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Turkey News Update

RW Robert Wexler

Thu 3/22/2018 9:44 AM

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I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Republic of Turkey.

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- **The US & Turkey Continue to Mend Ties**

-The US Department of State released a Joint Statement on the Turkey-US Strategic Partnership, which reaffirmed that the two are allies and strategic partners and confirm their unequivocal commitment to each other's security and defense.

-The Joint Statement also stated that the two sides have been strategic partners for over 65 years and are committed to establishing a result-oriented mechanism to resolve any outstanding bi-lateral issues, no later than mid-March.

-The two allies stated that their common agenda is a global one: to fight terrorism, counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, bring lasting peace and stability to the Middle East, ensure energy security and combat radicalism, extremism, and Islamophobia.

-US Secretary of Defense Mattis said, "We are with Turkey 100%", and "Turkey, number one, is a NATO ally; number two, they're the only NATO ally that confronts an active insurgency on their own home territory. Number three, it is by a group of PKK, a named terrorist group by the US State Department, and they have murdered innocent Turks, that is the legitimacy of the Turkish concern."

-Turkey's Presidential Spokesman Kalin met with US National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, where they reaffirmed their strategic partnership, and discussed their views on regional developments, issues harming their bi-lateral relations, and ways they can develop a joint fight against terrorism.

-US Defense Secretary Mattis stated that the two countries have an "absolutely open and honest dialogue", that they are "finding common ground" in the fight in Syria and are "coming together".

-Former US Secretary of State Tillerson, stated, "We are not acting alone. We are going to work through the issues that are causing difficulties for us, we will resolve them, we will move forward with the future of ISIS, in terms of coordinating our efforts to complete this battle and to address other terrorist presences within Syria."

-Tillerson also stated, "We are not going to act alone any longer, not US doing one thing, Turkey doing another."

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• **Turkey Enhances Its Relations with African Countries**

-Turkey's trade volume with Africa reached \$20 billion by the end of 2017, a 12% increase from 2016, while the Turkish EXIM Bank has provided \$800 million in loans, and Turkish contractors have taken on \$60 billion in 1,150 projects in Africa.

-As the Turkey-Africa Ministerial Review Conference approaches, Turkey's Representative to the African Union, Ulusoy, stated, "We are committed to support key priority areas [of the African Union] concerning the development and welfare of the African people. We focus on the areas where we have agreed together with the African side in the Malabo Summit."

-The two cooperate in trade, investment, energy, human resources, peace and security, youth empowerment and technological transfer, infrastructure, science and technology, tourism, education, and the economy and agriculture.

-Turkey's development assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa was \$395.77 million, with Turkish investments in Africa surpassing \$6 billion.

-President Erdogan has visited 32 African countries and aims to have embassies in all African countries. (Currently Turkey has embassies in 41 African countries.)

-Turkey has also built tons of hospitals in several regions of Africa which help thousands of patients.

-The Turkey-Zambia Business Council is looking to enhance investment in Zambia, with the potential sectors of interest being agriculture, energy, construction, manufacturing, mining, and tourism. Attracting FDI these areas will help harness Zambia's rich natural resources and spark economic development.

-Turkey and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed a trade and investment cooperation agreement, enhancing cooperation to promote trade, increase investment, increase trade volume, develop investment relations, implement joint infrastructure and development projects, and develop financing mechanisms for trade and investment.

-Turkey and the ECOWAS are considering a free trade agreement to enhance their trade volume even further.

-President Erdogan visited Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal and Mali during a 5-day tour to enhance trade and purge FETO from education, diplomatic and political relationships, and economic and trade arenas.

-Turkey and Algeria signed seven agreements and MoUs in various sectors, such as: tourism, diplomacy, culture, energy, agriculture, trade, and signed a \$1 billion petrochemical deal.

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• **Turkey Enhances Relations with the EU and Its Member Countries**

-Hungarian Consul General in Istanbul, Hendrich, said that Hungary appreciates Turkey's dedicated efforts regarding the migrant crisis for both its security and humanitarian aspects, and that Turkey is an important ally to Europe in the fight against terrorism.

-Hendrich also stated that the Hungarian government supports the modernization of the Customs Union between Turkey and Europe and is committed to re-energizing EU-Turkey relations and the Turkey accession process.

-Turkish President Erdogan and French President Macron agreed to work on a diplomatic road map for Syria, which they both hope will be a political solution overseen by the UN.

-German Chancellor Merkel underlined her desire for good relations with Turkey in a draft coalition government agreement, which stated, "Turkey is an important partner of Germany and EU's neighbor, with that we have multifaceted relations. Therefore, having good relations with Turkey is of special interest for us."

-Turkey has successfully completed the EU's 72 different criteria for visa free travel.

-Turkish FM Cavusoglu and German FM Gabriel said they will continue working together to strengthen and deepen bilateral relations between Turkey and Germany, and to enhance cooperation on regional issues.

- German Interior Minister de Maiziere, stated that Turkey is an important NATO partner and a key partner in the fight against terrorism.

-Germany approved over 30 defense industry deals with Turkey in December and January.

-Germany's exports to Turkey rose significantly in 2017 to reach €1.45 billion.

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• **Turkey Among the Top Five Countries for Diplomatic Missions**

-Turkey is in the top five countries with its number of diplomatic missions, showing that it is a global power.

-Turkey has 239 diplomatic foreign missions, with 138 of them being embassies, 86 which are consulate-generals, 13 of which are permanent representations, 1 of which is a trade office, and 1 a consular agency.

-Turkey has also increased its number of women ambassadors to 51 out of 255.

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• **Turkey Expands Its Technology & Energy Sectors**

-The establishment of technoparks in Turkey have increased to 71, which will increase innovation and technology ecosystems.

-Turkey plans to boost the number of RD centers to 1,000, design center to 250, and technoparks to 80 in 2018.

-Entrepreneurs who succeed in the Clean Innovation Program, which include SMEs and startups that work on energy and water efficiency, renewable energy, waste management, green buildings and transportation, will be supported by \$3 million in funds from the GEF and TUBITAK.

-Turkey is working on new tenders for 1,000 MW wind and solar power plants, and plan to add a solar battery and storage system to the solar project.

-Turkey had a 1.79 GW increase in solar capacity in 2017, an 213% annual increase, leading Europe and accounting for one-fourth of the total growth, making it the most promising market in the solar business.

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- **Turkey's Fight Against Terror**

- 5,800 foreign fighters have been removed from Turkey's borders, it has prevented 56,300 potential foreign fighters affiliated with Daesh from travelling to Turkey, and 10,000 Daesh members are currently under arrest in Turkey.
- A Turkish diplomat stated that Turkey never used chemical weapons in Syria, and that it takes utmost care of civilians.
- A White House official stated, that the US believes that it is "extremely unlikely" that Turkey used chemicals to fight against the Kurds in Syria.
- Civilians living in the Deir Ballut Village expressed their gratitude after the Turkish Army liberated them from PKK terrorist. Turkey has provided them with food and treated patients.
- London, AKP Deputy Chair, Eker said that Turkey is not trying to invade Syria, but is instead, trying to bring stability to the region, and to save civilians from oppression and torture.
- PM Yildirim stated, "We are very careful that no civilian is harmed", reiterating that the military is taking "utmost care and sensitivity" to avoid harming civilians during their efforts in Syria.

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- **Turkey's Economy Gains Ground**

- Turkey will implement tax cuts on manufacturing and export industries, research and development, and innovation and design, specifically with new employment, new machinery equipment, and purchases of vehicles more than 16 years old, which will boost employment, economic activity, and savings.
- Turkey is attempting to increase its tea exports, exporting tea to 110 countries this industry employs 10,600 people in 56 factories across Turkey.
- Turkey produced 16.1 million bovine animals in 2017, an increase of 13.2%, it produced 350 million poultry animals in 2017, a 4.4% increase, it produced 20.7 million tons of milk, a 12% increase, and it produced 114,471 tons of honey, a 8.3% increase, with exports in dairy products accounting for \$700 million.
- In December, Turkey's industrial production rose 8.7% compared to the same month in 2016, exporting \$13.87 billion, with the mining and quarrying index rising 14%, the manufacturing index rising 8.9%, and the electric, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply index rising 5.7%.
- Deputy PM Simsek, stated that Turkey will be prioritizing lowering inflation to single digits and keeping the current account deficit under control while advancing reforms to boost growth and make the economy resistant to shocks.
- Simsek said, "The rapid growth trend in Europe, the robust recovery in Turkey's tourism, and some rebound in Turkey's neighboring countries thanks to positive developments in commodity prices, will be of great importance in improving Turkey's growth dynamics... We also expect a strong rise in investments over this year."
- The IMF believes that Turkey's economic growth was 7% in 2017, with a projected 4% growth in 2018.
- Turkey has become the 5th biggest start-up market worldwide, with 445 registered angel investors, it has the potential to exponentially increase angel investors in the next few years.
- Turkey attracted \$10.83 billion in net international direct investment in 2017, \$7.44 billion of which was equity investment inflow.
- Direct capital inflow from EU countries rose by 30% from 2016, with the top three sources of equity being the Netherlands, Austria, and the UK.

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• **Turkey Works With European Neighbors to Strengthen Ties**

- Turkey and Belarus work to improve relations, enhance cooperation, and increase their trade volume.
- Turkish PM and Belarusian PM met to discuss topics, such as: education, science, innovation, human development, sports, culture, and expansion of investments and trade.
- Turkey and Azerbaijan signed an MoU to cooperate in the field of higher education, in hopes to improve academic and scientific cooperation.
- The Ukraine-Azerbaijan-Turkey trilateral cooperation format will allow the development of mutually beneficial projects.

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redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fyok.gov.tr%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fcohc%2Fdetailnews%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_6Tcwfl31cGtz%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_s

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• **Tourism is on the Rise**

- In January 2018, Turkey had 1.5 million foreign visitors, a 39% increase compared with January 2017, with a large growth in Iranian, Georgian, Bulgarian, German, and Russian tourists.
- Hotel occupancy rose to 60.6% in January 2018, a 28.6% increase compared with January 2017.
- Turkey's tourism rose to \$26.3 billion in 2017, a 19% increase from 2016.
- In 2017, Turkey received 32.4 million visitors from around the world, a 27.8% increase, compared to 2016.
- Emirati tourists from the UAE increased 29% in 2017, compared to 2016, with most of these visitors traveling to Turkey as tourist, medical tourists or business guests looking to invest in the country's many lucrative economic opportunities.

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• **Turkey's Humanitarian Efforts Continue to Grow**

- Turkey was one of the first countries to assist Bangladesh during the Rohingya crisis, providing more than \$10 million in humanitarian aid to Rohingya refugees, providing shelters, food, clothing, and health care.
- Turkey pledged to donate \$5 billion dollars to assist Iraq in their reconstruction efforts, helping Iraqis return to their homes.
- Turkey is currently hosting more than 3.5 Syrian refugees and has spent more than \$30.2 billion on their wellbeing.
- Turkey's AFAD has led the efforts in sheltering refugees, with 21 accommodation centers, hosting 227,894 Syrian refugees.
- Turkey has invested \$15.4 billion in educating Syrian refugee children, with the EU contributing an additional \$42 million, 60% of refugee children in Turkey are now receiving an education.
- Turkey has also spent \$1.6 billion on humanitarian aid in Syria, with Turkish charities spending an additional \$2.05 billion on Syrian refugees.
- Turkey is working to set up additional camps for civilians in northern Syria, which will be equipped with tents, bathrooms, and water wells.
- Turkey tops the list of countries for restoring the health of refugees worldwide, spending over \$10 billion on their health services, according to the World Health Organization.
- Turkish PM Yildirim, said "Turkey does not only protect its own law but also protects the oppressed, and victims. We are not indifferent to the crises and injustices anywhere in the world."

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• **President Erdogan Visits the Pope**

-President Erdogan visited Pope Francis in the Vatican, in a historic visit. The last time a Turkish head of state visited the Vatican was 59 years ago.

-The two discussed Turkey's Catholic community, its hosting of refugees, the humanitarian crisis in Syria, and the situation in the Middle East.

-The two leaders both highlighted the need to promote peace and stability in the region through dialogue and negotiation, regarding human rights and international law.

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All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler