Regional Updates

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CYPRUS

1. Greek Cypriot government welcomed the European Parliament’s position on EU visa liberalization for Turkish nationals. The parliament’s negative decision on introducing visa-free regime between EU and Turkey is in the accordance with the views of the Republic of Cyprus, the government spokesman Nicos Christodoulides said on May 12.

2. The Turkish Cypriot Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources Nazim Cavusoglu and the Turkish Minister of Forestry and Water Affairs Veysel Eroglu have signed a protocol on water transition at the conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul on May 20.

3. On May 20, the Turkish Cypriot President Mustafa Akinici suggested to his Greek counterpart to include Turkey as guarantor power in peace talks between the two Cypriot communities on the security and guarantee issues. “We do not accept warranties never ‘approach with saying that without guarantee of Turkey, the North will not respond to the referendum as yes’” Akinci said. Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasias insists on reaching a sustainable agreement between two sides of the island before conveying it to Turkey and other guarantor powers-Greece, Turkey and the UK.

4. According to the Cypriot parliamentary election results published on May 23, the right wing parties which are opposed to the federation with Turkey had increased their votes in contrast to the left parties left. Furthermore, the ultra-nationalist ELAM party passed the election threshold as taken 3.6 percentage of general votes and for the first time in the history won two seats in parliament.

5. Cypriot President Nicos Anastasias left early during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul on May 23 due to the fact that Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci was treated as a president of state at the summit. Akinci was invited to a dinner hosted by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on May 23, Anastasias was angered because the organizers did not promptly inform him about Akinci’s arrival. Moreover, Anastasias cancelled peace talks scheduled for May 25 and said that he will not accept the downgrading of the Republic of Cyprus. “A bi-communal dialogue between the two communities is one thing and the state of the Republic of Cyprus which is recognized internationally, is another”, Greek Cypriot President said following the incident.
6. On May 25, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasias met with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Athens. The two interlocutors discussed on Cyprus settlement, especially they exchanged their views on the matters of security and guarantees in the Cypriot reunifications talks.
ISRAEL-PALESTINE

Israeli Deputy Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Yair Golan was involved in a controversy following his remarks on Holocaust Remembrance Day. He said that Israeli society was demonstrating similar trends to those seen in 1930s Germany. The General was widely criticized by government ministers and defended by Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon who left office and resigned from the Knesset following PM Netanyahu’s decision to replace him with Yisrael Beitenu leader Avigdor Liberman. Moshe Ya’alon said that extremists have taken over Israel and the Likud Party.

The Palestinian Authority’s Foreign Ministry stated "Liberman joining the government is a renewed emphasis on the lack of a true peace partner in Israel, and on the correctness of the Palestinian approach to internationalize the Palestinian issue."

Negotiations between the main opposition party, the Zionist Union’s leader Isaac Herzog and PM Netanyahu took place during the month, as part of efforts to bring the Zionist Union to the coalition. While the negotiations have failed, Herzog also faced criticism from his own party. Herzog’s conditions for joining Netanyahu’s government were to take responsibility for fight against boycott movements, and negotiations with Palestinians over statehood, according to his statements on social media.

PM Benjamin Netanyahu once again rejected the French peace initiative. After meeting the French Foreign Minister, Netanyahu told his cabinet "I told him [Ayrault] the only way to advance genuine peace between us and the Palestinians is through direct negotiations between us and them, without preconditions."

On the other side, during a speech at a meeting of foreign ministers at the Arab League, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas commented on the French initiative by saying that “its purpose must be to implement the visions of both states, based on the border agreement of 1967 and the capital of the Palestinian state being eastern Jerusalem, so that both countries can live side by side, in safety, stability and peace – if Israel wishes to seek peace”. President Abbas also suggested NATO replace IDF in the West Bank.

NATO approved Israel office in its Brussels headquarters after Turkey Lifted its veto. Turkey’s move was interpreted by Jerusalem as another sign of Ankara’s desire to reconcile with Israel.
LIBYA

Political Developments

1. The head of Libya’s Unity Government has laid out plans to end Islamic State group’s activities in the country without foreign intervention. Meanwhile, The UN-backed Libyan Unity Government has called in a statement on its military forces to halt any military operations against the Islamic State-dominated city of Sirte.

2. Tunis hosted security experts from 6 African States and 35 Libyan tribal leaders to discuss security in Libya. On the other hand, Islamic State’s capture of villages along Libyan’s Southern Coast has prompted the deployment of militiamen to counter assaults.

3. Tunis has re-opened its embassy in Tripoli with Libyan Airlines set to also resume flights to Tunis according to Tunisian Prime Minister. Libya and Tunisia are also, set to counter terrorism. “we will conquer terrorism, but it will take time” Prime Minister Habib Essid said in a joint press conference with his Libyan counterpart in Tripoli.

4. Libyan’s new Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj has called on the international community to support its fight against terrorism urging the lifting of arms embargo and release of frozen funds due to UN backed sanctions. Added to this, Libyan authorities have allowed Gaddafi’s widow, Safia back as part of national reconciliation efforts.

Migration Issues

1. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported 84 migrants missing with 110 survivors, 26 migrants were rescued in a boat that sank off the coast of Libya. On the other hand, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor reports African Migrants in Libya continue to face kidnapping, torture and robbing en route to Europe.

2. Operation Sophia, EU’s Naval Mission to stop people smuggling in the Mediterranean is failing to achieve its aims according to British Parliamentary sources. Meanwhile, Libyan Coastguards on Sunday April 22, intercepted a boat carrying 850 migrants trying to reach Europe.

3. Around 3,000 migrants were saved in 23 separate rescue missions according to Italian Coastguards on May 25. The UK is also set to send a Royal Navy Warship to help tackle arms smuggling in Libya according to Prime Minister David Cameron at the G7 Summit in Japan.
Economic Developments

1. The Distya Ameya tanker returned with its oil to Zawiya after UN blacklisted the shipment amidst ongoing struggles of the country’s rival governments for control of its crude wealth. Meanwhile, Algeria has pledged to develop areas along Libya’s border according to Abdelkader Messahel, Algeria’s Minister for Maghreb Affairs in his latest visit to Tripoli.

2. World Bank has reported that Public-Private Partnerships remains key for jobs in Libya with regards to the youth, ex-combatants and women in the labour market. Also, rival Libyan oil firms have agreed to join forces in an effort to get production back on track. East Libya Oil deal exports is also set to resume after the brokerage of a diplomatic deal. On the other hand, there have been concerns by diplomats as fear of dual circulation of dinar notes by two central banks in Libya with different security and watermark features increases.

International Developments

1. Egypt’s foreign minister Sameh Shoukry through a phone call with Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord of Libya, Fayez al-Sarraj, have discussed the latest developments in Libya, the significance of international efforts to fight Islamic State and other terrorist organizations, including enhancing the capabilities of the Libyan armed forces.

2. Following recent NATO and EU meetings the US has committed to sending warships to strengthen naval presence on Libya’s Coast to check the inflow of overcrowded migrant vessels to Europe. Meanwhile, Matteo Renzi, Prime Minister of Italy has confirmed his government resisted the pressure for military intervention in Libya.

3. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta became the first head of government to visit Libya after the country’s formation of UN’s backed unity government. Efforts to collaborate in ending illegal migration and energy issues were discussed whilst Dr. George W. Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador of the United States to Libya Peter Bodde also have discussed recent developments in Libya and Malta’s commitment to support the Government of National Accord.

4. Bert Koenders, Dutch foreign minister has said that Libya is set to receive Dutch support and expressed willingness to unfreeze Libyan assets in the Netherlands for humanitarian purposes. Aside this, Leading diplomats are set to hold talks this month on Libya, Tunisia and Italy are very interested, for historic, political and geographic reasons, in resolving the crisis in Libya said Paolo Gentiloni, Italian Foreign Minister.
REGIONAL UPDATES: LIBYA

5. Countries including the US, UK and Saudi Arabia have agreed to lift Libya’s arms embargo to help its unity government fight Islamic State presence. A UN arms embargo is also, set to be amended to allow weapons to be sent by the West to Libya’s Unity Government as it seeks to establish itself in Tripoli. Furthermore, the United States has sanctioned Agila Saleh Issa Speaker and President of Libya’s House of Representative for preventing the smooth process of Political Transition.

6. Secretary of State John Kerry has met with the King of Saudi to discuss efforts to end conflicts in Libya, Yemen and Syria. Added to this, 20 States including the US and Italy gathered in Vienna to discuss Islamic State’s threat in Libya.

7. The US has added Islamic State in Yemen and Libya to its list of terror organizations and have subsequently sent US Special Forces and Surveillance to Libya as the West seeks to increase Libya’s fight against Islamic State.

8. NATO has said there are no plans for Military combat in Libya but would rather seek to build the capacity of Libya to defend itself according to group secretary, Jens Stoltenberg. On the other hand, Libya’s General Khalifa Haftar has said it will not work with the unity government until Militias are disbanded. Haftar leads the Libyan National Army (LNA).

9. According to Human Rights Watch, the Islamic State has executed almost 50 people in Libya. The government of India on the other hand too has banned all travels of Indians to Libya. The ban has been effective since May 3.
SYRIA

A report published by Sky News on May 2 noted that, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have had several deals and coordination with the Syrian government on the withdrawal from Palmyra including oil trade, and evacuation of areas before the Syrian army attacked.

The U.S. and Russia agreed to extend the cessation of hostilities to include the war-torn city of Aleppo on May 4. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) will also meet within the next two weeks to discuss the situation. In Germany, the Foreign Minister announced that he will host High Negotiations Committee (HNC) General Coordinator Riad Hijab, U.N. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, and French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault to facilitate the continuation of peace talks in Geneva.

Qatari Foreign Minister Khalid al-Attiyah met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to discuss the ceasefire in Aleppo and possibilities to revive the political process on May 6. In the wake of the bombed refugee camp in Idlib, he also highlighted the importance of saving Syria's population from the war.

As the truce in Aleppo was extended a few times, HNC Coordinator Hijab met with friends of Syria at the ministerial level in Paris. The meeting held on May 9 was attended by representatives of the UK, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Jordan, Turkey, and the EU. It aimed to address three points: the expansion of the cessation of hostilities from local truces to a nation-wide ceasefire; the improvement of humanitarian aid delivery to besieged areas; and the discussion on the people captured during the fighting and imprisoned.

On May 9, a Joint Statement was released by the Russian Federation and the United States on Syria to reaffirm their support for the cessation of hostilities (CoH). To reinvigorate the agreement, the co-chairs decided to focus on 5 measures: first, coordinate with field commanders to improve and sustain the CoH in Aleppo, Eastern Ghouta, and Latakia; second, to cease indiscriminate attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure, and medical facilities; third, the Russian Federation will work with the Syrian authorities to minimize aviation operations in civilian-dominated areas; fourth, the co-chairs urge all states to implement the UNSC Resolution 2253, to prevent any support to ISIL, al-Nusra Front, and any other UN-designated
REGIONAL UPDATES: SYRIA

terrorist organizations; and fifth, to facilitate a shared understanding of the threats posed, territory controlled, and ways to counter terrorist organizations. The co-chairs also declared their intent and efforts to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and to redouble efforts to reach a political settlement of the Syrian conflict.

Following meetings with officials in London and Paris, US Secretary of State John Kerry met with Saudi Arabia's King Salman al-Saud, in Jeddah to discuss the truce and most recent developments in Syria on May 15.

On May 17, the 17-member ISSG convened a meeting to consolidate the CoH and hasten the delivery of humanitarian aid to besieged and hard-to-reach areas in Syria. Following the meeting, Lavrov and Kerry both stated that they have made progress regarding the CoH, expansion of humanitarian assistance, and facilitating the political process. Additionally, a statement was issued by the ISSG to: welcome the U.S. and Russian recommitment to intensify the cessation's nationwide implementation; condemn the indiscriminate attacks by any party to the conflict; commit to intensifying the efforts to stop the indiscriminate use of force; call for the immediate lifting of all sieges and delivery of humanitarian aid by airdrops if convoys are not allowed to pass by June 1; and support a genuine political transition.

Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu proposed on May 19 that Russia and the U.S. coordinate airstrikes on al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups that are not party to the truce in Syria. Pentagon spokesman Jeff Davis responded claiming that they will not collaborate with Russia due to their links with the Assad regime.

The Head of U.S. Central Command, General Joseph Votel, made a secret visit to northern Syria on May 21 to meet with U.S. military advisers and leaders of the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and assess the efforts to train local forces fighting ISIS.

During a forum for democracy and development in Qatar on May 22, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on regional and international powers to resume the peace negotiations in Geneva.

ISIS claimed responsibility for a series of car bombings that targeted the regime loyalist cities of Jableh and Tartous. The attacks killed a total of 120 people on May 23.

On May 25, the U.S. carried out airstrikes on ISIS defensive positions in the city of Raqqa. On the ground, Kurdish groups YPG and SDF also pushed their offensive on ISIS positions to liberate the city. As the offensive proceeded, civilians fled Raqqa to safer neighboring places. In
response to this military development, Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that Russia is also ready to coordinate similar anti-ISIS activities. Days later, ISIS launched surprise attacks on key villages along Syria’s border with Turkey, causing approximately 100,000 Syrians to flee the war-stricken areas.

Special Envoy de Mistura the UN Security Council on the current situation pertaining to Syria’s office announced that the peace talks in Geneva will not be held until 2-3 weeks due to the lack of progress on the cessation of hostilities and access to areas in dire need of humanitarian aid.

On May 27, the European Union extended sanctions on the Assad regime until June 1, 2017. The sanctions include an oil embargo, restrictions on investment, asset freezes, export restrictions, and travel bans.

At the end of May, Chief Negotiator of Jaysh al-Islam, Mohammed Alloush, announced his resignation from the Geneva peace talks, citing the failures of the talks to either secure the release of detainees or facilitate a political transition; and the continued violation of the cessation of hostilities. He called on the U.S. and Russia to increase their efforts in securing and enforcing a ceasefire.
REGIONAL UPDATES: WESTERN BALKANS

WESTERN BALKANS

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On May 7, the former Turkish PM Ahmet Davutoglu visited Banja Luka, the capital of the Serb-dominated entity to attend the re-opening of a renovated 16th century Ferhadija Mosque that had been destroyed in the Bosnian War.

“"We are here for fellowship, for humanity, for multicultural Bosnia-Herzegovina. We were here, we are here, we will be here for eternity," Davutoglu pointed out at the opening ceremony. Furthermore, Davutoglu met with the Chairman of the Bosnian Presidency Bakir Izetbegovic and confirmed Turkey’s intention to support Bosnia’s path to the EU and NATO membership. In Banja Luka, the government and the opposition parties organized two rival protests on May 14.

The poor state of economy and corruption were the main reasons for holding opposition rally. At the pro-governmental protest, President of Serbian entity Milorad Dodik highlighted that Republika Srpska is a real state capable of defending itself. According to Dodik, the pro-governmental gathering aims to prevent “internal treason” of Serbian national interests on behalf of the opposition. On May 19, the Bosnian statistics agency decided to publish the results of the 2013 census in order to fulfill international recommendations and to meet the publishing deadline on July 1. Bosnian Serbs leaders condemned this decision due to the reason that three national statistical agencies in BiH could not agree on the criteria to define the number of permanent residents.

Kosovo

On May 4, the European Commission proposed visa-free travel for Kosovo’s citizens after Pristina successfully met all the requirements of its visa liberalization roadmap. The visa-free regime for Kosovo will enter into force following the adoption of the proposal by the European Parliament and the Council of EU. On May 16, the deputy speaker of the EU Parliament Ulrike Lunacek paid an official visit to Pristina where she called on Kosovo authorities to take decisive measures in order not to delay the visa-free regime with EU.

According to Luncek, the ratification of the Demarcation Agreement with Montenegro and the creation of the Association of Serb Communes is a condition for the visa liberalization. On May
16, the UN Security Council discussed the situation in Kosovo. Kosovo’s ambassador to UN, Vlora Citaku pointed out the latest achievement of Kosovo such as the proposal for the liberalization of visas and accession to the international football organizations. Citaku also warned that Serbia still continues to hamper Kosovo’s attempts to join international organizations and institutions. Kosovo moved closer to the NATO after the US Congress unanimously voted on May 18 in favor of an amendment which call on US to back Kosovo accession to the NATO Partnership for Peace programme. At the end of the month, a new round of Belgrade-Pristina dialogue was held in Brussels. Kosovo’s delegation insisted that Serbia remove completely its parallel structures in Kosovo in order to establish the Association of Serb Communes, besides this, Pristina criticized Serbia’s blockade for Kosovo’s telephone code and for the independent distribution of energy.

**Macedonia**

Anti-government protests has continued in Skopje and other Macedonian cities, calling for repealing President’s Gjorge Ivanov decision to pardon all of those involved in the wire-tapping scandal. On May 16 in an interview with Greek daily, Greece’s Foreign Minister Nicos Kotzias said that conditions should mature in Macedonia so two countries would be able to find a “substantial comprise” on the Macedonian name dispute. On May 18, Macedonia’s MPs voted to postpone the general election planned for June 5 following the Constitutional Court’s decision that parliament’s earlier dissolution was unconstitutional. Apart from the ruling, VMRO DPMNE and other political parties in Macedonia, as well as US and EU called for delaying the June election in order to meet the criteria for holding free and fair polls.

**Montenegro**

Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Djukanovic signed an accession protocol with NATO at alliance’s headquarters in Brussels on May 19. Russian officials expressed concern over Montenegrin signature, pointing out that Moscow could change its policy to “this friendly country”. On May 19, Montenegrin MP’s approved a government reshuffle following the deal on organizing "free and fair elections" between the ruling party and the opposition. Montenegro marked ten years of independence on May 21, the central celebration was held in country’s capital Podgorica with the participation of the President of the European Council Donald Tusk.

**Serbia**

On May 16, Serbia’s President Tomislav Nikolic officially invited President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping to visit Serbia. On May 14, European Parliament Vice President
Ulrike Lunacek said she is convinced that Serbia will not be able to join EU until Belgrade recognizes Kosovo. The Higher Court in Belgrade decided on May 18 not to extradite three members of the nationalist Serbian Radical Party to the Hague Tribunal, who are accused for alleged witness intimidation. According to some Croatian high officials this decision showed that Serbia is not fully cooperating with The Hague Tribunal, due to this reason Zagreb is not ready to back Serbia’s EU accession process. Serbian PM Aleksandar Vucic met with Russian President Valdimir Putin on May 26 during his private visit to Moscow. According to the Serbian and Russian media, two leaders talked on Serbia’s future cabinet when Putin expressed hope that new Serbian government would include people who are giving “serious attention to developing the relations between the Russian Federation and Serbia”. PM Vucic confirmed the intention of the new government to cooperate with Russia in the economic and political field, besides this, Vucic said that the new government will be formed by mid-June.
RUSSIA

International Affairs

1. The US-Georgian military exercises “Noble Partner 2016” represent a provocation aimed at “deliberate destabilization of the military-political situation in South Caucasus”, the Russian Foreign Ministry declared on May 6. At the same day, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov said that Moscow requires a judicially binding guarantee that the US missile system in Asia does not target Russia.

2. Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Sochi on May 7. The two leaders agreed to a ‘new approach’ in bid to resolve the territorial dispute over the Southern Kurils, as well as on expanding economic cooperation.

3. At the meeting with military commanders on May 13, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the deployment of NATO’s missile shield in Romania signify a potential threat for Russian security. Putin warned that the US is creating condition for breaching the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and trying to change strategic balance of force in Europe.

4. Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makey said Russia and his country will jointly develop “adequate reactive measures” in order to respond to the deployment of NATO’s missile shield in Romania and other Eastern European countries. Makey reported these statements at the meeting with Russian FM Sergey Lavrov on May 16. Furthermore, the two FM agreed that the Minsk Agreements are the only suitable tools to resolve Ukraine crisis.

5. On May 21, Russia’s Permanent Representative to NATO Alexander Grushko stated he does not see signs indicating NATO-Russia relations’ normalization, he added “NATO unilaterally severed and terminated all cooperation projects”.

6. On May 12, Russia called on EU not to support Turkey’s plan to establish safe zones for refugees in Syria. According to Russian Ambassador to EU Vladimir Chizov, the safe zones could become shelter for radical Islamist where they would have opportunity to refurbish their weapons and supplies. Turkey’s plan directly violates Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity, Chizov added.
7. Russian Foreign Ministry’s spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on May 19 that Turkey’s stance on Crimean Tatars is biased and extremely politicized, without considering true reasons behind Crimea’s “reunification” with Russia. Moscow’s decree on political rehabilitation of Crimean Tatars was adopted soon after Crimea’s “access” into Russia with regard to eliminating negative consequences of deportation, she emphasized. Furthermore, Zakharova said that Russia supports UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ claim for Ankara to provide possibility that independent observers visit Turkey’s southeastern regions with the aim to monitor the humanitarian situation.

8. Appointment of a new prime minister in Turkey will hardly change the relation between Russia and Turkey, first deputy chairman of the Russian Federation Council’s international affairs committee Vladimir Dzhabarov said on May 23. Dzhabarov interpreted Binali Yildirim’s appointment as one more step in order to make Turkey a presidential republic.

9. Russia-ASEAN summit was organized in Sochi on May 19-20, with the focus on: cooperation between integration associations in Eurasia and in the Asia-Pacific region; security cooperation; culture tourism; and conservation of world cultural heritage.

10. At the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul on May 23-24, Russian delegation was led by Russian Deputy Emergencies Minister Sergey Voronov.

11. On May 27, the G7 leaders decided to prolong sanctions imposed on Russia for its role in the Ukraine crisis.

12. On May 27, Russian President Vladimir Putin paid an official visit to Greece, where he met with Greek leaders. Additionally, Putin visited a Russian Orthodox monastic community in the northern Greek peninsula of Mount Athos due to the celebration of 1,000 years of Russian presence at Mount Athos.

Internal Affairs

1. On May 9, Russia celebrated her 71st anniversary of Victory in World War II with military parades and festive events in Moscow and other Russian cities. Approximately 10,000 soldiers, 135 items of military hardware and 71 aircrafts and helicopters were involved in the central parade in Moscow.

2. The first chief of the newly established National Guard’s Main Staff is Sergey Chenchik, according to presidential decree dated on May 20.
3. The first nationwide primaries were held on May 23 by the ruling United Russia, ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections in September.
UKRAINE

1. The Ukrainian defence intelligence announced on May 1 that Russia sent additional fighters and military equipment to the cities of Donetsk and Antratsyt in eastern Ukraine. Moreover, six Russian soldiers were killed in combat with Ukrainian army on May 25-26 near the cities of Donetsk and Horlivka. On May 30, Ukrainian defence intelligence stated that Russia deployed nuclear weapons and “aviation – surface vessels which are able to carry and use nuclear hardware” in Crimea.

2. Ukrainian and Turkish Armed Forces have signed a military cooperation roadmap on May 17. The agreement aims to strengthen ties with Turkey and to prepare Ukraine's Armed Forces for joining NATO in 2020, according to the Ukrainian General Staff. On May 24, Ukrainian President’s Press office reported that 3,000 Ukrainian police officers are set to train in Turkey, also, the two side agreed on mutual investment protection in order to avoid double taxations. The deals were reached by Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko and his counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan during Poroshenko visit to Istanbul.

3. On May 18, Ukraine commemorated the mass deportation of Tatars from Crimea in 1944. The Day of Commemoration of Victims of the Crimean Tatars' Genocide was established in 2015.

4. According to the police on May 20, over 2000 people mostly supporters of the nationalist parties and movements protested in front of the parliament in Kiev against Ukrainian administration’s plan to organize election in the country’s breakaway region Donbass.

5. The self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics’ (DPR and LPR) envoy to the Minsk Contact Group Denis Pushilin said on May 24 that they are against the deployment of an armed police OSCE mission in Donbass which aims to monitor the upcoming local election.

6. Ukrainian combat jet pilot Nadia Savchenko left jail after Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a pardon decree on May 25, a day before Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko pardoned two Russian citizens charged for terrorism.

7. On May 30, the leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) Alexander Zakharchenko said that DPR could reunite with Ukraine under certain circumstances such as: a demassification of Ukraine and eliminating Maydan’s effects from political and social life;
conducting a constitutional reform that will transform Ukraine from unitary state into confederation; holding free and democratic elections.
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