this year has reached 27 705, Pakistanis 6 709 and the total number of other nationalities adds up to 13 819. At removal centres currently are accommodated 8 152 Afghans, 3 840 Pakistanis and 5 781 other nationals.

**9.** **Violence against Afghan and Pakistani refugees, who escaped from a refugee camp**. On 01/07, protests broke out in a refugee camp in Osmaniye. Reportedly, about 35 Afghan and Pakistani refugees escaped from the camp. Videos showing local people chasing and beating the fleeing refugees went viral on social media. On 02/07, the governorate announced that 24 of the refugees were captured.

**Judiciary and Fundamental Rights**

**10.** **Human Rights Defenders (HRDs):** The trial of the case against eight trade unionists and HRDs, including the Health and Social Service Workers’ Union (SES) co-chair, was held at the Ankara 22. Heavy Penal Court on 04/07. The court decided to continue detention of Gönül Erden and to arrest SES co-chair Selma Atabey, and adjourned the trial to 03/10.

**11.** **Media reported that a 4-year-old child died and 12 people were injured by gendarmerie firing on a vehicle fire with refugees**, on the grounds of “disobeying stop warning” in Saray district of Van on 03/07. Van Governorate’s Office made a statement saying that the gendarmerie officers wanted to stop a suspect vehicle at a checkpoint. The gendarmerie opened fire, one immigrant was killed, and 12 were injured. According to the governorate, there were 40 irregular migrants in the vehicle and added a judicial and administrative investigation has been initiated.

**12.** **Minorities:** In the village of Enhil in the Midyat district of Mardin, the tombstones in the Mor Petrus and Mor Paul Syriac Orthodox Chapel were desecrated, and the bones of the Saints were thrown out. The locals reported the situation to the gendarmerie.

**Foreign policy**

**13. RU war against UA:** Turkey claims to intensify diplomatic efforts for the establishment of a grain corridor with RU and UA. President Erdoğan said TR would try to reach an outcome with Kyiv and Moscow for a potential grain export corridor from Ukrainian ports “*in a period of a week or 10 days*”. Turkish customs authorities halted the Russian flagged cargo ship Zhibek Zholy carrying grain from the occupied Ukrainian port of Berdyansk on Sunday 3 July, upon UA request. However, on July 6th, the Zhibek Zholy was on the move again, which led to a sharp rebuke by the UA MFA, calling it an “unacceptable situation” and summoning TR’s Ambassador in Kyiv. The UA MFA regretted that the ship was allowed to leave Karasu port, despite criminal evidence presented to the TR authorities.

**14. Syria:** President Erdogan delivered statements that are more circumspect than earlier declarations on the possibility of a new TR incursion into northern Syria. On July 1, he stated that there is no cause for panic whatsoever and there is no need to rush. TR is already operating in northern Iraq as well as northern Syria, adding that TR would begin its new operation in Syria "*when the time is right*".

**15. NATO applications of FI and SE and issue of extradition**: President Erdogan revisited the issue of extradition this week, by claiming that some promises were made of delivering 173 accused terrorist suspects. According to Erdogan, TR services would remind their counterparts to “*send over these terrorists without delay*”. The TR Justice Minister announced that his ministry sent the necessary papers related to the extradition requests to the MFA.

**16. Armenia:** Turkish and Armenian officials have agreed to open the land border for third country citizens visiting both countries as soon as possible, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said. Envoys for the normalization process between Ankara and Yerevan also agreed on commencing direct air cargo trade at the earliest possible date.

**17. Libya:** Turkey did not allow inspections to be carried out on a commercial ship it sent to Libya, where the UN imposed an arms embargo. The EU reacted publically through the Spokesperson and the mission EUNAVFOR MED IRINI.

**18. Somalia**: Somalia’s President Hassan was on an official visit in TR this week. President Erdogan emphasized the TR steps taken to revitalize Somalia starting with his visit in 2011, growing bilateral trade volumes, direct TR airlines flights and the largest TR embassy building in the world in Mogadishu.

**19. Iraq**: two TR soldiers died this week in the course of their deployment in Operation Claw-Lock in northern Iraq.

**20. Iran:** President Erdogan will visit Iran on July 19, the Turkish presidency said.

**VISA: Steven DE WILDE**

**SIGN-OFF: N. MEYER-LANDRUT, HoD**