



## Turkey Monitoring

**Brussels, 20.01.2021 as at 10h00**

### Turkey's international relations

H.E. Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, will pay a visit to Brussels on 20-22 January 2021 and hold talks with high-level officials of the European Council and the European Commission as well as the members of the European Parliament. Minister Cavusoglu will also meet with H.E. Ms. Sophie Wilmes, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions of Belgium and H.E. Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-General to discuss bilateral and multilateral relations. During the talks in Brussels, all aspects of Turkey-EU relations, Turkey's accession process, current regional and international issues are expected to be discussed. Turkey's expectations for progress in Turkey-EU relations through a positive agenda will be conveyed. (Republic of Turkey-Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release, 19/01/2021) [more](#)

### Sanctions

Le forage illégal de la Turquie dans la zone économique exclusive chypriote (ZEE) entraînera probablement de nouvelles sanctions. La Grèce, Chypre et la France ont soumis une liste conformément aux conclusions du Conseil européen de décembre [...] Les propositions devraient être débattues lors de la prochaine réunion de la commission de la Direction générale des relations extérieures jeudi prochain. (Skai.gr, Greece/Cosmo Sonic, France, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkey can never accept dictation from anyone about its defense industry, Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday, citing US sanctions on the purchase of S-400 systems from Russia [...] "This is entirely our decision," Erdogan said after Friday prayers in Istanbul. [Original article in Greek/Google-translated into English](#) (Oikonomia.gr, Greece, 17/01/2021)

### USA

[...] the US president-elect is yet to respond to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's offer of a phone call, an unusual snub for a powerful Nato ally [...] Biden's decision not to pick up the phone is hardly surprising considering his remarks last year to the New York Times, in which he said that Washington should take a different approach towards Erdogan and support the Turkish opposition. (Middle East Eye, UK, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

Unable to get a meeting with Biden himself, Erdoğan turns to his defense minister [...] Akar renewed Erdoğan's request for an appointment with Biden [...] Akar said Turkey wants to acquire Patriot missiles from the US and restart talks towards that end. (Turkish Minute, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

## NATO

A technical meeting between Turkish and Greek military delegations hosted at NATO headquarters in Brussels has concluded, said a Turkish National Defense Ministry statement on Monday. The ministry announced earlier that the meeting – resuming meetings from last fall – would discuss an established de-confliction mechanism between the two countries, amid disputes over maritime boundaries and related issues. (Anadolu Agency, Turkey, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

## EU

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Tuesday his country is ready to put its frayed relationship with the European Union “back on track” and called on the 27-nation bloc to display the same determination [...] Erdogan told the EU ambassadors that he believes that Turkey's membership in the EU would help overcome “uncertainties” created by Britain's departure. “Uncertainties that are increasing with Brexit can only be dissipated with Turkey receiving its rightful place in the European family,” Erdogan said. (The Associated Press, USA, 12/01/2021) [more](#)

[...] the European Commission Information Service and representative Peter Stano confirmed there will be a meeting next week on 21 January 2021 between High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevl Cavusoglu in Brussels. (Independent Balkan News Agency, Greece, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

**GREECE:** Greece submitted a request to the European Commission, and to Frontex for the immediate return to Turkey of 1,450 third country citizens who are not entitled to international protection [...] The request for their return is based on the first paragraph of the EU-Turkey Joint Statement, which clearly states that any irregular migrants entering Greece, after the 20th of March 2016, who are not entitled to international protection will be returned to Turkey. (Hellenic Republic-Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

A video released on Thursday by a news website on the eastern Aegean island of Kalymnos appears to show a Turkish coast guard patrol vessel harassing a Greek fishing boat near Imia [...] The incident comes a week after another Turkish coast guard patrol boat hit a Greek one in the same area. (eKathimerini, Greece, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

Thirteen members of the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO) have approached Greek authorities to request asylum after fleeing to Rhodes island, according to local media. [...] Authorities noted that the FETO members, who had come from Turkey's western Izmir province on a speedboat, introduced themselves as "Gülenists" and requested asylum. (Anadolu Agency, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

As Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday left open the possibility of meeting with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, his Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu insisted that the agenda of the upcoming exploratory contacts between Athens and Ankara must include “all disagreements” and not just maritime areas of responsibility as Greece wants. (eKathimerini, Greece, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

Foreign Affairs Minister Nikos Dendias made it clear that the only issue Greece would discuss with Turkey in the upcoming exploratory talks on January 25 concerned the continental shelf and the Exclusive Economic Zone in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean [...] in case the two countries do not reach an agreement on the technical details, they will go to The Hague to resolve them [...] as the Foreign Minister noted that there was a big problem with Turkey since it did not accept the legal framework of reference, international law, and the law of the sea. (Proto Thema, Greece, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

[...] Turkey has just completed a large amphibious exercise of amphibious forces in a scenario of occupying a Greek island. [Original article in Greek/Google-translated into English](#) (Hellas Now, Greece, 17/01/2021)

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu [...] continued to accuse Greece of raising obstacles to exploratory talks planned for later this month [...] "If Greece insists on not cooperating, then the responsibility of any tension between the two countries will be on Athens' shoulders," he said. (eKathimerini, Greece, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

**CYPRUS:** Turkey on Wednesday remembered the founding father of the territories of Cyprus occupied by Turkey/not under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus on the ninth anniversary of his death. "We will not forget Rauf Denktaş, the founder, first president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and with whom we supported the just struggle of the Turkish Cypriots for years. On the ninth anniversary of his death, I remember Rauf Bey with mercy," President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on the Telegram social network. (Daily Sabah, Turkey, 13/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that believing that a bicomunal, bizonal federal model could bring a sustainable solution to the Cyprus Problem was an illusion. (Brt Haber, Cyprus, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkey sends 20,000 doses of vaccine to the territories of Cyprus occupied by Turkey/not under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus, the country's top health official said Wednesday. (Anadolu Agency, Turkey, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

EU sends 1,080 doses of COVID-19 vaccine to the territories of Cyprus occupied by Turkey/not under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus. 2nd batch of vaccine developed by Pfizer-BioNTech will be sent within a month, says official. (Anadolu Agency, 18/01/21) [more](#)

**CYPRUS-UAE:** The United Arab Emirates and Cyprus signed a defense cooperation agreement yesterday in the latest partnership between the Gulf country and a Mediterranean country [...] The agreement includes proposals for future joint training exercises and operational cooperation [...] Tuesday's deal is the latest sign the UAE is capitalizing on its common cause with Mediterranean nations opposed to Turkey's policies in the region. (Al-Monitor, USA, 13/01/2021) [more](#)

**ITALY:** Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Giuseppe Conte discussed steps to improve cooperation between the two countries and regional developments, Turkey's Communications Directorate said in a statement. (Daily Sabah, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

**FRANCE:** France's Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier was deployed to the eastern Mediterranean, Paris confirmed [...] as part of operations led by the global coalition against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, Paris said [...] The return of the French aircraft carrier to the Eastern Mediterranean

coincides with ongoing tensions with Turkey, due to differences over conflicts in Syria and Libya. Tensions have also simmered over gas exploration work carried out by Turkey in waters contested by Greece and Cyprus. (The New Arab, UK, 13/01/2021) [more](#)

French President Emmanuel Macron and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan have exchanged letters in which they agreed to resume talks aimed at mending ties [...] "We now need tangible gestures" from Ankara, the French presidency said. (The New Arab, UK, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

**GERMANY:** Turkey: Cavusoglu and Maas discuss Euro-Turkish relations, exploratory talks, Eastern Mediterranean and Ozil. Amid a renewed commitment by Turkey and Germany to improve bilateral ties, during joint statements with his German counterpart Heiko Maas who visited Ankara, the Turkish Foreign Minister said on Monday that Turkish-EU relations are now on a more positive course. (Independent Balkan News Agency, Greece, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

## EUROPE-CENTRAL ASIA

**ALBANIA:** The Albanian Prime Minister noted that he does not comment on whether he is mediating between Greece and Turkey [...] "I have no official mandate to do such a thing to deserve such a status, a negotiator or a solver, etc. I just have the privilege of being between two friends and in this context to say my word in discussions with them, for a very long and hot issue they have with each other". (Independent Balkan News Agency, Greece, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

**UK:** Rights groups have called on UK companies to stop providing parts for Turkish drone aircraft, following an announcement earlier this week by UK aviation company Andair that it would no longer export to Ankara after its technology was discovered to have been used in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. (Middle East Eye, UK, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

**UKRAINE:** Director General of the State Concern Ukroboronprom Yuri Husev met with Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Ukraine Yağmur Ahmet Güldere to discuss a number of important defense projects. (MENA Financial Network, Jordan, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

After three days of negotiations, the Ukrainian and Turkish delegations fully agreed on the text of the draft social security agreement between Ukraine and the Republic of Turkey. (MENA Financial Network, Jordan, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

## MIDDLE EAST

**IRAN:** Iran and Turkey are to enhance border security in a coordinated effort according to the commander of Iran's border guards, Brigadier General Ahmed Ali Kuderzi. (Middle East Monitor, UK, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

## AMERICAS

**VENEZUELA:** The Venezuelan Oil Minister, Tareck El Aissami, held a meeting on Sunday with Turkey's Deputy Energy Minister, Alparslan Bayraktar, to review the energy agreements established between the two nations and strengthen them. (Atalayar, Spain, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

## *Regional cooperation*

**Turkey, Azerbaijan, Pakistan** Issue Joint Declaration [...] the ministers agreed to enhance joint efforts on combating Islamophobia, discrimination and persecution of Muslim minorities, in particular at the regional and international fora, expressing serious concerns over the grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity committed against Muslim communities in various parts of the world. (Haberler.com, Turkey, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

**Egypt and the United Arab Emirates** are seeking to establish closer relations with Senegal to counter Turkey's expansion in West Africa, Al-Monitor reported. (Al Monitor, USA/Ahval, Cyprus, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

## Energy exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean

Ten days before the start of exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey, and hours after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan indirectly invited Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis for a meeting, Ankara issued a series of NAVTEX. Turkey formally announced via NAVTEX [...] that it has committed areas of the Aegean for military exercises with live fire until the end of the year. (Greek City Times, Greece, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

## Turkey's involvement in:

### Libya

[...] Al-Mesmari confirmed that the Turkish forces would not leave Libya through negotiations or mediation, despite the confirmation of the ceasefire agreement. (Middle East Monitor, UK, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkey secretly sent nearly 200 Syrian mercenaries to Libya this week, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said [...] "To compensate for the return of mercenaries from Libya, nearly 200 fighters belonging to factions loyal to Turkey were secretly transferred from Syrian to Libyan territories". (The National News, UAE, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkey welcomes appointment of Slovakian diplomat Jan Kubis as UN envoy to Libya [...] "Turkey will support special envoy Jan Kubis' efforts to reach a political solution in Libya," the ministry said in a written statement. (Daily Sabah, Turkey, 19/01/2021) [more](#)

### Syria/Iraq

Syrian Observatory activists have reported seeing a new Turkish military column of nearly 20 vehicles carrying military and logistical supplies crossing into the Syrian territory, via Kafr Lusin border crossing on the border with Iskenderun region in northern Idlib. (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Syria, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

[...] a new batch of the Turkish-backed Syrian mercenaries have returned from Libya to Syria in the past few days. This batch is the first one to return from Libya to Syria in two months, exactly since mid-November 2020. It is worth noting that the return of this batch, which comprised 40 fighters, was not normal, especially with the ongoing suspension of return of mercenaries from Libya to Syria. According to SOHR sources, these fighters had paid bribes of an estimated 500 USD each to doctors in Libya in return for writing reports stating that their health conditions were poor and that they

had to return to Syria. The mercenaries later provided these reports to their commanders in order to permit their return to Syria, before they were transported to Turkey then to Syria. (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Syria, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkish security forces detained a wanted Daesh terrorist sought with a Red Notice as he attempted to illegally cross the border from Syria, reports said Friday. (Daily Sabah, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkey's former Foreign Minister, Yasar Yakis, confirmed that the Head of the Turkish regime, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is responsible for the problems that Turkey is suffering from due to his policies supporting for terrorists, especially in Syria. (SANA Syrian Arab News Agency, Syria, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

German police have made a further arrest as part of an investigation into a European network that sought to finance terrorism in Syria through Turkey, Deutsche Welle reported on Friday. The suspect [...] is accused of soliciting financial donations in Europe for Syrian militant group Tahrir al-Sham [...] Russia has previously accused Turkey of supporting the foundation of Tahrir al-Sham as part of efforts to bolster its influence in Syria. (Deutsche Welle, Germany/Ahval, Cyprus, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

The Russian side of the Russian-Turkish commission monitoring the implementation of the Syrian truce has registered 21 ceasefire violations in Syria within the past 24 hours, while Turkey registered none, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Saturday. (Urdu Point, Pakistan, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

A new batch of 95 Turkey-backed mercenaries in Libya were sent back to Syria on Sunday, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR). In a statement, the SOHR said that this is the second batch of Syrian fighters to be repatriated from Libya. In a statement, the SOHR said that this is the second batch of Syrian fighters to be repatriated from Libya in days, after Turkey had suspended their return since mid-November 2020. On the other hand, reports revealed that a group of about 200 Turkish-backed fighters were secretly sent to Libya in the last few days. (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Syria/SeeNews, Egypt, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

Iraq's Water Resources Minister Mehdi Rashid Al-Hamdani yesterday warned that his country would face a water crisis if it does not reach a deal with Turkey. (Middle East Monitor, UK, 11/01/2021) [more](#)

Reiterating Turkey's legitimate security concerns during an official visit to Baghdad, Defense Minister Akar called on Iraqi authorities for the joint cooperation and coordination against the PKK terror group's presence in northern Iraq. (Daily Sabah, Turkey, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

### **Armenia-Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh conflict**

Iran to Increase Non-Oil Exports to Caucasus. Iran's non-oil exports to the Caucasus region will boom as Armenia is more interested in importing products from Iran rather than Turkey, a commercial official said. (Fars News Agency, Iran, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev called his Turkish counterpart President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss the operation of the joint monitoring centre with Russia, Aliyev's office reported. (Ahval, Cyprus, 17/01/2021) [more](#)

Servicemen of Azerbaijan's Combined Arms Army will take part in the Winter Exercises-2021 to be held in Turkey's Kars city, the Defence Ministry reported on January 17. (MENA Financial Network, Jordan, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

## Turkey's internal situation

### Political issues

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has documented a litany of abuses across Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Turkey in its annual world report published Wednesday [...] Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's party the Justice and Development Party (AKP), with its parliamentary majority alliance, has rushed through legislation that contravenes the country's international human rights obligations, argues HRW. (Rudaw, Iraq, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

Political prisoners in Turkey's prisons launched the hunger strike to stop the isolation of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan [...] as well as to protest the rights violations in prisons more generally. The strike is now on its 51st day, and has already spread across 107 prisons in Turkey. (MedyaNews, Italy, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

3,362 people killed, 3,534 mistreated or tortured in Turkey in 2020, opposition MP says. (Turkish Minute, Turkey, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

The judge representing Turkey on the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) dissents from majority opinions in cases whose applicants are political critics of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, taking an explicit stance in line with local Turkish courts that are already under the strict control of the government, a Nordic Monitor review of the top court's rulings shows. (Nordic Monitor, Sweden, 16/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is hunting for potential electoral allies to bolster the People's Alliance that he formed with the ultra-nationalist party MHP. The next elections are not scheduled until June 2023, but the growing popularity of the opposition has made him aware of his vulnerability in a possible snap election. (Arab News, Saudi Arabia, 18/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkey on Tuesday slapped advertising bans on Twitter, Periscope and Pinterest over their non-compliance with a controversial new law that requires social media platforms to appoint legal representatives in the country. (Associated Press, USA, 19/01/2021) [more](#)

### Security issues

Turkish security forces on Thursday seized weapons and ammunition during operations against the PKK terror group in the eastern part of the country. (Haberler.com, Turkey, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

A sit-in protest by families seeking the return of their children kidnapped by the YPG/PKK terror group entered its 500th day on Thursday in Turkey. (Haberler.com, Turkey, 14/01/2021) [more](#)

48 Suspects With FETO Links Arrested. Arrest warrants issued for many others as part of investigations against terror group. (Haberler.com, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)



[...] Turkey has been completely purged of far-left terror groups' structures outside cities, Turkey's interior minister said Friday. (Haberler.com, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

The Turkish Coast Guard Command and police captured 14 suspects linked to the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ) on Friday as they attempted to flee into Greece. (Daily Sabah, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

Erdogan promoted Turkish general who leaked secret NATO documents in honey-trap scheme. (Nordic Monitor, Sweden, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkish security forces detained 35 Daesh-linked suspects in counterterrorism operations in 15 provinces, reports said Tuesday. (Daily Sabah, Turkey, 19/01/2021) [more](#)

## **Economy**

The Turkish central government's budget balance posted a nearly 173 billion Turkish lira (\$24.7 billion) deficit in 2020 [...] Despite a year-on-year rise in the budget deficit in 2020, the government is aiming for a permanent improvement in the figure, said Recep Tayyip Erdogan. (US Muslims, USA, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

[...] In a world of near zero inflation and economic fallout from the coronavirus, Turkey stands out with annual consumer prices climbing to 15%, second only to Argentina among emerging markets and by far the highest in the OECD. (Reuters, UK, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

Turkey's trade volume with UK set to rise to \$25 billion. Development in Turkey's technology sector will ensure Turkey-UK trade volume will expand, British business leader says. (Yeni Safak, Turkey, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

## **Covid-19 situation**

Turkey has launched a nationwide vaccination program against COVID-19 after the government approved emergency use of China's Sinovac [...] Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said it was an "absolute need to get the injection" to return to "old lives," but the vaccination was not mandatory. Koca said the shots would be distributed fairly, in four stages, following priorities set by the Science Board. (Arab News, Saudi Arabia, 15/01/2021) [more](#)

## **Analysis/Opinion**

[World Unfiltered: Turkey-Russia Relations-Strategic Partnership or Regional Rivalry?](#) (Webinar) (EA Worldview, UK, 11/01/2021)

[Is Turkey's Procurement Of Russian S-400 Missiles Really Comparable To Greece's Past Procurement Of S-300s?](#) (Forbes, USA, 12/01/2021)

[Could Turkey-Greece talks yield positive results?](#) (AI Monitor, USA, 15/01/2021)

[Why Israel and Turkey could reset fraught relations](#) (The New Arab, UK, 15/01/2021)



[Turkey speaks with a forked tongue towards Israel and the West](#) (Jerusalem Post, Israel, 16/01/2021)

[Turkey Pressures Countries That Rely on It for Assistance to Illegally Deport Turkish Citizens](#) (Exit News, Albania, 16/01/2021)

[Will Turkey succeed with its new charm offensive?](#) (Arab News, Saudi Arabia, 16/01/2021)

[How the Biden presidency might impact Turkey's Kurdish problem](#) (Arab News, Saudi Arabia, 18/01/2021)

[Erdogan's great game: Turkey pushes into Africa with aid, trade and soaps](#) (Financial Times, UK/US Vision, USA, 18/01/2021)