

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ  
AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ BAKANLIĞI



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
MINISTRY FOR EU AFFAIRS

# REPUBLIC OF TURKEY MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS



Arguments Compiled Based on the Statements by  
the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ömer Çelik  
No: 4

# SYRIAN ISSUE

a n d R E F U G E E C R I S I S

## ARGUMENTS

COMPILED BASED ON THE STATEMENTS BY  
THE MINISTER FOR EU AFFAIRS  
AND CHIEF NEGOTIATOR ÖMER ÇELİK



**SYRIAN  
ISSUE**

and REFUGEE CRISIS

*Europe becoming introverted because of the migrant crisis would mean the disappearance of the architecture of European values.*

*Ömer Çelik*



The rising far-right and similar movements in Europe threaten our shared democratic values. In the same vein, the rising terrorism wave to the south of our country, perpetrated by terrorist organizations such as Daesh, the PKK and the PYD also threaten our common values. Therefore, territory of Europe, European security and European values seem to have gotten stuck in brackets. As with the migrant issue, a rapprochement between Turkey and the European Union and the building of closer links will break those brackets and change this vicious circle.

*Visit to Belgium-Press Conference at the  
EU Permanent Representation  
Date: 01/06/2016, 15:37*







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Lately, as a result of the migrant issue, a new momentum has emerged in our relations with the European Union. Yet, as we always say, we should not simply confine this to the migrant issue. We need to place this within a broader vision. Turkey has been a European power throughout its history.

*Reception of the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly  
Pedro Agramunt-Date: 07/06/2016, 14:01*

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Turkey is playing a central role in preventing a very large regional and global crisis. Therefore, the 18 March Turkey-EU Statement, voluntary humanitarian admission, the Readmission Agreement and visa liberalization must be thought of as part of a single package. All these make up a single file. The sheets of this file must not be separated. Each element is linked with another.

*Visit to the Netherlands-Press Conference  
Date: 10/06/2016, 13:18*

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Reducing the issue simply to migration would be to perceive Turkey as a 'human storage room' or a 'concentration camp'; we cannot accept this under any condition.

*Visit to the Netherlands-Press Conference  
Date: 10/06/2016, 13:18*

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We have all seen, with the migrant issue, that Turkey is a major European power and a major European democracy. Even if it is not a member of the European Union, it is one of the great powers of Europe. This has been so throughout history. Hence, relations with Turkey should be based not on competition but solidarity.

*Visit to the Netherlands-Press Conference  
Date: 10/06/2016, 13:18*

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Perhaps one of the greatest crises that the European Union has faced in its history has been prevented by the joint action plan and the common will between Turkey and the European Union.

*Visit to the Netherlands-Press Conference  
Date: 10/06/2016, 13:18*

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So long as the situation in Syria continues, we are likely to be faced with a larger migrant wave and greater humanitarian crises. Therefore, the correct and effective functioning of the mechanism that we have just built will constitute the basis on which further crises are going to be prevented.

*Visit to the Netherlands-Press Conference  
Date: 10/06/2016, 13:18*

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Turkey is often left alone in preventing the greatest humanitarian and political crisis that both the world and the European Union have ever faced.

*Visit to the Netherlands-Press Conference  
Date: 10/06/2016, 13:18*

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Migration has many times upset the European geopolitical order and the European political map throughout history. This is one of the greatest crises to upset the geopolitical order and the political map. However, as a result of Turkey's performance and the 18 March Turkey-EU Statement, the number of people crossing the Aegean Sea fell from seven thousand people in one day to a mere 40, or 20. This is an example of what great deeds Turkey and the European Union can achieve if they act in unison. We are presently not a member of the European Union but our country has been a major European power throughout its history. Today, we are a major European power and a major European democracy. Hence, visa liberalization cannot be simply a nice gesture towards Turkey, but is rather an outcome that must be reached as a result of a concluded agreement.

*Visit to the Governorate of Adana  
Date: 17/06/2016*

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Had Turkey not displayed its capacity during this migrant crisis, had it not produced a common position and a joint action plan with the European Union, this would have turned into a crisis that would have upset the whole European geopolitical order.

*Joint Press Conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs Paolo Gentiloni in Italy- Date: 21/06/2016, 19:43*

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Some Member States of the European Union build their relationship with Turkey on a basis of competition; this is the worst possible thing that could be done, the greatest historical mistake that could be made for the future of Europe, of which we are a part, for the values of the European Union, and for European democracy. What needs to be done here is to put forward a great vision and to stand side by side, as we did in the implementation of the 18 March Turkey-EU Statement. Whether we agree or not, with a common vision, we will be able to talk about and assess their criticisms of Turkey, our criticisms of Europe, and all the other issues.

*Joint Press Conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs Paolo Gentiloni in Italy- Date: 21/06/2016, 19:43*

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We know from our historical experience how these migration events upset the European geopolitical order, political map, and what kind of havoc they cause in our region. We need to look at this issue with a greater vision.

*Joint Press Conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs Paolo Gentiloni in Italy- Date: 21/06/2016, 19:43*

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There are some who look at this as a temporary, conjunctural crisis or a crisis that can be solved by certain technical mechanisms. What we are faced with is not a technical crisis, nor is it solely a political crisis. It is an existential crisis.

*Joint Press Conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs Paolo Gentiloni in Italy- Date: 21/06/2016, 19:43*

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The Turkey-EU relationship cannot be reduced to the migrant issue; it has to be placed in the context of a broader vision and a wider framework, and this relationship should be handled politically and from different aspects. The time has come for this to be treated not as the management of temporary political crises but as an existential matter.

*TRT Haber Special Interview  
Date: 22/06/2016, 16:11*



The migrant issue has sparked a new era in Turkey-EU relations, but these relations must not be reduced to the migrant issue.

*TRT Haber Special Interview  
Date: 22/06/2016, 16:11*



As we witnessed in the latest migrant crisis, Turkey and the European Union acted in shared wisdom and managed one of the greatest challenges, one of the greatest crises that the European Union has ever faced extremely effectively. The potential and the capacity Turkey showed in the face of great crises and great challenges will provide the basis on which to generate a foreign policy that promotes peace, enhances prosperity, and is more effective in humanitarian terms. Today, Europe needs a rejuvenation; it needs a new vaccine.

*Press Conference on Current Issues at the Ministry for EU Affairs  
Date: 24/06/2016, 15:06*



Europe's becoming introverted because of the migrant crisis will mean the disappearance of the architecture of European values.

*Press Conference on Current Issues at the Ministry for EU Affairs  
Date: 24/06/2016, 15:06*







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With the migrant crisis, we witnessed how the European Union and Turkey, acting in a shared wisdom and with a joint action plan, managed to solve a global problem.

*Visit to Belgium-Press Conference  
Date: 29/06/2016, 15:35*

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We should also create a joint action plan against terrorism, which has become an even greater issue and which threatens European values as well as the fundamental values of humanity. Solidarity alone is not enough, a common discourse alone is not enough; we need to put forth a joint action plan.

*Visit to Belgium-Press Conference  
Date: 29/06/2016, 15:35*

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Turkey is not a concentration camp. Turkey is fulfilling its obligation to humanity as a sovereign and legitimate state. It is hosting those who are fleeing from death. But if you consider Turkey as a concentration camp and say ‘we should give this much money and Turkey should host these people’, in fact we do not need that money and we have no intention to strike any deal.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk  
Date: 31/08/2016, 10:13*

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By taking a common stance and creating a joint action plan, we have solved the greatest migrant crisis in history. Let us not forget that this problem has been solved, thanks to Turkey's capacity.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk  
Date: 31/08/2016, 10:13*

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The 18 March Turkey-EU Statement has shown how a common EU-Turkey approach and a joint action plan can work in solving a global problem, thanks to Turkey's capacity. After this, if they provide us with a clear date for visa liberalization, then we will start to implement the Readmission Agreement. If they cannot, then we are saying that we cannot amend the anti-terrorism law and other laws at the moment. But, alternatively, this issue can be transferred to a mechanism within the Council of Europe and can be reassessed when conditions change. Turkey can make this commitment and therefore visa liberalization can be guaranteed in this manner. But Turkey cannot be expected to amend this law while fighting five or six terrorist organizations simultaneously.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk  
Date: 31/08/2016, 10:13*

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If you ask Turkey to take the front seat when it is necessary to fight for common values, but tell Turkey that it does not have a reservation when it is necessary to share those common values in the same institutions, then we cannot accept such turn of events.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk  
Date: 31/08/2016, 10:13*

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We are committed to the framework of the March 18 Agreement and are fulfilling our relevant obligations. We are doing this for humanitarian reasons, political reasons, and under the pacta sunt servanda principle. Visa liberalization is a key issue here. Once we reach agreement on this matter, we will see how quickly we will reach agreements in all the other matters.

*Joint Press Conference with European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos-Date: 01/09/2016, 13:45*

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The migrant crisis will first turn into a political crisis. Then, after the migrant crisis a much greater security crisis will emerge. Therefore, there is a need for new mechanisms, and these mechanisms have to be of a humanitarian and political nature. If you fence your borders and keep people out who are running for their lives through the use of NATO armies, then pictures that put humanity to shame, reminiscent of a hundred years ago, will reappear, and the human conscience cannot bear this. People would riot against that, European people would revolt against that.

*Informal Meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers in Bratislava*  
Date: 03/09/2016, 14:44



We have expressed that Turkey and the European Union should focus on a common and positive agenda and not only work on migration and terrorism, but also enhance their cooperation on negotiations and other initiatives.

*Informal Meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers in Bratislava*  
Date: 03/09/2016, 14:44



A country is thinking of hosting one hundred migrants and they are debating whether or not to hold a referendum on this. Another country is saying 'we cannot take migrants', arguing that would 'weaken their national identity.' Behind this are such negative developments as cultural racism, Islamophobia and the rise of the far-right. Hence, finding the right solutions to this problem is important for Europe's political future, for the protection of Europe's mainstream political movements, and for the protection of democracy. If they are not careful about this, then we will witness the rise of the far-right in Europe on one side and the rise of the jihadist and Salafi movements in the Middle East on the other, culminating in radicalization on both sides that would jeopardize global security. That is why there is a need for new mechanisms.

*Informal Meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers in Bratislava*  
Date: 03/09/2016, 14:44





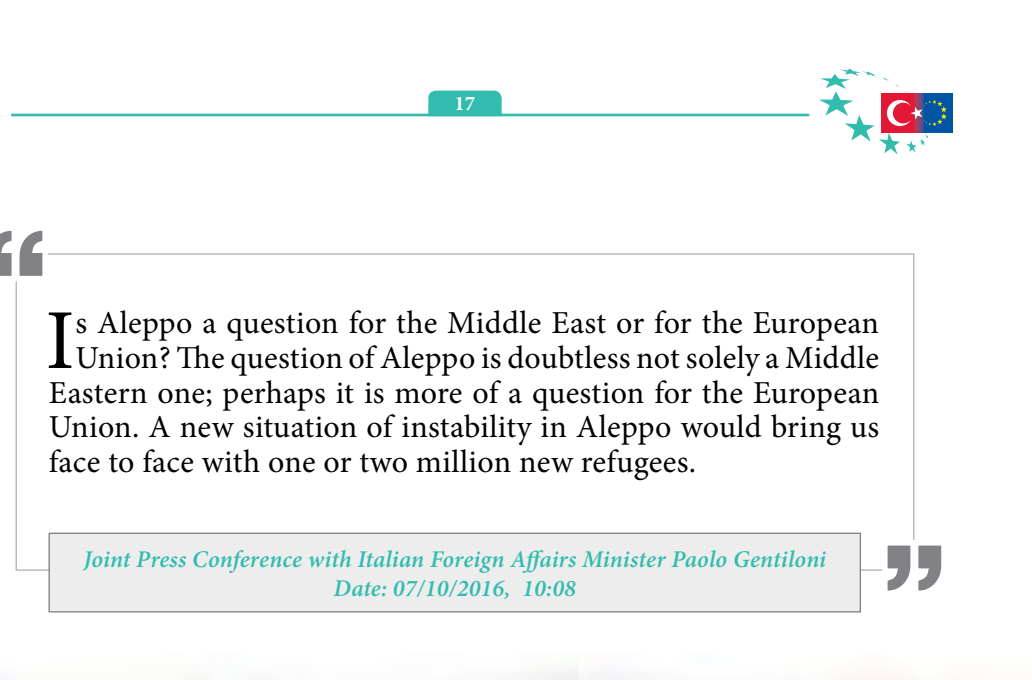


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Emphasizing cooperation with Turkey with regards to the migrant crisis and fighting terrorism, but saying ‘Turkey cannot become a member in 20 years; it cannot become a member in the near future even if it fulfills objective criteria,’ is a clear double standard. Just as Turkey is a partner in fighting challenges, it is a partner in sharing the stability of the European Union and the European Union mechanisms.

Press Conference following the Turkey-EU High Level Political Dialogue Meeting Date: 09/09/2016, 12:14

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Is Aleppo a question for the Middle East or for the European Union? The question of Aleppo is doubtless not solely a Middle Eastern one; perhaps it is more of a question for the European Union. A new situation of instability in Aleppo would bring us face to face with one or two million new refugees.

Joint Press Conference with Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Paolo Gentiloni Date: 07/10/2016, 10:08

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In discussions about visa liberalization, there is talk of a need to amend our anti-terrorism law. But when you look at the situation, the FETÖ terrorist organization is attacking Turkey, so is the PKK, and so is Daesh. Under these conditions, being asked to amend our law on terrorism would jeopardize Turkey's security as well as Europe's security. What we say is that we should leave the issue of terrorism to the mechanisms within the Council of Europe and Turkey should be granted visa liberalization.

*Joint Press Conference with British Minister of State for Europe and the Americas-Date: 19/10/2016, 14:37*



Asking us to amend our law on terrorism would mean jeopardizing Turkey's national security. We suggest that the question of amendments to the law on terrorism be dealt with through the common mechanism we have with the Council of Europe and visa liberalization be realized.

*A Haber Special Interview  
Date: 19/10/2016, 16:08*



Failure to implement visa liberalization would mean not putting into practice the new mechanisms Europe needs in the face of the emerging and on-going great migration flows, and therefore leaving Europe and our region vulnerable in the face of these migration flows. When I talk to Europeans about the political repercussions of migration flows, I give them the example of the Migration Period in history. Just as the Migration Period changed the political map of Europe as a whole, this migration flow is also generating a wave that is powerful enough to change the political map of Europe again, and remove governments from power. The far-right movements and xenophobic movements that emerge in the face of the migration flow are incorporating mainstream politicians and threatening democratic instincts and democratic order in Europe. What protects the democratic order in Europe from exploitation by the far-right and others is the mechanism Turkey has created, thanks to the 18 March Turkey-EU Statement. Following this, we need additional mechanisms: the Readmission Agreement and so on.

*A Haber Special Interview  
Date: 19/10/2016, 16:08*



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I claim here that the sole factor in the success of the 18 March Turkey-EU Statement concluded with the European Union is the strength of Turkish institutions. We achieve this because of the strength of our police force and our coast guard.

*A Haber Special Interview*  
Date: 19/10/2016, 16:08

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There are two pressure points on the global system, one of them is the Iraq-Syria line and the other is the Afghanistan-Pakistan line. Migration from these two places towards Europe will continue. The only mechanism that can solve this is one that the European Union can create with Turkey. Therefore, the visa liberalization decision that Europe will take has more to do with its own future than with Turkey.

*A Haber Special Interview*  
Date: 19/10/2016, 16:08

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One of the most important issues that we have discussed with Greece is migration. We are the ones shouldering the real burden here, and after us comes Greece. We host almost three million refugees in Turkey, 800 thousand of whom are children. 500 thousand of these children are at the moment deprived of education. I have called upon the EU authorities several times; the funds necessary for the education of these children should be allocated. However, EU funding is grindingly slow.

*Visit to Greece-Press Interview*  
Date: 03/11/2016, 11:10

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In many European countries and in many European Union Member States, which share democratic values, some political parties show these refugees, who are people fleeing from death, as monsters in their banners and posters; and through their campaigns they promote the far-right, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. This is dangerous for the future of the European Union.

*Visit to Greece-Press Interview*  
Date: 03/11/2016, 11:10

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It is as if there is a grave air of lethargy about the European Union. Thinking that *'this burden is already shared by Turkey and Greece and these two countries somehow manage to prevent the arrival of migrants,'* they are not fulfilling any of their responsibilities, they are not honouring any of their commitments. This is a turn of events that one might simply call shameful.

*Visit to Greece-Press Interview*  
Date: 03/11/2016, 11:10

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We have seen this before in other cases in history. It is much easier for the European Union to overcome a deadlock in close cooperation with Turkey. Moreover, any convergence with the European Union has always had a positive impact on Turkey's national interests.

*Visit to Greece-Press Interview*  
*Date: 03/11/2016, 11:10*

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The happiest news of all is that deaths in the Aegean have almost reached zero. We no longer see the bodies of babies washed up ashore. We do not see the corpses on the shore like that of little Aylan's. This success is Turkey's success and the world needs to stand with Turkey. But we in fact see that some are saying 'we have already shifted this burden to Turkey, and Turkey and Greece are sharing this responsibility, this burden' and are taking a step back.

*Visit to Greece-Press Interview*  
*Date: 03/11/2016, 11:10*

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Such a great problem should be handled by the whole international system together; they need to fulfil their responsibilities. In providing support in terms of mechanisms and providing financial assistance, the European Union is late and is functioning very slowly, which, unfortunately, causes the humanitarian tragedy before our eyes to escalate even more.

*Visit to Greece-Joint Press Conference with Greek Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Nikos Xydakis-Date: 03/11/2016, 15:11*

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“ Turkey has saved the European Union from one of the greatest crises in its history. It has achieved this through the 18 March Turkey-EU Statement during the migrant crisis.

*Discussions on the 2017 Budget for the Ministry for EU Affairs  
Date: 24/11/2016* ”

“ This resembles the Migration Period. We explained very clearly that the mass migration of Syrian refugees from the Mediterranean to Europe was akin to the Migration Period and that this phenomenon needed to be managed correctly, otherwise this would deliver a blow to the political institutions of Europe; and, indeed, this is what transpired.

*Discussions on the 2017 Budget for the Ministry for EU Affairs  
Date: 24/11/2016* ”



“ As a politician, I will always be proud of the fact that we host three million refugees in our country, but that they have never been used as material for domestic politics. Never has a racist political movement against them arisen.

*Visit to Belgium- Meeting with Journalists at the Turkey-EU Civil Society Meetings -Date: 29/11/2016, 12:53* ”

“ In my country, never has any political party assumed a stance against refugees in any election campaign or in any political polemics.

*Visit to Belgium- Meeting with Journalists at the Turkey-EU Civil Society Meetings -Date: 29/11/2016, 12:53* ”



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Humanity has to win this fight. Refugees do not constitute a problem for us. They are a blessing from God so that we are reminded of our humanity. They represent an opportunity for us to become better human beings and to make our continent, Europe, Anatolia, and the world more humanitarian. We need to think about it in this way. I also witness at times that some countries wish ‘to accept only the educated refugees and let other countries take the other refugees.’ Do you know what this is? This is called cultural racism. So, you want to accept a doctor into your country but not a labourer? That is cultural racism. Each human being is valuable as a human being. Therefore, this is also a challenge that requires us to do some soul-searching as well.

*Visit to Belgium-Panel on Education in Emergencies  
Date: 30/11/2016*

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If we cannot educate refugee children, then firstly these children will become a lost generation; we will lose all of these children. Secondly, this will cause these children to be subject to the influence of certain extremist movements, which would later pose much greater security threats. Certain organizations are running after these refugees, these refugee children. We can count Daesh and the PKK among these. They and other terrorist organizations are trying to recruit these children.

*Visit to Belgium-Panel on Education in Emergencies  
Date: 30/11/2016*

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We consider it praiseworthy that no political party in Turkey has placed refugees at the centre of political discussions and has never used them as material for their politics, and that there has been no mainstream approach of a racist or fascist nature against refugees.

*Plenary Session of the TGNA on the 2017 Budget for  
the Ministry for EU Affairs-Date: 13/12/2016*

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We constantly express in our meetings that as a European state and a European democracy, Turkey is the only country in which no racist or fascist discourse has been employed against refugees; we are very proud of this.

*Plenary Session of the TGNA on the 2017 Budget for  
the Ministry for EU Affairs-Date: 13/12/2016*

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Millions of refugees in Turkey are never made a subject for political debate. We are in full solidarity with these people.

*TRT Türk Special Interview-Date: 14/12/2016, 18:04*

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The number of people we host is about half the Slovakian population; we host three million people. Among these, we educate as many Syrian children as the total number of students in Finland.

*Visit to Germany-Meeting with Turkish and German Businessmen  
Date: 15/12/2016, 12:43*

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We see that the 18 March Turkey-EU Statement is implemented successfully and is helping prevent a great humanitarian and political crisis that Europe and the world at large is facing.

*Visit to Germany-Meeting with Turkish and German Businessmen  
Date: 15/12/2016, 12:43*

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The mechanism that the European Union uses to transfer this financial assistance is so slow that I fear these primary school children will have reached retirement age by the time the financial assistance arrives.

*Visit to Germany-Meeting with Turkish and German Businessmen  
Date: 15/12/2016, 12:43*

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Turkey hosts three million refugees. We still believe that the European Union unfortunately does not sufficiently honour its commitments in this regard.

*Joint Press Conference with Finnish Foreign Affairs Minister Timo Soini  
Date: 11/01/2017*

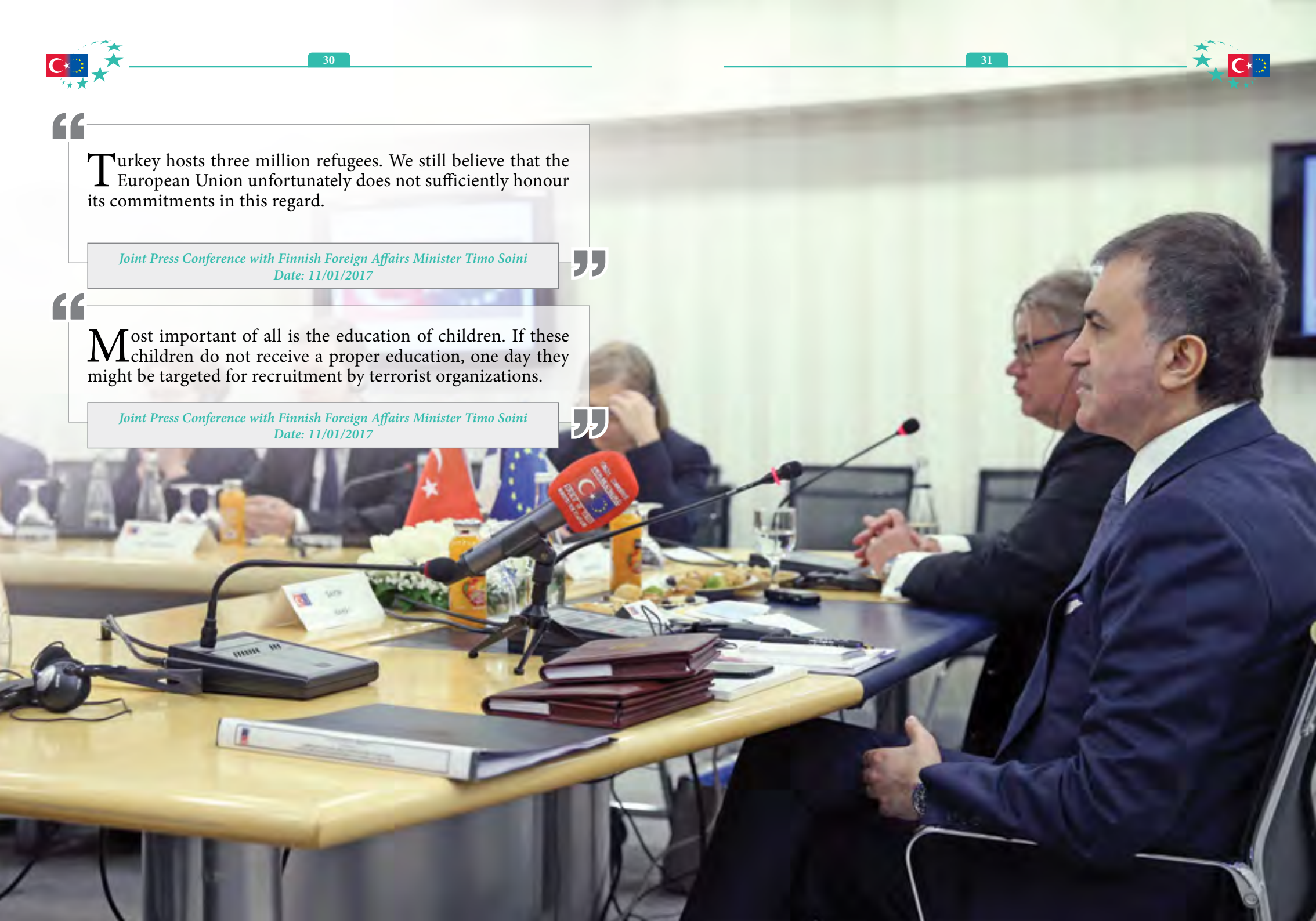
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Most important of all is the education of children. If these children do not receive a proper education, one day they might be targeted for recruitment by terrorist organizations.

*Joint Press Conference with Finnish Foreign Affairs Minister Timo Soini  
Date: 11/01/2017*

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It is illogical not to grant Turkey visa liberalization. They are asking us to amend the Anti-Terrorism Law. There is no nation-state, no national military, no national police force on the other side of our 1295 kilometre-long Iraq-Syria border. We are fighting Daesh here with our military force. When you see this bigger picture, it is illogical to suggest that Turkey amend its Anti-Terrorism Law.

*A Haber Special Interview-Date: 09/02/2017, 12:05*

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Asking Turkey ‘to amend its Anti-Terrorism Law’ in these conditions would be to weaken Turkey’s security as well as security of the EU. Nowadays, an issue in Mosul, al-Bab, or Raqqa is not simply a Middle East issue; it is also fast becoming a European Union issue.

*A Haber Special Interview-Date: 09/02/2017, 12:05*

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When mainstream politicians cannot take a strong stance in debates about Turkey and against the lack of principles in these matters, after a point, they also strengthen other approaches that harm Europe’s fundamental values and the policies of the Union. This is a two-way process. Any approach that excludes Turkey, tries to prevent Turkey’s integration with Europe, or makes it difficult for Turkish citizens or Turkish businessmen to go to Europe will eventually diminish Europe’s attractiveness as a union.

*A Haber Special Interview-Date: 09/02/2017, 12:05*

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Let us not forget that if Turkey had not hosted these three million people, they would have all gone to Europe through the Mediterranean. There would have been many humanitarian tragedies. Far-right movements would have abused the migrant situation and changed the political map of Europe. Let me emphasize that what Turkey is doing is saving the future of Europe.

*Speech Made at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)  
Date: 09/02/2017*

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We should not build walls but bridges. But when we look at the EU Member States, do we actually see that this is done in practice? I think instead of building bridges, they are building walls in two ways. Firstly, Turkey alone is fulfilling its obligations in dealing with these migrants who are fleeing from death. The EU Member States are not fulfilling their responsibilities. Secondly, the rising far-right movements in Europe are building ideological and political walls inside the European continent; they are building new Berlin Walls in terms of their mind-set, and creating even bigger barriers.

*Press Conference at the Paris Embassy Residence-Date: 10/02/2017*

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The European Union did not pass the test in protecting migrants, protecting people running from persecution and from their deaths. What did they do when they could not pass the test? In the face of the anti-migrant rhetoric and politics of the far-right, they developed approaches such as closing off their borders and employing isolationist policies.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk-Date: 08/03/2017*

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What do you do when you ostracize these migrants, what do you compel these people to, these people who are running for their lives? When you do that, you give them no opportunity apart from radicalism.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk-Date: 08/03/2017*

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By hosting three million people, Turkey is passing the humanitarian test on its own. In a way, Turkey is saving the honour of humanity.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk-Date: 08/03/2017*

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What Turkey is achieving is miraculous. Before the March 18 Turkey-EU Statement, seven thousand people crossed the Aegean Sea in one day. This number is now 20 to 30. Even on the night of the coup attempt, the number did not reach 100. I say in Europe that this resembles the Migration Period in history. As in the Migration Period, these events could have changed the whole political map of Europe. It could have led to the reactionary far-right domination of the whole political map of Europe. Turkey has saved the political future of Europe.

*Anadolu Agency Editorial Desk-Date: 08/03/2017*

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Today, crises caused by wars, natural disasters and epidemics target the peace and common future of all humanity. Humanity is faced with great challenges. With what it has done so far and what it will do in the future, Turkey is making a great effort in coping with these crises.

*Joint Press Conference with European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides-Date: 07/06/2017*

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We have never shied away from extending our helping hand to people in need. We are always sensitive towards those afflicted by natural disasters, wars, poverty and social conflicts, and we continue to support humanitarian work conducted in several countries.

*Joint Press Conference with European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides-Date: 07/06/2017*

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We should not regard the migrant issue as a burden for humanity but rather as an opportunity to prove our humanity. This issue is not solely a technical or a political issue. It has a great deal to do with our humanity. Unfortunately, when there is less migrant mobility and when migration flows abate, this is forgotten. But, as we can see, the humanitarian tragedy related to migration will continue.

*Joint Press Conference with European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides-Date: 07/06/2017*

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REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS

Mustafa Kemal Mahallesi 2082. Cad.  
No: 4 06530 100.Yıl Çankaya / Ankara - TURKEY  
Phone : +90 312 218 13 00  
Fax : +90 312 218 14 64



/ABBakanligi

[www.ab.gov.tr](http://www.ab.gov.tr)