**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, 25 June - 1 July 2022**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

* ***President Erdogan lifted TR’s veto on the SE and FI NATO applications in the NATO Summit in Madrid, but now links ratification to FI and SE fulfilling their “promises”, including on extradition.***
* ***In the margins of the Madrid NATO Summit Presidents Erdogan and Biden held a meeting. Erdogan also held several bilateral meetings with European counterparts.***
* ***Upon the request of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), access to Deutsche Welle (DW) Turkish and America's Voice (VOA) in Turkey is banned.***
* ***The Parliament will go on recess from 1 July. All pending proposals, including the so-called ‘Disinformation Law’, are postponed to October.***

**ASSESSMENT**

Pro-government media portrays that Ankara “*got what it wanted*” from Finland and Sweden in the framework of their NATO application and that, it constitutes a clear diplomatic victory for President Erdogan. The long sought after meeting with US President Biden and with other Western leaders adds another layer to this claimed victory. In his address to TR media after the NATO Summit, Erdogan puts however to the fore a maximalist approach which will keep the pressure on EU-MS and on NATO high. This hard tone is also used domestically to portray strong leadership and to fence of opposition criticism on his perceived U-turn.

**DETAIL**

**EU-Turkey relations / NATO-SUMMIT in Madrid**

1. **TR lifts its veto on the SE and FI NATO applications**: President Erdogan met with NATO Secretary, Finnish and Swedish counterparts prior to the NATO leaders' summit in Madrid, during which the three countries signed a memorandum of understanding. Turkey would support these two countries’ applications to join NATO, while also TR’s concerns on lifting of arms embargos and regarding the fight against terrorism would be addressed.
2. **President Erdogan however dampens hopes for a quick ratification.** At the press conference held after the NATO summit, President Erdogan said Turkey will send the memorandum of agreement to parliament for ratification only after the two countries fulfil their promises, including the extradition of 73 alleged “terrorists” by Sweden. He noted that it took Macedonia 20 years to join the alliance. For Erdogan, the signature of the accord signed with Finland and Sweden is not the end of the matter, it is only an invitation.
3. In the margins of the NATO summit, President Erdogan held several bilateral meetings with his European counterparts including French President Macron, Spanish Prime Minister, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and European Council President Charles Michel. He also met with CY President Anastasiades with whom he exchanged views.
4. In a context of tense relations with **Greece**, President Erdogan again refused to meet with his Greek counterpart, “*until he pulls himself together*”. President Erdogan claims that TR is not looking for escalation pointing to the claimed militarization of the islands as well as the alleged 147 Greek overflights overTurkey’s airspace.

**Domestic Politics**

1. **Parliament goes to summer recess / Disinformation law postponed to after summer:** The Parliament will go on recess from 1 July. The so-called “Disinformation Law” was adjourned to the new legislative year, which will start on the 1st of October, reportedly due to significant disagreements within the ruling coalition.
2. **Statements from President Erdogan following cabinet meeting:** On 28/06,President Erdogan asked the public for some more patience regarding the rising inflation and said that they will reduce inflation to lower levels in February-March 2023. Stating that the work on the expected July increase in the minimum wage will be completed before the end of this week.
3. **CHP leader Kılıçdaroğlu called out to 7.5 million first-time voters:** Calling out to the young voters who will vote for the first time in the 2023 elections, Kılıçdaroğlu mentioned that are 7 and a half million young people who will vote for the first time.

**Judiciary and Fundamental Rights**

1. **Access to DW Turkish and Voice of America sites is blocked:** Upon the request of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), access to Deutsche Welle (DW) Turkish and America's Voice (VOA) in Turkey is banned by a court order on the grounds that they failed to submit a licensing application. On February 9, RTÜK imposed the obligation to license VoA, DW Turkish and Euronews Turkish**.**
2. **Other cases on Freedom of Expression**: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) has fined for a maximum amount four TV channels — Halk TV, KRT, Tele 1 and TGRT for showing and making comments on a gendarmerie shoot out in a village of Van. Street artist nicknamed "İzinsiz" was sentenced to 15 months in prison (deferred) for “insulting the President”, for a mural. Musician Veysi Beltekin was detained by the police on the grounds of making propaganda for an illegal organisation by singing Kurdish songs at a wedding in Aydın; he was released the next day by the court on judicial control conditions. A local court session on 30/06 sentenced Diyarbakır journalist Abdurrahman Gök to 1 year, 6 month and 22 days in prison on charges of propaganda of a terrorist organization. His attributed crime was based on his photograph of the moment when a police officer shot dead unarmed university student Kemal Kurkut during Diyarbakır Newroz in 2017.
3. **The sixth Judicial Reform Package was adopted on 23 June**: The new law amends the Law on Judges and Prosecutors and Certain Other Laws and introduces inter alia the posts of assistant judge and assistant prosecutor and changes the regulations on Council of State (CoS) and Court of Cassation (CoC).   Overall, the judicial package does not address key shortcomings in the judicial system.
4. **Court of Cassation (CoC) judgment annuls acquittal of sociologist Pınar Selek in the trial over the Egyptian Bazaar explosion in 1998.** Having been tried and acquitted four times on the Egyptian Bazaar Explosion in 1998, the prosecutor appealed the decision (asking for the acquittal to be reserved) and the file was sent to CoC General Board. There are technical reports that the explosion was not due to a fabricated bomb.
5. **Prisons:** Mücella Yapici who was sentenced to 18 years in the Gezi case was recently taken to the hospital for a medical check. The fact that she was taken to a dental and eye examinations with handcuffs on was heavily criticized.
6. **HRDs:** In a second court case, the Ankara 60th Criminal Court of First Instance acquitted Human Rights Association (HRA) Co-Chair Öztürk Türkdoğan on 27/06. The case was based on the allegation that he had insulted Interior Minister Soylu via statements of the Human Rights Association. On the other hand Mr Türkdoğan, lawyer Eren Keskin and 14 other HRDs were detained - for 4 hours – at the 900th weekly gathering of the Saturday Mothers when they wanted to meet at the banned traditional venue on 25/06.
7. **LGBTI+ - As part of LGBTI+ Pride March month events**: Throughout Turkey 10 Pride Months events were banned. Authorities detained over 530 LGBTI+ and LGBTI+ rights defenders over the month, starting with 70 people at the ninth Bosporus Pride Parade on May 20, and 373 people on June 26, the highest numbers of detentions in protests in Istanbul in recent years. Despite the bans, the LGBTIQ activists carried out impromptu gatherings.
8. **Pressures on HDP continue:** 35 persons affiliated to HDP including deputy mayor of Seyhan Municipality in Adana, HDP Adana Provincial co-chairs and the Democratic Regions Party Çukurova co-spokespersons were detained in operations covering 4 cities through an Adana based investigation on 27/06.

**Foreign policy**

1. **RU war against UA:** In a statement, TR MFA expressed grief over the loss of lives in a missile attack on a shopping mall in the city of Kremenchuck, underlining the brutality of the war and demonstrating the urgent need for lasting peace. TR MFA however did not mention the aggressor by name. On sanctions, Presidential spokesperson Kalin mentioned that the nature of the TR-RU economic ties is such, that imposing sanction will harm TR’s economy more than RU’s. Kalin claims that the West has accepted this situation. Turkish drone producer Baykar said that it would donate three UAVs to Ukraine.
2. **Syria:** President Erdogan once again reiterated that as soon as the preparations to complete the deficiencies of the security corridor on the TR-Syrian border are finalised, a new military operation would start.
3. **Iran:** President Erdogan received Iranian FM Abdullahiyan, who also met separately with Cavusoglu. FM Cavusoglu emphasized TR opposition against unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran and expressed its hope that all parties would take the necessary steps to make the nuclear deal work again. Cavusoglu also mentioned the goal to increase the bilateral trade volume to $30 billion. Iranian FM Abdullahiyan expressed understanding for TR’s security concerns, which should be resolved as soon as possible and permanently.
4. **US:** In the margins of the Madrid NATO Summit Presidents Erdogan and Biden held meeting, discussing Sweden-Finland’s NATO bids, the war in UA and the importance of removing obstacles to the export of UA grain, as well as the situation in SY and in Aegean. President Erdogan mentioned that the issue of CAATSA sanctions did not come up in talks with US President Biden, but there are positive developments in talks between foreign ministers. The US Deputy Treasury Secretary Adeyemo visited Turkey last week, where he met with officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Treasury and Finance to discuss regional economic issues, the fight against terrorist financing and the Ukraine crisis.
5. **KSA:** Presidential spokesperson Kalin commented on the Khassogi case and the normalisation of relations with KSA. He mentioned that in international relations could not be eternal and that once should move on.
6. **Turkey-Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan:** A trilateral meeting took place in Baku on strengthening regional connectivity and on the development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route. The three countries signed the Baku declaration on cooperation in transport and communications which includes support of newly proposed transport corridors, such as the Zangezur corridor. FM Cavusoglu in a joint press conference with his AZ and KAZ counterparts said that TR supports the immediate opening of the Zangezur corridor.
7. **Armenia:** The TR and ARM Special Envoys for the normalisation process held their 4th meeting on 1st July in Vienna.

**VISA: Steven DE WILDE**

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