

## Turkey, EU to talk over migrants, accession process

Hurriyet Daily News, 19.11.2015



The EU will host Turkey to discuss the country's ongoing candidacy process in a summit, where a solution to the migrant influx from Turkey to the EU will also be sought. The leaders of the EU had agreed in early November to hold summit with Turkey by the end of the month and European Council President Tusk, the chairman of the summit, had said the summit would be held on Nov. 29 in Brussels.

Turkish PM Davutoğlu will attend the summit. The EU announced that it would give Turkey 3 billion euros to ensure the needs of refugees are met in the country, which currently hosts the highest number of refugees with around 2.2 million.

"In dealing with the refugee crisis, it is absolutely clear that the European Union needs to step up its cooperation with Turkey and Turkey with the European Union," European Commission First-Vice President Frans Timmermans said in a statement. Grants and financial support from the Refugee Facility for Turkey will be provided as of Jan. 1, 2016, it added.

The EU expects a total of 3 million migrants by the end of 2017, with an estimated 1 million refugees seeking a safer life in the EU this year, a further 1.5 million migrants in 2016 and another half a million in 2017. Meanwhile, a European Union draft document, which is expected to be released after the Nov. 29 meeting, has set October 2016 as the target date for visa exemption for Turkish citizens, daily Hürriyet reported after seeing the document.

Turkey is scheduled to fully implement the readmission agreement with all EU member countries as of June 2016, which requires the country to recognize Greek Cyprus. Both Turkish diplomacy sources and EU authorities have said they aim for a solution on the divided Cyprus by spring next year.

Turkish EU Minister Volkan Bozkır told Hürriyet that Turkey was capable of opening all EU accession chapters, with the exception of competition and public procurement, as long as the union was prepared. Bozkır added the remaining chapters could be opened if the Cyprus problem was solved.

Bozkır also said progress is expected on Turkey's stalled bid to join the EU, with Chapter 17 of the accession process dealing with the economy and monetary policy due to be opened on Dec. 14-15. Hürriyet Daily News reported that the independence of Turkey's Central Bank, an important prerequisite in the harmonization process with European norms, will be the closing benchmark in EU accession talks. European Commissioner Johannes Hahn had told Reuters in an interview that there was "new momentum in the EU-Turkey relationship."

On the same day when Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras paid a visit to Turkey and held a meeting with his Turkish counterpart over the growing number of migrants crossing to Greece from Turkey for better life standards, both of the leaders agreed on more bilateral mechanisms between relevant ministries and the formation a working group to tackle the migrant crisis.

“This is not merely a problem of Turkey and Greece. Europe should take responsibility... We need to maintain settlement assurance to migrants,” Tsipras said in Ankara. The Turkish Prime Ministry said the number of migrants saved after making failed attempts to cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Europe has increased by over 500 percent in 2015 compared to 2014. The number of migrants rose from 14,961 in 2014 to 79,489 in 2015, according to Prime Ministry figures.

## US Embassy urges Turkish courts to uphold ‘media freedom’ upon arrest of Dündar, Gül

Hurriyet Daily News, 27.11.2015



The United States Embassy in Turkey has labeled the detention of two prominent Turkish journalists as another example of pressure on the media, calling on the Turkish courts to uphold the principle of media freedom in line with the country’s constitution.

“We are very concerned by the arrests of @candundaradasi & @erdemmgul and what appears to be yet another media outlet under pressure,” the U.S. embassy said in a message posted to its official Twitter account, tagging the twitter accounts of daily Cumhuriyet Editor-in-Chief Can Dündar and Ankara Bureau Chief Erdem Gül, respectively.

“We hope the Turkish courts & authorities will uphold the fundamental principle of media freedom enshrined in the Turkish constitution,” the Embassy added. Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador to Turkey John Bass blacked out his official Instagram account.

Dündar and Gül were arrested on charges of “espionage” and “being a member of an armed terrorist organization” based on reports in Cumhuriyet regarding Syrian-bound National Intelligence Agency (MİT) trucks in 2014.

The “armed terrorist organization” mentioned by the prosecutors referred to the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), a term used by prosecutors to define the followers of Fethullah Gülen, a U.S.-based Islamic scholar. Footage released by Cumhuriyet on May 29 reportedly showed gendarmerie and police officers opening crates on the back of trucks which contained what the daily described as weapons and ammunition sent to Syria by the MİT in January 2014.

# EU sets October 2016 as date for visa exemption for Turkish citizens

Hurriyet Daily News, 26.11.2015



A European Union draft document, which is expected to be released after meeting with Turkey, has set October 2016 as the target date for visa exemption for Turkish citizens.

The EU's Committee of Permanent Representatives was set to study the document. Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was expected to join the meeting with the European Union, where relations and a joint program for migrants to Turkey will be handled. The EU will prepare a report in March 2016 of a readmission agreement, which basically covers third-country citizens who traveled to Europe from Turkey, and visa liberalization.

Turkey is scheduled to fully implement the readmission agreement with all EU member countries as of June 2016, which requires the country to recognize Greek Cyprus. Both Turkish diplomacy sources and EU authorities have said they aim for a solution on the divided Cyprus by spring next year.

The document will also welcome European Commission preparation for Turkey's EU membership talks on chapters covering "energy," "the judiciary and basic rights," "justice, freedom and security," "education and culture" and "foreign, security and defense policies."

The draft also highlights that a previously decided 3 billion euros of support to Turkey for refugees is a starter amount. Some 500 million euros of the support will be met by the EU budget, while the financing of the remainder will be decided by Dec. 21. Turkey currently hosts around 2 million refugees who have fled the civil war in neighboring Syria.

# The end of a Russian-Turkish “Golden age”

Carnegie, 25.11.2015



The downing of a Russian plane by Turkey is jeopardizing the strong business and political relationship built by Ankara and Moscow. The two countries’ clash over Syria suggests that relations will get worse before they get better.

The shooting down by Turkey of a Russian warplane closes the curtain on what has been a brief golden age in Russian-Turkish relations. Traditional rivals for centuries, had recently identified a host of mutual interests, which enabled them to smooth over contradictions and improve political and economic relations. Turkish leader Erdoğan and Russian President Putin forged a good personal relationship.

But the downing of the Su-24 jet on the Syrian-Turkish border prompted sharp language by the two strongmen, with Putin calling Turkey “an accomplice of terrorists.” The episode coincided with a shift in Turkish politics, caused by the recent elections on November 1. Erdoğan’s Islamist party, AKP, which had been forced into a coalition government in June, scored a victory that enabled it to govern again as a single party.

However, the AKP fell just short of winning the majority in the Turkish parliament that it needs to call a referendum to change the constitution and achieve Erdoğan’s dream of establishing a new presidential republic. Erdoğan evidently believes that if he can project the image of a strong political leader, he will not only improve his rating with the public, but also be able to win the votes of wavering parliamentarians from the nationalist party, the MHP.

This is one reason the government has stepped up its rhetoric about “defending the Turkic world,” not only against the Kurdish militants of the PKK but also in its strong criticism of the Russian military operation in Syria. The Turkish authorities have said that they are defending their Turkmen “compatriots” on the other side of the Syrian border, who are allegedly being hit by Russian airstrikes.

The Kurdish question is even more key. For Ankara, the fight against the militant Kurdish PKK is as important, if not more so, than the battle against the self-proclaimed Islamic State. The Turkish government has long resented Washington’s de facto alliance with the Syrian Kurdish movement, known as the PYD.

Even though the United States still formally regards the PKK as a terrorist organization, Ankara knows that Washington views any attack by Turkey on the Syrian Kurds of the PYD—which is closely associated with the PKK—as a “red line” it should not cross. Russia’s military intervention in Syria was a new source of frustration for Turkey, not only because it helped to prop up Turkey’s adversary, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, but also because it aided the Kurds.



Then, the aftermath of the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris increased the possibility of cooperation between Russia and the West in the fight against the Islamic State and further deepened Turkey's worries that its interests were being ignored.

In this light, Turkey's appeal for NATO solidarity after the November 24 incident can be seen as a chess move intended to restore Turkey's influence in Syria. Turkey used its membership in NATO to characterize Russia's alleged infringement of its airspace as a challenge to the alliance as a whole.

The way Turkey played the NATO card was a blow to the personal relationship Erdoğan and Putin had established as the foundation of their countries' strategic partnership. Putin bitterly complained that "instead of immediately establishing contacts with us, as far as we know, Turkey turned to its NATO partners to discuss this incident. As if we had hit their plane and not the other way around."

Over many years, a strong economic partnership worth billions of dollars has protected Russian-Turkish relations from political shocks. The two countries recently agreed to build the Turkish Stream gas pipeline to replace the defunct South Stream project. Russia is contracted to build a nuclear power plant at Akkuyu in southern Turkey. Russians provide a huge number of tourists every year to Turkish resorts.

This economic relationship had thus far enabled the two countries to overcome their differences on Syria and manage difficult episodes, such as when Turkey forced a Russian commercial plane bound for Syria to land in Ankara in 2012, claiming it was carrying weapons, or when Erdoğan spoke out forcefully for the rights of Tatars in Crimea.

The shooting down of the Su-24 is obviously much more serious. The political relationship is bound to suffer. Russia has declared that it is suspending military cooperation with Turkey. There are rumors that commercial projects may be cancelled. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called off a visit to Turkey. Saying that the threat of terrorism was "not lower than in Egypt," Lavrov warned Russian tourists against visiting Turkey as well and several Russian tour operators have cancelled flights there (even though this is the dead season).

These steps are for the short term and can be reversed through diplomatic efforts. But there is every sign that the underlying cause of the new downturn in relations—Russia and Turkey's escalating clash over Syria—is intensifying rather than diminishing.

The Russian General Staff has announced that it is increasing Russia's military presence in the region by deploying a Russian missile cruiser to the Syrian coast and sending fighter jets to accompany its bombers. That is also likely to increase the possibility of new incidents in the air over Syria.

In other words, all of the economic and political links that have been built over the past few years between Moscow and Ankara now suddenly mean much less in the context of their international clash over Syria.

# Foreign Ministry summons Russian envoy over attacks on Turkish missions in Moscow

Hurriyet Daily News, 27.11.2015



Turkey's Foreign Ministry has summoned the Russian ambassador in Ankara to complain about protests against Turkish missions and businesses in Russia following Turkey's downing of a Russian jet.

A Foreign Ministry statement said Turkish offices had come under "unacceptable" physical attacks disguised as protests. The statement said Turkey had warned Russian authorities to increase protection for the embassy and other Turkish interests. "Our unease in this situation, which we consider unacceptable, was brought to the attention of the Russian Ambassador in Ankara," read the statement.

Protesters in Moscow hurled eggs and stones at the Turkish Embassy, breaking windows in the compound. Around 500 protestors from the Russia's nationalist Political party LDPR (formerly the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia) carrying Russian, Syrian and party flags first shouted slogans against Turkey in front of the Turkish embassy in the afternoon before pelting the building with stones.

Windows on the first two floors of the four-story building were completely broken, according to diplomats at the embassy. Diplomats said no one was injured in the attack and added that Russian police failed to stop the attack. Protesters also pelted the embassy's external wall with tomatoes and eggs.

The ultra-nationalist protestors also chanted, "We will come again tomorrow," after the attack. Police cleared the area and made some arrests shortly after the protest began. Two Turkish F-16s shot down a plane around 9:20 a.m. near the southern province of Hatay's Yayladağı district after the plane violated the border between Turkey and Syria and remained in Turkish airspace for five minutes despite being warned 10 times, according to a statement released by the Turkish General Staff immediately after the event.

The statement said the jet, of "unknown nationality," was downed within the rules of engagement after it failed to heed the warnings. The Foreign Ministry summoned the Russian ambassador in Ankara to inform him about the incide.

# Turkey ready to open accession chapters, says EU minister

Hurriyet Daily News, 27.11.2015



Turkey is capable of opening all European Union accession chapters, with the exception of competition and public procurement, as long as the union is prepared, Turkish EU Minister Volkan Bozkır has told, adding the remaining chapters could be opened if the Cyprus problem was solved.

Bozkır also said Turkey and the EU should “plan healthier relations,” as a number of paradigms had shifted, adding he found the union’s increasing interest in Turkey to be sincere. Recalling the “economic quake” in Europe, he defined the first paradigm shift as “the EU needing strong economies such as Turkey and its policies.”

EU member states could make their investments in Turkey and gain added value, the minister said, noting his country was a huge market. Bozkır also cited the refugee and terror problems the EU has been facing recently as a second issue, adding the refugee crisis in particular could reach more problematic levels.

Turkey has said the differentiation between terror groups could lead to terror spreading across Europe and reaching the entire world, Bozkır noted. Due to these developments, relations between the EU and Turkey have changed, therefore “a new deal is needed which will make Turkey and the EU act on the same platform, in the same direction, producing the same solutions,” he said.

Meanwhile, progress is expected on Turkey’s stalled bid to join the EU, with Chapter 17 of the accession process dealing with the economy and monetary policy due to be opened on Dec. 14-15, Bozkır told reporters. Turkey would not be content with the opening of only one chapter, Bozkır said, adding they will launch a joint effort to open a further five to six chapters in 2016.

EU leaders and Ankara agreed to hold a special summit on Nov. 29 in order to finalize an accord to curb refugees flowing from the Middle East to Europe. Setting a date for an intergovernmental conference, at which Chapter 17 will be opened, was one of Turkey demands for holding the conference.

# Days before summit, Turkey, EU face big hurdles to migration deal

Reuters, 25.11.2015



Prospects for a grand bargain between the European Union and Turkey to stem a flow of migrants into the continent are uncertain days before a summit on Nov. 29 meant to seal a deal and put fraying relations back on a firm footing, EU and Turkish officials said.

How much money Turkey will receive for settling more Syrian migrants, the pace at which Turkey's long-stalled EU membership bid can be accelerated and whether Brussels can deliver on its promise of easier travel for Turks are all unresolved. "We are not there yet," said a senior European Union official.

Turkish officials also said they had not finalized an agreement, raising questions about whether Ankara was holding out for a better deal at the summit. Officials want it to be essentially a signing ceremony, attended by the EU's 28 leaders.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will not be attending, despite his desire for more high-level contact with EU leaders. He will leave the three-hour meeting in Brussels to Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.

Complicating the picture has been Turkey's confrontation with Moscow over its shooting-down of a Russian warplane in its air space, just as Europe is seeking Russian help in defeating the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants after the Paris attacks.

At stake is whether the European Commission, the EU executive, can deliver on its gamble to deepen ties with Turkey to ease the migrant crisis, despite deep concerns about what Brussels sees as Erdoğan's authoritarianism and a surge in violence in the mainly Kurdish populated southeast of Turkey.

European Commissioner Johannes Hahn, who handles EU enlargement policy, told Reuters last week the summit would mark a "fresh start" with Turkey a decade after Ankara started its membership talks to join the EU.

The EU wants to see Turkey help curb the influx into Europe of migrants including refugees from Syria's civil war in return for 3 billion euros (\$3.18 billion) in EU aid over two years. While 500 million euros comes from the EU's budget, the remainder must be raised from EU governments. Most have not said how much they will offer, leaving it unclear if the fund can indeed reach 3 billion euros. Turkey is seeking 3 billion euros a year, according to a senior EU official involved in negotiations with Ankara.



European Council President Donald Tusk, the former Polish prime minister who now chairs EU summits, called the summit earlier this week in an apparent move to force Turkey's hand. Pressure is rising on the EU to solve its worst migration crisis since World War Two as borders have begun to close on the main Balkan refugee route towards the heart of Europe, drawing condemnation from the United Nations.

Roughly a million refugees and migrants fleeing war and deprivation in the Middle East, Africa and Asia are expected to arrive in EU economic powerhouse Germany alone. Traditional refugee haven Sweden announced it will tighten border controls and asylum rules to stem the flood of asylum seekers.

Various EU states' tightening of frontier checks threatens Europe's prized 26-nation Schengen zone of passport-free travel. Central to the success of any EU-Turkey deal is the end of the stalemate on Cyprus, the Mediterranean island divided for four decades between the Turkish-controlled north and Greek Cypriot south, which joined the EU in 2004.

"The Turkish are now playing a constructive role in Cyprus, but we have an interest not to overload the boat," said a senior EU official. "Turkey's membership talks have to run in parallel with the Cyprus talks." One risk is that Turkey may push too hard to open new negotiations with the EU. Six new so-called "chapters" of talks, including energy, the judiciary and security, may be opened by spring, but all 28 EU states must agree to it.

Differences between the EU and Turkey may also arise on the issue of visa-free access to the EU for Turkish citizens. A deal would entail full visa liberalization from 2017 but only after Ankara implements the migration deal for at least six months. But the new security threats in Europe exposed by the deadly ISIL attacks on Paris may harden some EU states against opening up borders to a large Muslim population.

## Erdoğan: No apology to Russia, they need to apologize to us

Hurriyet Daily News, 26.11.2015



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan appeared set to increase tension with Russia in the wake of his country's downing of a Russian jet, vowing that his country would offer no apology for the incident.

"I think if there is a party that needs to apologize, it is not us," Erdoğan said in an interview with CNN. "Those who violated our airspace are the ones who need to apologize. Our pilots and our armed forces, they simply fulfilled their duties, which consisted of responding ... violations of the rules of engagement. I think this is the essence."



Earlier the same day, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Turkey still had not apologized for the downing of the Russian warplane or given assurances that “the culprits of this crime” would be punished. Speaking at the Kremlin, Putin complained that he had not received an apology from Turkey or an offer “to make up for the damages.” Russia previously insisted that its plane never violated Turkish airspace as Turkey claimed.

Putin also said he regretted the fact that relations between Turkey and Russia had been driven into a stalemate. Speaking to reporters during a visit to the Turkish Cypriot capital of Nicosia, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu also said Ankara would not apologize to Moscow.

“We don’t need to apologize on an occasion in which we are right,” Çavuşoğlu said. “But we said on the phone that we are sorry,” he said, referring to a telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov.

Hours before the release of his interview with CNN International, Erdoğan addressed a group of village chiefs when he said Turkey had no reason to target Russia. “We are exerting efforts to maintain peace and serenity in the region, not create new tensions. There is no reason to target Russia with whom we have multidimensional and very strong relations ... Our disagreement with Russia on Syria is one thing and the activation of our rules of engagement is something else,” Erdoğan said.

The Turkish president also dismissed “emotional” suggestions that projects with Russia could be canceled following the incident, which was one of the most serious publicly acknowledged clashes between a NATO member and Russia for half a century, and further complicated international efforts to battle the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria.

“We are strategic partners. ‘Joint projects may be halted, ties could be cut.’ Are such approaches fitting for politicians?” Erdoğan asked. “First the politicians and our militaries should sit down and talk about where errors were made and then focus on overcoming those errors on both sides. But instead, if we make emotional statements like this, that wouldn’t be right,” he said.

Medvedev alleged that Turkish officials were benefiting from ISIL oil sales, while Lavrov said it was no secret that “terrorists” use Turkish territory. “Shame on you. It’s clear where Turkey buys its oil and gas ... Those who claim we are buying oil from Daesh like this must prove their claims. Nobody can slander this country,” Erdoğan said, using an Arabic acronym for ISIL.

“If you are seeking the source of weaponry and financial power of Daesh, the first place to look is the regime [of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad] and the countries that act with it,” he said. Putin also argued that the current leadership of Turkey was purposefully supporting the country’s Islamization.

“The problem is not in the tragedy we faced yesterday [the Su-24 incident], the problem is much deeper,” Putin told reporters. “We see – and not only we, I assure you that the entire world sees it as such – that the current leadership of Turkey has been for a number of years pursuing a purposeful policy of support and the Islamization of the country,” Putin said. Erdoğan had a response for those remarks as well.

“Turkey’s 99 percent [of the population] is Muslim, how can you say that? How can a phrase like that be used? Can I come up and say ‘The administration is exerting efforts at the Christianization of Russia?’ There are 30 millions of Muslims living there,” Erdoğan said. “Tayyip Erdoğan is Muslim. This country’s 99 percent is Muslim. Then what should I exert efforts for? We are solely exerting efforts to fulfill what our religions requires; that’s what we do,” he said.

## Tourism players praise ties between Russians, Turks

Anadolu Agency, 27.11.2015



Turkish tourism representatives have praised the ties between Turks and Russians, adding they believed any political tensions between the two countries could be overcome.

“Even if some political [tensions] are now present between Turkey and Russia, we’ll continue to live peacefully with Russian residents in our country and show our hospitality to Russian visitors, just as we did before,” said the head of the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers’ Association, Yusuf Hacısüleyman, at the 5th International Resort Tourism Congress, which was organized by Resort and AKTOB.

The head of the Turkish Hoteliers’ Federation (TÜROFED), Osman Ayık, said Russia was one of the most important markets for the Turkish tourism sector. “The latest sad incident has unfortunately caused tension between Turkey and Russia... The ties between the two countries’ people are very strong. I believe these people will resolve the current crisis easily,” he said, adding market diversification was of great importance for the sector and Turkey needed a master plan immediately in tourism.

Hacısüleyman said the tourism sector has seen both positive and negative developments over this year and the hottest issue has been security concerns in the sector. Saying that people’s freedom of travel and safety has been under serious threat across the world, he added the second crucial point which has affected global tourism has been huge refugee flow.

He underlined the importance of a visa-free world to enhance people’s freedom of travel across the world. Sören Hartmann, the CEO of German tour operator Rewe Group, said travel demand is expected to decline due to escalating terror attacks, and this trend will likely most hit the eastern Mediterranean. “We expect fewer people to travel in 2016, as many people do not feel safe in the world,” he said.

# Russian officials order retaliatory economic measures against Turkey

Hurriyet Daily News, 26.11.2015



Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has ordered Moscow to draw up measures including freezing some joint investment projects with Turkey, in retaliation for the downing of a Russian warplane by Turkey.

“The government has been ordered to work out a system of response measures to this act of aggression in the economic and humanitarian spheres,” Medvedev told a cabinet meeting in televised comments, as quoted by Agence France-Presse. He said under Russian law the broad punitive steps could include halting joint economic projects, restricting financial and trade transactions and changing customs duties.

Measures could also target the tourism and transport sectors, labor markets and “humanitarian contacts,” Medvedev said, adding that the measures would then likely be listed in a decree from President Vladimir Putin.

“In these documents the focus will be on introducing limits or bans on the economic activities of Turkish economic structures working in Russia, a limitation of the supply of products, including food products, and on the work and provision of services by Turkish companies and other restrictive measures,” Medvedev reportedly stated.

“I propose doing all this in a period of two days so that we can move to setting up the appropriate procedures as quickly as possible,” he told government ministers. Tensions have soared between Moscow and Ankara following the downing of the Russian jet on the Syrian border.

Russia may impose various economic restrictions on Turkey, including measures to restrict the planned Turkish Stream gas pipeline, Russian Economy Minister Alexei Ulyukayev also said, as reported by Reuters. Ulyukayev said the restrictions, drawn up in retaliation for the downing of a Russian warplane by Turkey, may also include limits to civil flights to and from Turkey and a halt to preparations for a Free Trade Zone. Another statement came from Russia’s tourism agency.

The head of Russia’s tourism agency, Rostourism, said cooperation between Russia and Turkey in the sector would “obviously” be halted, the Interfax news agency reported. The press service of the Russian Ministry of Agriculture said Moscow would strengthen control over food supplies from Turkey and perform additional border and production checks, as reported by Russia’s TASS news agency. “The Russian government has authorized Rosselkhoz nadzor [the federal agricultural supervision agency] to strengthen control over agricultural products and foods supplies from Turkey and organize additional checks on the border and at production sites in Turkey,” the ministry stated, as quoted by TASS.

Measures have been introduced in view of repeated violations of Russian standards by Turkish producers, it added. “About 15 percent of Turkish agricultural products on average do not meet Russian standards,” Minister of Agriculture Alexander Tkachev said, according to the report.

Russia has found “traces of banned and harmful substances” in Turkish food products of animal origin some 40 times this year, Tkachev added. According to the Russian Ministry of Agriculture, the country imported foods and agricultural products from Turkey amounting to \$1.7 billion in 2014. At the same time, Russian exports of food and agricultural products to Turkey rose by a third in 2014 and totaled \$2.4 billion.

Turkish vegetables account for some 20 percent of vegetables imports to Russia, said Tkachev, adding that Moscow could opt to buy produce from other countries, such as tomatoes from Iran, Israel, Morocco, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

Turkey also accounts for a quarter of Russian citrus fruit imports, he said, adding that the country could switch to other producers including South Africa, China, Argentina and Georgia. Russia has also said it could redirect its Turkish exports, including wheat and oil, to countries in the Middle East and Africa.

## Deputy PM: ‘Reform cabinet’ to be established in Turkey

Reuters, 20.11.2015



Turkey’s new government will be a reform government so as to enable the country to attend the high-income club, Deputy Prime Minister Cevdet Yılmaz has said, adding a separate senior official position may be created to oversee the reform agenda.

Yılmaz said the required reforms were connected to more than one institution and the coordination of these separate units in the direction of one target may require the supervision of a deputy prime minister. “We hope that we’ll realize the planned reforms in a more efficient way through this mechanism,” he said.

He said Turkey needed the realization of a number of critical reforms and the new government would also be a reform cabinet so as to enable the country to rise to a higher-income level. “I don’t know whether it will be for us to realize, but we mentioned in our election statement that a deputy prime minister will be responsible for overseeing the reform process and a ‘reform task force’ will also be established under his/her coordination in a rapid manner,” he said. With the establishment of such a mechanism, the realization of the required reforms was aimed as soon as possible, he noted.

# Turkey suspends Syria flights after crisis with Russia

Hurriyet Daily News, 27.11.2015



The Turkish army has suspended flights over Syria as part of an ongoing joint military campaign with the US against the ISIL after it shot down a Russian jetfighter, sparking an unprecedented crisis between Ankara and Moscow.

The decision was taken following the crisis with Russia in which a Turkish F-16 downed a Russian warplane after it allegedly violated Turkish airspace. Sources stressed that the suspension of the Turkish jetfighters' participation in the U.S.-led military operations against ISIL was in fact a mutual decision taken with Russia, which also halted its aerial campaigns near the Turkish border.

Both parties will continue to be as careful as possible in a bid to avoid a repetition of such incidents until they re-establish dialogue channels to reduce the tension. Turkish and Russian military officials held initial talks on the incident as the office of the Chief of General Staff invited defense and military attachés from the Russian Embassy to military headquarters to inform them about how the incident took place. However, there is still a need for high-level political meetings to let the two parties reconcile and reduce the tension.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu proposed to his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, a meeting on Dec. 3 or 4 in Belgrade on the sidelines of an international conference. However, the Russian side has not yet confirmed that the meeting will take place.

Following the downing of the plane, the existence of a memorandum from October emerged calling for the establishment of a special radio channel between Turkish and Russian warplanes. Russia's deputy Air Force commander, Maj. Gen. Sergei Dranov, visited Ankara on Oct. 15 following consecutive airspace violations by Russian warplanes after Moscow started a massive military campaign in Syria on Sept. 30. The objective of the agreement and the establishment of the channel was to avoid potential confrontation between the two countries' air forces, sources said.

The agreement was largely similar to one Russia agreed on with the U.S., sources said. "Russia's message to us during the Oct. 15 talks was like: 'We use only one channel in Syria. Contact us through this channel to send your warnings to avoid problems.' We accepted this, and we have issued all our warnings through this channel since then.

As this channel is being used by the U.S. Air Force as well, warnings Turkey has made to Syria have been recorded by both the Russian air base [in Syria] and the Americans at Incirlik base [in Adana]." Although Turkish pilots reportedly warned two Russian warplanes 10 times in five minutes while they were approaching Turkish airspace, there was no response on this special radio channel, sources said.

“Despite the agreement with Russia, the fact that both warplanes did not communicate through this channel caused Turkish pilots to profile these planes as ‘Profile: Syria aircraft,’ and consider the situation a ‘serious threat’ as part of the military rules of engagement. One of the aircraft returned to Syrian airspace but the other that insisted on heading toward Hatay was downed by the F16s,” a source said.

A military official also said the downing of the Russian warplane occurred within the knowledge of Turkish Air Force Cmdr. Gen. Abidin Ünal and under the political instruction of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.

“Pilots have full authority and should follow a certain procedure in the implementation of the rules of engagement. In the ‘combat phase,’ pilots inform the base but do not seek consent. Every step pilots take in the emergency phase is followed by the relevant commanders. During the five-minute warning period, both Air Force Commander Gen. Ünal and Combat Air Force and Air Missile Defense Commander Lt. Gen. Mehmet Şanver were informed. The pilots succeeded in implementing the procedure as there was no negative command from either commander,” the official said.

## French FM says can work with Syrian regime forces after transition

Hurriyet Daily News, 27.11.2015



France’s foreign minister said that troops loyal to Bashar al-Assad could be used to fight the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) , but only in the framework of a political transition without the Syrian President, as France and Russia has agreed to coordinate strikes against ISIL.

“Troops on the ground cannot be ours, but [there can be] Syrian soldiers from the Free Syrian Army, Sunni Arab states, and why not regime troops,” French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius told RTL radio without specifying whether he meant immediately or in the long-term.

Clarifying Fabius’ comments, an official in his entourage said the minister was reiterating France’s long-standing position that there could be no cooperation with Syrian government forces to battle ISIL until a unity government was in place.

“It could only happen in the framework of a political transition and Fabius stresses that this transition is urgent and indispensable,” the official said. A day before Fabius’ remarks, French President Francois Hollande and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin agreed to coordinate strikes against ISIL and share information on who to strike. “The strikes against Daesh [ISIL] will be intensified and be the object of coordination,” Hollande said at a press conference with Putin, adding that the strikes would focus on the transportation of oil.

“We today agreed to intensify our joint work on the anti-terrorist track, to improve the exchange of information in the fight with terrorism, establish constructive work between our military specialists,” Putin said.

“We have agreed... that we will exchange information about which territories are occupied by the healthy part of the opposition rather than terrorists, and will avoid targeting them with our airstrikes,” Putin said. Putin asked France to draw up a map of where groups fighting ISIL militants operate in Syria in order not to bomb them, Fabius said, Reuters reported.

“He asked us to draw up a map of forces that are not terrorists and are fighting Daesh [ISIL]. He committed to not bombing them once we’ve provided that,” Fabius said on RTL after accompanying Hollande to Moscow.

Meanwhile, Germany said it would join the military campaign against ISIL in Syria by deploying Tornado reconnaissance jets, refueling aircraft and a frigate to the region, after a direct appeal from close partner France for Berlin to do more.

“Today the government took difficult but important and necessary decisions,” German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen told reporters after meeting with lawmakers. “We are standing with France, which was hit by these inhuman attacks from ISIL.”

The decision to commit military personnel and hardware is a shift for Germany, which has resisted such direct involvement in the conflict. It still has no plans to join France, the United States and Russia in conducting air strikes in Syria.

## Cameron says time to bomb militants in Syria

Hurriyet Daily News, 27.11.2015



Prime Minister David Cameron said that it was time to join air strikes against ISIL in Syria because Britain cannot “subcontract its security to other countries.”

“It is wrong for the United Kingdom to sub-contract its security to other countries, and to expect the aircrews of other nations to carry the burdens and the risks of striking ISIL in Syria to stop terrorism here in Britain,” Cameron wrote in a response to the parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, which had said a policy to extend air strikes was “incoherent” without a strategy to defeat the militants, according to Reuters.

“We do not have the luxury of being able to wait until the Syrian conflict is resolved before tackling ISIL,” he said.





Cameron said in the 24-page response that the campaign against ISIL was entering a new phase, focusing on command and control, supply lines and financial support, something that suited Britain's capabilities.

Fearful of losing standing on the world stage, Cameron said Britain should respond to requests from allies, including the United States, but said he would not put a vote to parliament unless there was a majority backing action.

Cameron lost a vote on air strikes against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces in 2013 and must persuade some wary members of his own Conservative Party and in the opposition Labor Party to back him if he is to win parliament's support for military action.

A day before, French President Francois Hollande urged Germany to do more in the fight against ISIL after he held talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel following the Paris attacks. Hollande said he hoped Germany "can do even more in the fight against Daesh [ISIL] in Syria and Iraq."

Merkel said in response she would act "swiftly" to see how Germany could take up "additional responsibilities" to assist in the fight against terror. "We will be stronger than the terror," she said.

Lawmakers from Germany's ruling parties were set to meet to discuss how Berlin can provide more support to France in the fight against ISIL. Coalition sources told Reuters that new support measures under consideration included the deployment of German Tornado jets for reconnaissance flights and of refueling aircraft.

Hours before Hollande was scheduled to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, France and Italy said world powers need to step up efforts to stop ISIL from gaining ground in Libya while keeping up the fight against the militant group in Syria and Iraq.

"We're focusing our attention on the Vienna process for Syria," Renzi said, referring to international talks to try to find a political solution for Syria's conflict. "And we are particularly committed to opening this diplomatic window a little further to include Libya for the reasons President Hollande stated better than I have," he said.

# US House passes bill to slow Syrian refugees despite Obama veto threat

Anadolu Agency, 12.11.2015



The U.S. House of Representatives, defying a veto threat by President Barack Obama, overwhelmingly passed Republican-backed legislation to suspend Obama's program to admit 10,000 Syrian refugees in the next year and then intensify the process of screening them.

The measure, quickly drafted following the ISIL attacks in Paris, was approved on a vote of 289-137, with 47 of Obama's 188 fellow Democrats breaking with White House to support it. It would require high-level officials - FBI director, director of national intelligence and homeland security secretary - verify that each Syrian refugee poses no security risk.

Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan said the bill would pause the program the White House announced in September to admit 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next year. He said it was important to act quickly "when our national security is at stake."

After the House vote, Obama's attorney general, Loretta Lynch, called such screening both impractical and impossible. "To ask me to have my FBI director or other members of the administration make personal guarantees would effectively grind the program to a halt," Lynch told reporters at a news briefing with FBI Director James Comey.

The vote result came despite a last-ditch appeal for Democratic votes from Jeh Johnson, Obama's secretary of homeland security, and Denis McDonough, his chief of staff. It followed a testy exchange at a House hearing between lawmakers and Anne Richard, the assistant secretary of state for population, refugees and migration. Republicans responded with incredulity to her assertion there was only a "very, very small" threat of any of the Syrian refugees being a "terrorist".

Some Republicans have said some refugees could be militants bent on attacking the United States, noting reports that at least one Paris attacker may have slipped into Europe among migrants registered in Greece.

The bill, which would create the strictest-ever U.S. screening of refugees from a war-torn nation, passed with the two-thirds majority the House would need to override a presidential veto. It now goes to the Senate, also controlled by Republicans, where its prospects remained uncertain.

If it passes in the Senate, each chamber would have to muster a two-thirds majority to override any Obama veto. Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid said there was "no way" the House bill would pass in the Senate.



While many Americans see the United States historically as welcoming to immigrants, accepting refugees from Syria has raised concerns the newcomers may pose a national security threat in a country where about 3,000 people were killed by al Qaeda militants in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Lawmakers have been receiving an unusually large number of calls on the issue. An aide to Ohio Republican Senator Rob Portman said his office got 2,710 calls between Monday and Wednesday opposing resettlement of Syrian/Iraqi refugees in the United States, versus only 58 in favor.

Speaking in Manila after meeting with Canada's prime minister, Obama said America had always been open to allowing people from war zones to find refuge in the United States, where they become "part of the fabric of American life".

Denouncing the "spasm of rhetoric" over refugees, Obama said refugees already faced the most vigorous vetting process for anyone admitted to the country. He added that "the idea that somehow they pose a more significant threat than all the tourists who pour into the United States every single day just doesn't jibe with reality."

The White House had said Obama would veto the House bill because it would introduce "unnecessary and impractical requirements" that would hamper efforts to help some of the world's most vulnerable people without providing meaningful additional security for Americans.

"Our position on this piece of legislation has not changed," an official on board Air Force One, carrying Obama to a Southeast Asian summit in Malaysia on Friday, quoted White House spokesman Josh Earnest as saying.

Comey said there was no credible threat of an attack on U.S. soil similar to the one in Paris, but his agency is monitoring dozens of people it has deemed "high-risk" for copying the attack. ISIL militants released a video threatening the White House with suicide bombings and car blasts. The threat came a day after another video from the militant group that suggested New York was a potential target. Ben Carson, a leading 2016 Republican presidential candidate, likened Syrian refugees to "a rabid dog running around your neighborhood," and said admitting them would put Americans at risk.

Some Democrats touted a different approach, promising legislation in the Senate to tighten a visa waiver program that intelligence experts say can be exploited by ISIL militants or others planning U.S. attacks. Earnest said White House staff were talking with members of Congress on reforming the program.

"This is an area where additional scrutiny and reforms could be useful in enhancing the national security of the United States," he was quoted as saying. Honduras said it had detained five Syrians seeking to reach the United States for traveling on doctored Greek passports, but authorities in the Central American country said the men did not belong to "any terrorist cell" and four were college students. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said members of two Syrian families - two men, two women and four children - turned themselves in to U.S. authorities in Laredo, Texas, on the Mexican border. There was no evidence the Syrians had any connection to terrorism, U.S. officials said.

# Announcements & Reports

## ► *Macroprudential Supervision: From Theory to Policy*

**Source** : Bruegel

**Weblink** : <http://bruegel.org/2015/11/macroprudential-supervision-from-theory-to-policy/>

## ► *Public Hearing on the EU's Future Trade and Investment Strategy*

**Source** : Bruegel

**Weblink** : <http://bruegel.org/2015/11/public-hearing-on-the-eus-future-trade-and-investment-strategy/>

## ► *Inside the Kremlin*

**Source** : CSIS

**Weblink** : <http://csis.org/publication/inside-kremlin>

# Upcoming Events

## ► *Secular Stagnation in Europe and Japan*

**Date** : 27 November 2015

**Place** : Brussels - Belgium

**Website** : <http://bruegel.org/events/secular-stagnation-in-europe-and-japan/>

## ► *The Role of The Nordic Social Model in The Future*

**Date** : 27 November 2015

**Place** : Brussels - Belgium

**Website** : <http://bruegel.org/events/the-role-of-the-nordic-social-model-in-the-future/>

## ► *Lebanon's Deepening Domestic Crisis*

**Date** : 28 November 2015

**Place** : Washington DC – The USA

**Website** : <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2015/10/12-lebanon-domestic-crisis>



### ► *The Politics of The Fed: Past, Present and Future*

**Date** : 28 November 2015  
**Place** : Washington DC – The USA  
**Website** : <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2015/10/22-politics-of-the-fed-past-present-and-future>

### ► *Supporting Military Families and Veterans, Sustaining The All-Volunteer Force*

**Date** : 29 November 2015  
**Place** : Washington – The USA  
**Website** : <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2015/10/29-military-families-veterans-lifestyle-survey>

### ► *Competitive Gains in the Economic and Monetary Union*

**Date** : 23 December 2015  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/534-competitive-gains-in-the-economic-and-monetary-union/>

### ► *The Future of Capitalist Democracy: UK-Japan Perspectives*

**Date** : 24 December 2015  
**Place** : London - UK  
**Website** : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/event/future-capitalist-democracy-uk-japan-perspectives>

### ► *Emerging Markets and Europe: Time for Different Relationships?*

**Date** : 26 December 2015  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/524-emerging-markets-and-europe-time-for-different-relationships/>

### ► *What future for Europe's Social Models?*

**Date** : 27 December 2015  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/526-what-future-for-europes-social-models/>

### ► *Challenges for Growth in Europe*

**Date** : 28 December 2015  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/521-challenges-for-growth-in-europe/>

### ► *Global Governance of Public Goods: Asian and European Perspectives*

**Date** : 28 December 2015  
**Place** : Paris - France  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/529-global-governance-of-public-goods-asian-and-european-perspectives/>



► *The Future of the Welfare State*

**Date** : 29 December 2015

**Place** : Berlin - Germany

**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/541-the-future-of-the-welfare-state/>