

MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (11 Apr - 16 May 2022)

KEY EVENTS

1 Europe Races To End Its Russia Gas Addiction

2022-04-12 The EU entered a race to replace Russian energy. Several countries are essential to reinforcing the EU's energy supply, such as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Qatar, and the US, notably via LNG. [BLOOMBERG BUSINESS](#)

2 Focus On LNG, Not Pipelines, US Official Tells Kathimerini

2022-04-07 The US favours transporting natural gas via LNG and the incorporation of Turkey into the regional energy cooperation so that the region could become an important "energy engine." [EKATHIMERINI](#)

3 Energean Discovers New Gas Off Israel's Coast

2022-05-09 Eastern Mediterranean-focused oil and gas producer Energean said it had made a new commercial gas discovery off the coast of Israel. Yet, it fell far short of the company's previous estimates. [REUTERS](#)

4 Crete Fields Key To Natural Gas Potential

2022-04-16 Total and ExxonMobil are asked to accelerate research efforts off Crete. Earlier studies show potential reserves of 70-90 trillion cubic feet of gas. Experts say it could alter the Greek economy as the largest reserve in the East Med. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

5 Energy Cooperation With Israel And Cyprus | EKathimerini.Com

2022-04-12 The ministers further agreed to examine the possibility of an LNG terminal in Cyprus in order to make optimal use of the natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

6 Greece To Extend Base Access Deal With US Military

2022-05-12 Greece's parliament approved the 5-year-extension (instead of one) and amendment of MDCA, the defence cooperation deal with the US, days before Greek PM Mitsotakis' visit to Washington. [AP NEWS](#)

7 State Department: Greece An Essential Ally For The Security Of NATO's Southern Wing | EKathimerini.Com

2022-05-12 Greece is an essential ally for the security of NATO's southern wing, a State Department official said. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

8 Biden Administration Asks Congress To Approve New Weapons Deal With Turkey.

2022-05-11 Ankara's role in the Ukraine conflict helped repair frayed ties with Washington. It could set the stage for the sale of F-16s and upgrade kits to Turkey, which the US administration asked congressional leaders to approve. [THE WALL STREET JOURNAL](#)

9 Turkey May Be Planning New Drilling In Mediterranean In Early July

2022-05-12 Turkey's newly purchased drillship, expected to arrive in the country in the coming days, will be ready to explore for hydrocarbons in the East Med in two months, said the chairman of the Turkish Petroleum Corporation. [AHVAL](#)

10 Turkey And U.S. Work To Repair Strained Relations

2022-04-13 Turkey and the U.S. recently announced the launch of a "strategic mechanism" aimed at repairing relations and unlocking potential cooperation in different areas during the visit of the US Under Secretary Nuland. She also suggests Cyprus seek alternatives instead of the too expensive East Med pipeline in her visit to Nicosia. [AXIOS](#)

11 Italy, Egypt Sign Deal To Boost LNG Exports To Europe

2022-04-14 The Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company and Italy's Eni signed a deal to maximise gas production and export liquefied natural gas from Egypt to Europe. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)

12 Eni-Total To Resume Work Off Cyprus | EKathimerini.Com

2022-04-13 The Eni-Total consortium will resume work on Block 6 within Cyprus' exclusive economic zone and conduct drilling at a specific point in Block 6 to get a better picture of the Calypso deposit. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

13 Panagiotopoulos Says "Now Is Not The Time To Speak Against Turkey" As Turkish Jets Violate Greek Airspace 90x In A SINGLE Day.

2022-04-16 Greek Defence Minister Panagiotopoulos said that due to the war in Ukraine, "now is not the best time to speak against Turkey in NATO" despite Turkey continuing its daily violations of Greek airspace. [GREEK CITY TIMES](#)

14 Cyprus To Export Natural Gas By 2026, Energy Minister Says | EKathimerini.Com

2022-05-04 Cyprus is hoping to begin exporting its natural gas from the Aphrodite gas field by 2026, Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry, Natasa Pilides, has said. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

15 Turkey's Top Diplomat Due In Israel In May - Turkey News

2022-05-03 Foreign Minister will hold talks on the normalisation of the bilateral ties in Israel on May 25. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

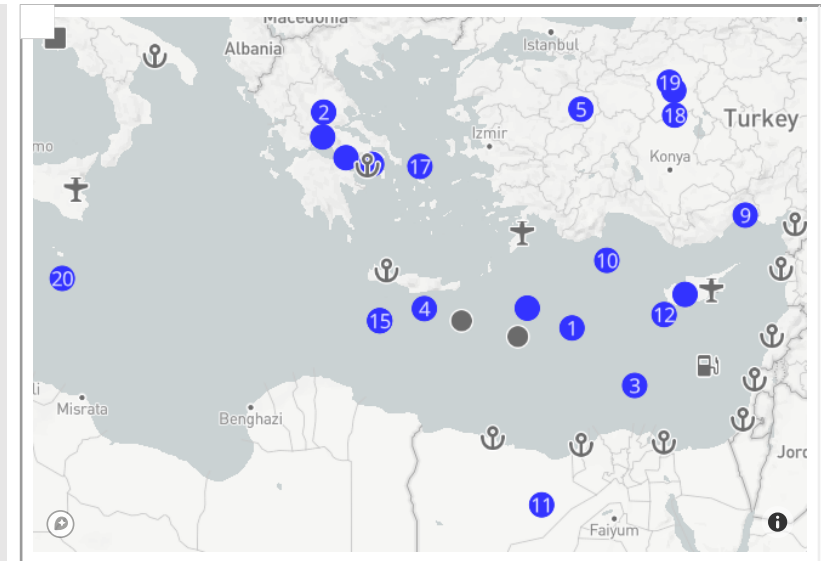
16 Turkey Tightening Restrictions On Hamas, Dozens Deported - Officials | | Ahval

2022-05-09 Turkey increased restrictions on the leaders and activists of Hamas in the country, deporting dozens and preventing others from entering, The New Arab reported. [AHVAL](#)

17 'Unacceptable Provocation': Greece-Turkey Spar Over Airspace

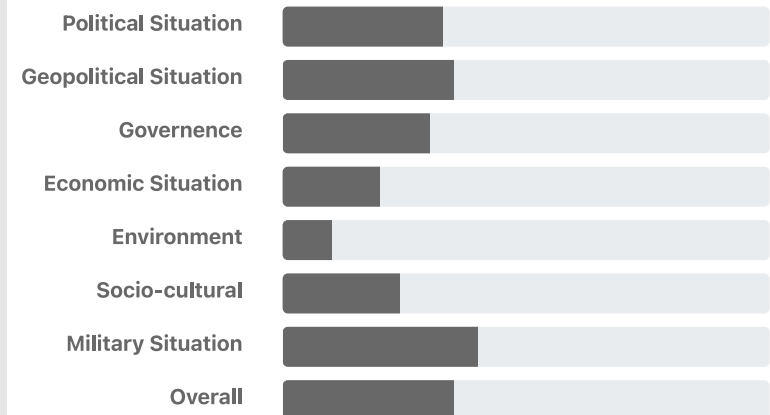
2022-04-28 Greece accused Turkey of undermining NATO unity by violating its airspace with fighter jets, prompting an angry Turkish response that blamed Athens for "provocative" violations of its own airspace. [AL JAZEERA ONLINE](#)

18 Defense Minister Urges Greece To Respond To Turkey's Call For 'Friendship' - Turkey News



AI Powered Crisis Situation

This product is prepared by a group of subject matter experts using a number of open sources with a hybrid methodology that merges both traditional methods and AI-powered, data-driven approaches.



2022-04-22 "We tell our neighbor Greece: 'Hold this hand of friendship that we sincerely extend.' Our neighbor takes a little slow

19 Turkey Woos Israeli Media With Five-Star Hotel, Top Restaurants | | Ahval

2022-04-14 Turkey is wooing the Israeli media by inviting journalists for meetings with officials in a five-star hotel. [AHVAL](#)

20 Mare Aperto 2022 Is Underway.

2022-05-09 Mare Aperto 22 (MA22), the largest exercise of the Italian Navy, commenced in the Central Mediterranean on May 3, 2022. The drills will last three weeks and include about 4,000 troops from 7 NATO nations. [MARINA MILITARE](#)

21 Seventh Report On The Naval Situation In The Mediterranean Sea

2022-05-12 NATO currently has 4 aircraft carriers available in the Mediterranean: USS Truman, ITS Cavour, ITS Garibaldi, and FNS Charles de Gaulle. RFN Marshall Ustinov, RFN Admiral Kasatonov, and RFN Admiral Grigorovich operate around Crete. The remaining naval units of the Russian Mediterranean task force are in the port of Tartus. [ITAMILRADAR](#)

22 EU External Borders In April: Detections On The Rise

2022-05-16 The illegal crossings detected in the Eastern Med surged to %66 (9109) this year, and Cyprus accounted for 68% (6273) of these figures. The Western Med route saw a slight increase of 4%, while the Central Med increased by 86%. [FRONTX](#)

ASSESSMENT

Europe has a difficult task, breaking its dependency on Russian energy resources. There are not much alternatives. The US collapsed the plans for the East Med pipeline, which is not already seen feasibly. LNG arises as an essential option to replace Russian gas. Therefore, the Mediterranean nations scramble to find additional gas reserves, which is crucial for meeting the demand and decreasing the expenses, especially for transportation. Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and Turkey conduct surveys to find natural gas.

In this context, Ankara struggles to normalise its relations with the regional countries. Washington encourages all countries to work together and does not want tensions and escalations in the middle of the Russian invasion. The success of the Turkish campaign to reset relations, which is also significantly affected by the war, has a mixed results. At first, most countries did not approach positively to this efforts though Ankara had already started tone down its rhetoric following the election of Biden as the new US president.

However, Turkey made important gestures to facilitate this process such as the transfer of Jamal Khashoggi's case to Saudi Arabia, restricting the activities of Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood in Turkey, and deporting some of their members. After these gestures as well as the war in Ukraine, the scene has started to change.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE welcomed the normalisation process and they made an unexpected and important progress. After the new government in Israel, Tel Aviv also started to gave positive signals which is solidified with official visits and communications. Egypt is less eager to respond to Turkey and the process is moving slowly despite the restraints imposed on the Muslim Brotherhood by Turkey.

There was some improvement after the meeting of Greek PM and the Turkish President in Istanbul. Yet, after the exchange of accusations about the overflights in the Aegean, Greece becomes more sceptical about making progress. The Greek Defence Minister's statement depicts that Athens try to balance its criticisms due to the war in Ukraine. Greece also decided to suspend the confidence building measures for now. This has two meanings.

First, the war provides an opening in which Ankara has restored some of its relationships by standing with Ukraine. The Biden administration suggested the Congress to approve F-16 deal and some key senators signalled that they will not exercise their veto rights as happened in the Turkey's expulsion from F35s. The atmosphere is not similar to the 2020 when Turkey was more and more isolated.

Second and less important, Greece does not want to undermine the unity within NATO, which will not be welcomed by other allies.

Concerning the military activities, Mediterranean is still busy. A group of NATO units completed a patrol in the context of the Operation Sea Guardian. SNMG2 joins the Italian Mare Aperto 2022, which is the largest exercise of the Italian Navy. Meanwhile, some Russian warships continue to operate around Crete and others are in the Port of Tartus, unlike the first days of war when all units were at sea.

MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (14 - 28 Mar 2022)

KEY EVENTS

- 1 Navy Pilots Flying Dozens Of Daily Russian Deterrence Missions From USS Harry S. Truman**
2022-03-19 Charles De Gaulle Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and the Italian Cavour joined USS Truman CSG in the Mediterranean. They conducted naval drills, and their air wings launched sorties to contribute to policing missions in Eastern Europe. [USNI NEWS](#)
- 2 Russian Warships And Submarines Spotted Around Crete**
2022-03-26 According to the OSINT reports, it is assessed that the Russian Ustinov and Varyag Surface Actions Groups are sailing in the West and South of Crete, and the Russian subs are operating in the East of Crete. [ITAMILRADAR](#)
- 3 Multinational Exercise "NOBLE DINA 2022"**
2022-03-27 The multinational exercise "NOBLE DINA 2022" was held in the East Mediterranean, with the participation of Naval assets from Greece, Israel, France, USA and Cyprus. [HELLENIC NAVY](#)
- 4 Turkey-Greece-Agree-Improve-Ties-Amid-Ukraine-Conflict**
2022-03-13 "Despite the disagreements between Turkey and Greece, it was agreed at the meeting to keep communication channels open and to improve bilateral relations," the Turkish presidency said in a statement. [REUTERS](#)
- 5 Guarded Optimism In Athens After Istanbul Talks**
2022-03-16 There is guarded optimism in Athens for bilateral relations after the meeting between Mitsotakis and Erdogan. [AHVAL](#)
- 6 Turkey Offers Greece Sharing Of Aegean Sea's Bounties**
2022-03-17 After talking with the Greek defence Minister, Akar said Turkey favours joint exploitation of "the riches of the Aegean" with Greece, for which they received a positive response. [THE NATIONAL HERALD](#)
- 7 Our View: Time For Cyprus To Be Realistic About A Role In Energy Supply**
2022-03-20 Cyprus Mail editorial suggests the government seek new ways to position Nicosia as a key player in the energy sector instead of pursuing a "fantasy world" based on the EastMed pipeline. It refers to the Energy minister's remarks that the project is a more medium-term choice for the EU and "at the moment the confirmed deposits are not enough" for export. [CYPRUS MAIL](#)
- 8 Alternative To EastMed For Cypriot Gas | EKathimerini.Com**
2022-03-21 Cypriot Energy Minister said that the EastMed pipeline is not a one-way street, and the aim is to find the most economical and efficient way. She expressed that LNG facilities in Egypt can be a good solution for Cyprus deposits. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 9 Turkey Slams EU For Non-Visionary 'Strategic Compass' - Turkey News**
2022-03-23 Turkey criticised the EU after the approval of the Strategic Compass, implicitly mentioning Turkey's activities in the Eastern Med "provocations and unilateral actions against EU member states." [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 10 Greece Signs New Arms Deals With France Worth \$4.4 Billion**
2022-03-24 Greece signed deals worth some 4 billion euros to buy three navy frigates and six additional Rafale fighter jets from France, as Athens strengthens its armed forces in response to tension with neighboring Turkey. [AP NEWS](#)
- 11 The Number Of Illegal Border Crossings Detected In The Eastern Mediterranean Spiked In 2022**
2022-03-23 The number of illegal border crossings detected in the Eastern Mediterranean Route also more than doubled to 3 500. Cyprus accounted for over 2 700 detections. [FRONTEX](#)

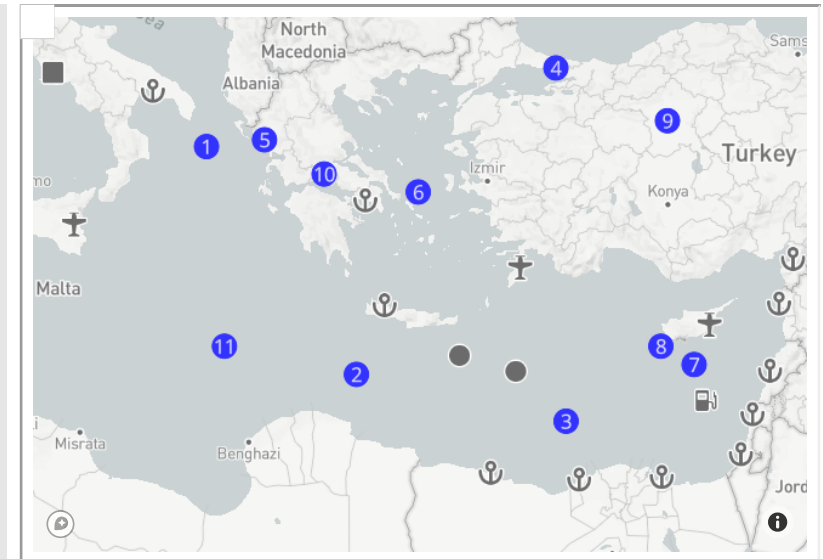
ASSESSMENT

Three allied aircraft carriers are underway in the region to contribute to a deterrent posture against Russia. Jets fly from carriers to assist Air Policing in Eastern Europe. Russia cannot move additional warships to the Black Sea due to the closure of the Turkish Straits. Yet, it has enough naval power in the Black Sea to conduct operations; it hence does not aim to confront the West. Russian warships in the Mediterranean concentrated around Crete, where they aimed to monitor NATO assets and impede naval traffic towards the Aegean.

There are rapid developments in the region; the US withdrawal from the East Med pipeline, Israel exploring alternative ways to export natural gas, notably via LNG, the EU's struggle to break its dependence on Russian gas, and Turkey's endeavour to repair its ties with its neighbours. Greece continues its plans to upgrade its military, notably the fighter jets and warships, to have a deterrent stance. The Strategic Compass, a document approved recently, which provides a common threat analysis for the EU, states that "the tensions in the Eastern Med remain, due to provocations and unilateral actions against EU Member States." Nothing can change overnight, and it is early to see a breakthrough. However, despite earlier scepticism, Ankara made important progress in repairing its ties with the Gulf states, Israel, and Egypt to some extent. Many factors contributed to this profound change, e.g. Biden's presidency, the plunging Turkish economy, the 2023 elections, Ankara's isolation, and the Russian invasion.

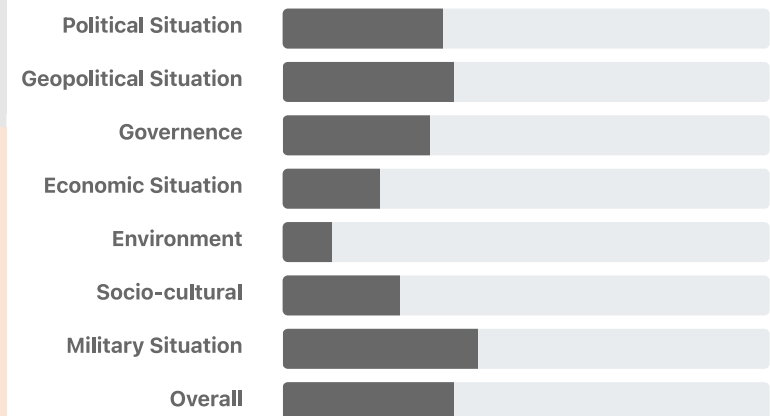
The latest developments indicate that Greece and Turkey "can" find ways to de-escalate and solve problems via diplomacy. The Russian invasion is a salient reminder of the high cost of war. It also provided Turkey with a diplomatic reach. Should Ankara keep this policy, it will not face a big problem with the West. Under the current conditions, the Turkish government is unlikely to change its current track.

Critics articulate that there are many disputes to be solved along with deep distrust, and Turkey made U-turns in the past. As pointed out previously, the so-called anti-Turkey alliance was based on pragmatism, not principles. Like Ankara, Nicosia and Athens were unwilling to compromise since they enjoyed powerful support due to the reactions toward Ankara's assertive policy. Now, it seems to be changing. The energy resources can be a facilitator instead of an impediment. In this context, every chance for normalisation should be seized by leaving the grievances and ideological clashes aside. It would be very challenging, but diplomacy is the only way out.



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MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (08 - 20 Mar 2022)

KEY EVENTS

- 1 Navy Pilots Flying Dozens Of Daily Russian Deterrence Missions From USS Harry S. Truman**
2022-03-19 The Truman Carrier Strike Group is joined in the Mediterranean by other ships from NATO, including FS Charles De Gaulle and the Italian aircraft carrier ITS Cavour. They conducted naval drills and their air wings launch sorties to contribute to policing missions in Eastern Europe. It is also reported that Russian warships and submarines were in the area. [USNI NEWS](#)
- 2 NATO's Operation Sea Guardian Returns To Western Mediterranean**
2022-03-17 NATO's Operation Sea Guardian Task Group set sail to patrol the waters of the western Mediterranean Sea. [MARCOM](#)
- 3 Fourth Offshore Drilling Ship For Turkey En Route From South Korea**
2022-03-08 Cobalt Explorer, a massive drilling vessel Turkey purchased last year, is reported to be sailing to Turkey. [AL-MONITOR](#)
- 4 Israel's President Visits Turkey In Sign Of Thawing Relations**
2022-03-09 President Herzog was received with pomp and ceremony by President Erdogan during a state visit described by both sides as an effort to reset after years of testy and broken relations between the onetime regional allies. [NYT](#)
- 5 'Turkey, Israel Could Cooperate In Eastern Mediterranean'**
2022-03-12 Turkey and Israel could cooperate in the Eastern Med., Deputy Speaker of the Knesset said to the Daily Sabah. He stated his optimism about a positive change in the relations after the "very positive meetings" of the presidents. [DAILY SABAH](#)
- 6 Turkey-Greece-Agree-Improve-Ties-Amid-Ukraine-Conflict**
2022-03-13 "Despite the disagreements between Turkey and Greece, it was agreed at the meeting to keep communication channels open and to improve bilateral relations," the Turkish presidency said in a statement. [REUTERS](#)
- 7 Greece, Turkey Vie For Relevance During Russia's War On Ukraine**
2022-03-14 As Russia's war in Ukraine drags through its third week, the Trans-Atlantic alliance is standing reinvigorated in the face of what they see as President Vladimir Putin's unilateral attempt to upend the post-Cold War security architecture in Europe. [AHVAL](#)
- 8 Guarded Optimism In Athens After Istanbul Talks**
2022-03-16 There is guarded optimism in Athens for bilateral relations after the meeting between Mitsotakis and Erdogan. [AHVAL](#)
- 9 Turkey Offers Greece Sharing Of Aegean Sea's Bounties**
2022-03-17 After talking with the Greek defence Minister, Akar said Turkey favours joint exploitation of "the riches of the Aegean" with Greece, for which they received a positive response. [THE NATIONAL HERALD](#)
- 10 Our View: Time For Cyprus To Be Realistic About A Role In Energy Supply**
2022-03-20 Cyprus Mail published an editorial suggesting the government explore new ways to position Nicosia as a key player in the energy sector instead of pursuing a "fantasy world" centred on the EastMed pipeline in a changing environment. It also refers to the Energy minister stating that the EastMed project would be a more medium-term choice for the EU and "at the moment the confirmed deposits are not enough" for export unless Israel is interested and does not make other deals. [CYPRUS MAIL](#)
- 11 Alexandroupoli Crucial For NATO**
2022-03-10 After the Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the port of Alexandroupoli in northern Greece remains crucial for the US plans on reinforcing allied forces in the east flank of NATO, particularly after the activation of NRF, NATO Response Force. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

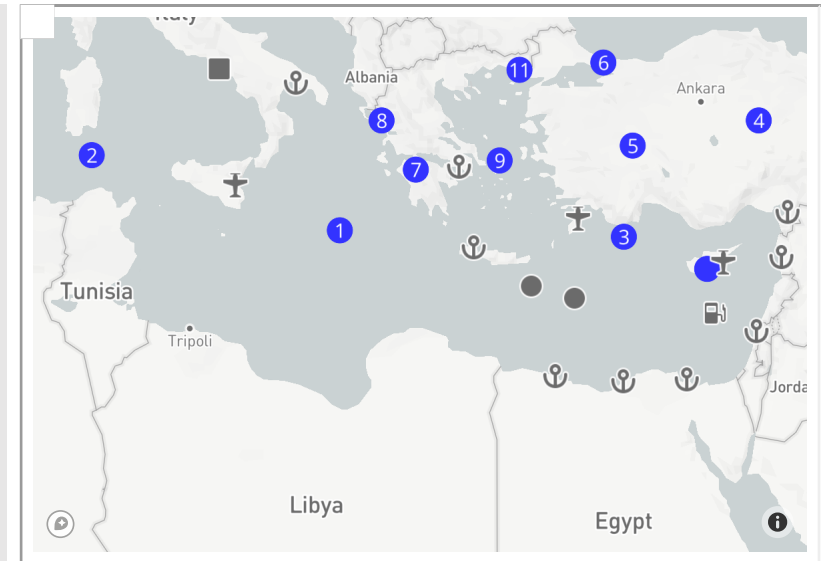
ASSESSMENT

There has been increased naval activity in the Mediterranean in the last weeks. Three allied aircraft carriers are still underway to contribute to a deterrent posture against Russia. One might question the purpose. After Turkey closed the straits, US Navy sent USS Truman to Northern Aegean if Russia was to violate it, and Turkey would seek help. Russia has enough warships in the Black Sea to conduct necessary operations, it hence does not aim to confront the West. Moreover, dozens of jets fly daily to assist Air Policing missions in Eastern Europe, where a fragile military situation exists due to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Concerning the regional dynamics, there are rapid developments. The US withdrew its support from the East Med pipeline. Israel explores alternative ways to export natural gas, notably via LNG. The EU struggles to break its dependence on Russian gas, and Turkey strives to repair its relations. Despite being faced with scepticism earlier, Ankara moved forward fast beyond expectations. Of course, nothing can change overnight, but we could not have anticipated recovery in Turkey's relations with the Gulf states, Egypt, or Israel. Many factors contributed to this profound change, e.g. Biden's presidency, plunging Turkish economy, incoming 2023 elections, its isolation in regional politics, and lastly Russian invasion of Ukraine.

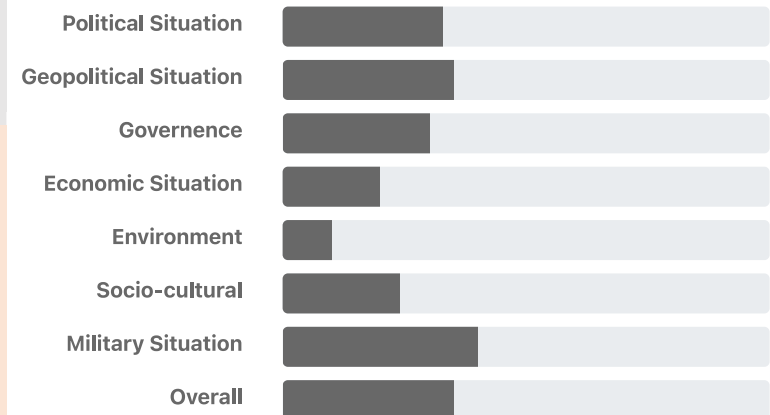
Ankara toned down its rhetoric and extended an olive branch to other countries. The only remaining country on the list of normalisation was Greece. Still, the latest developments indicate that Greece and Turkey "can" find ways to de-escalate and solve problems through diplomacy. In fact, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a salient manifestation of the high cost of war. The war in Ukraine also has provided Turkey with a diplomatic reach. Should Ankara keep its current policy, it will not face a substantial problem with the West. Considering the current conditions and challenges, the Turkish government seems open to dialogue and unlikely to change track.

Critics can articulate that there are so many problems to solve, Turkey made U-turns in the past, and they cannot trust each other. As pointed out in previous assessments, the so-called anti-Turkey alliance was based on pragmatism, not principles. Like Ankara, Nicosia and Athens were unwilling to compromise in the last years since they enjoyed powerful support due to Ankara's assertive policy and diverging preferences with the West. Currently, it seems to be changing. In this regard, every chance for normalisation should be seized by leaving the grievances and ideological clashes aside. It is very challenging, but diplomacy is the only way out.



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MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (14 - 27 Feb 2022)

KEY EVENTS

1 Unusual Russian Navy Concentration Seen In Eastern Mediterranean

2022-02-24 Russia reinforced its naval presence in the Mediterranean, much more than usual, aiming to support naval operations in the Black Sea and impede any involvement from NATO, which also solidified its task force with additional assets. [NAVAL NEWS](#)

2 US Navy Aircraft Had An 'Extremely Close' Encounter With Multiple Russian Military Jets Over The Mediterranean

2022-02-16 A US Navy aircraft had an "extremely close" encounter with multiple Russian jets in the Mediterranean. [CNN](#)

3 No Question On Greek Sovereignty Over Islands, Says EU

2022-02-13 Following the Turkish FM Cavusoglu's remarks about the demilitarization of the Aegean Islands, the EU's Spokesperson for External Affairs stated that "Greece's sovereignty over these islands is unquestionable." [AHVAL](#)

4 Dendias Meets With US Ambassador In Wake Of The Aegean Disputes

2022-02-14 Greek FM Dendias met the US Ambassador over the regional developments after Minister Cavusoglu's remarks. Also, "The sovereignty of Greece over these islands is not in question," said a State Department spokesman. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

5 Greek Parliament Approves Major Arms Deals With France

2022-02-16 Greece's parliament approved a 3 billion euro deal for three new French-made frigates that defence officials say are vital for addressing ongoing tensions with neighbouring Turkey. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

6 Turkish Fishing Boat Clashes With A Greek Coastguard Vessel.

2022-02-22 A Greek Coast Guard vessel fired warning shots after a Turkish fishing boat did not comply with a request to leave the Greek Waters and attempted to ram the Greek ship. After the incident, US Ambassador Pyatt stated that they are firmly committed to Greece's sovereignty and territorial integrity but welcome exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey. [NEO KOSMOS](#)

7 Athens Wary Of Recent Ankara Moves

2022-02-22 The concern is growing in Athens that Ankara's strategic choice to forcefully challenge and dispute Greece's sovereignty in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean could be transferred from the diplomatic field to the ground. [AHVAL](#)

8 Turkey, UAE Sign 13 Agreements During Erdoğan-Mohammed Bin Zayed Meeting

2022-02-14 Turkey and the UAE signed 13 cooperation agreements in sectors including defence and trade, during Turkish President Erdoğan's meeting with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed. [AHVAL](#)

9 Turkey, Greece Discuss 'Positive Agenda' In Athens

2022-02-22 eighbors Turkey and Greece held the third working meeting within the scope of a "positive agenda" dialogue in the Greek capital Athens, the Turkish Foreign Ministry announced on Monday. [DAILY SABAH](#)

10 Israeli President Welcomed In Greece

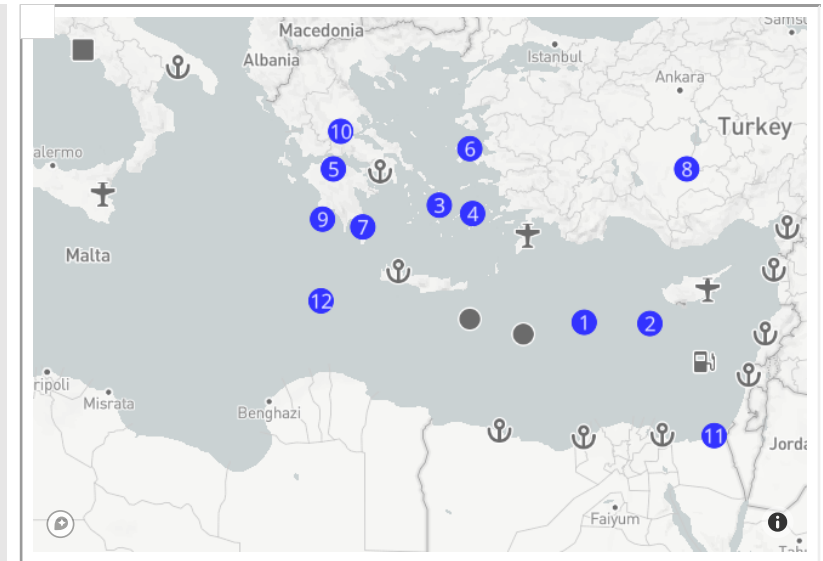
2022-02-25 Israeli President arrived in Athens ahead of his trip to Cyprus and his visit with President Erdogan. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

11 Israel's NewMed Energy Looks To Enter Moroccan Market

2022-02-22 Israel's NewMed Energy is looking to join the exploration sector in Morocco after it developed natural gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean that supply Israel, Egypt and Jordan, the company's chief executive said. [REUTERS](#)

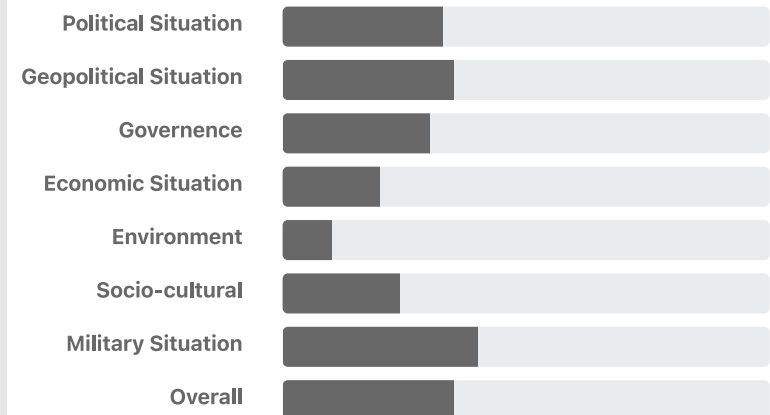
12 Situation At EU's External Borders In January.

2022-02-15 The number of illegal border crossings at EU's external borders in the first month of 2022 reached 13 160, 78% more than in January 2021 and 23% more than in 2020, according to preliminary calculations. [FRONTEx](#)



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ASSESSMENT

The tension of the Russian invasion can be felt in the Mediterranean. In December 2021, Defence Secretary Austin ordered USS Truman to stay in the region. Since then, there has been an increasing and unprecedented naval activity since the Cold War. NATO and Russia have significantly reinforced their task forces. There are currently three allied carrier strike groups (CSG) underway: the USS Truman CSG, French Charles de Gaulle CSG, Italian ITS Cavour CSG. Britain dispatched HMS Trent and HMS Diamond to the region. Allied nations articulated that they won't fight for Ukraine. Yet, considering the magnitude of the deployments and close manoeuvres, an awkward accident among the military jets or warships can deepen the existing tensions.

Turkey reiterates its objection to the militarisation of some Aegean Islands. Afterwards, the EU and the US voiced their support for Greek Sovereignty. The dispute has repercussions on the field. Both sides claim that their maritime and air borders have often been violated. Especially, Greek officials have depicted their anticipation of an escalation with Turkey. The disputes don't concern only military assets but civilian boats. Coast guards warn them, sometimes with a warning shot. In case of an accident, this may evolve into an unwanted escalation. France explicitly supports Greece. They inked deals regarding mutual defence and sales of Rafael fighters and FREMM frigates, approved by the Greek parliament. Last year, the French Navy conducted an unprecedented military exercise about a scenario of "an all-out war between two symmetrical forces." Also, the deployment Clemenceau 22 of the French CSG is limited to the Mediterranean, unlike in 2021, including visits to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Yet, it is hard to anticipate a connection between this planning and the expectation of Greece for an escalation.

Ankara continues to move on its normalisation agenda. Erdogan visited the UAE for the first time in years and signed deals/MoUs there. Next week, he will receive the Israeli President, for which Herzog paid a visit to Greece for reassuring them that no rapprochement won't be at the expense of Athens. Athens states that Erdogan pursues a very pragmatic policy instead of a principled one and makes rapid changes. Hence, it is hard to rebuild trust for Turkey with regional states. That is right, but it is also crucial to keep in mind that the regional alliance was built upon pure pragmatism. Turkey has a backsliding democracy, yet some members of that alliance are no different from Turkey. And, elections are also approaching in Turkey, so they want to invest for the future.

After the US dropped its support from the East Med pipeline, Israel is looking for alternatives. Israel has more options now considering the normalisation with Arab countries after the Abraham Accords in the region. Morocco could be the first one.

MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (10 - 30 Jan 2022)

KEY EVENTS

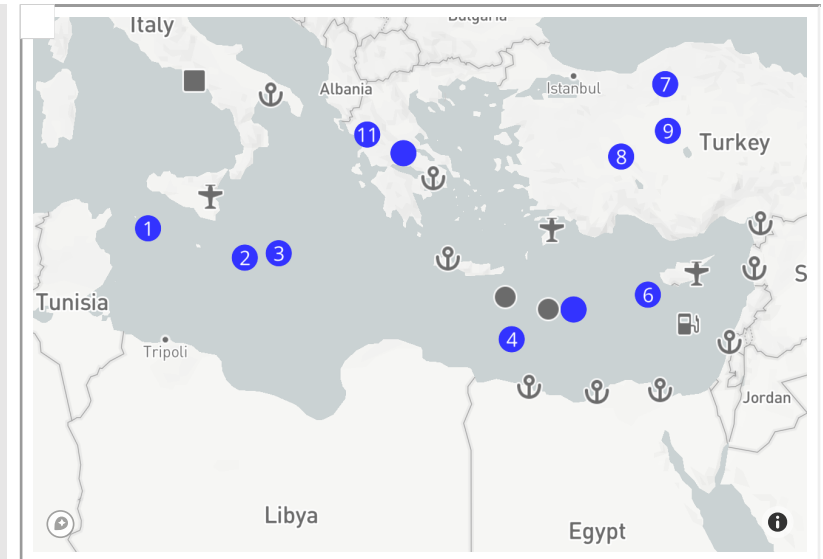
- 1 Six Russian Landing Ships That Left The Baltic Sea Have Entered The Mediterranean**
2022-01-27 The arrival of these warships comes ahead of major naval manoeuvres and concerns that they could take part in operations against Ukraine. [THE DRIVE](#)
- 2 US, French And Italian Navies To Conduct Tri Carrier Operations**
2022-01-20 The French carrier Charles de Gaulle strike group (CSG) will set sails in February for the "Mission Clemenceau 22." The French CSG will conduct "tri carrier operations" with the Italian Navy's Cavour CSG and the U.S. Navy's Truman CSG. [NAVALNEWS](#)
- 3 NATO Kicks Off Vigilance Activity Neptune Strike 2022**
2022-01-24 Neptune Strike 2022 is the execution phase of a series of activities known as Project Neptune, conceptualized in 2020. The drills focus on overcoming the complexities of integrating command and control of a carrier strike group to NATO. [US NAVY](#)
- 4 U.S. Voices Misgivings On EastMed Gas Pipeline -Greek Officials**
2022-01-11 The US expressed misgivings on the EastMed pipeline project designed to supply Europe with natural gas from the region, Greek government sources said, in an apparent U-turn over a project supported by the Trump administration. [REUTERS](#)
- 5 EU Commits \$736m To Fund Power Cable Linking Cyprus To Europe**
2022-01-27 The EU agreed to provide 657 million euros in funding for a power cable linking Cyprus and Israel with the European grid. [BLOOMBERG](#)
- 6 Anastasiades On EastMed: Ready To Examine Other Solutions**
2022-01-16 Cyprus President Anastasiades says there is the political will to implement EastMed, but if the gas pipeline is not feasible, the country will examine alternatives. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 7 Turkey's Diplomacy Priority 'Normalization With Regional Foes'**
2022-01-25 Turkey's near-term priority in foreign policy will continue to be normalizing the strained ties with regional foes, including Armenia, Israel and Gulf countries, the daily Hürriyet has learned from sources. [HURRIYET DAILY](#)
- 8 Turkey Signs \$5bn Swap Deal With UAE, Boosting Foreign Reserves.**
2022-01-19 Turkey depleted its reserves to defend the lira, which lost more than 40 per cent of its value last year. Turkey signed a \$4.9 billion currency swap deal with the UAE to boost its dwindling exchange reserves. [AL JAZEERA](#)
- 9 Israeli President May Visit Turkey Soon, Says Erdoğan**
2022-01-18 Turkish President Erdoğan said that his Israeli counterpart might arrive in Turkey soon on an official visit. [AHVAL](#)
- 10 Greece Boosts Air Force With Advanced French Jet Fighters**
2022-01-19 French-built fighter jets roared over the Acropolis as Greece races to modernize its military. [AP](#)
- 11 Athens And Ankara Seek Positive Agenda.**
2022-01-22 The Greek-Turkish Joint Economic Committee is meeting in Athens under Deputy Foreign Ministers of Greece and Turkey. Also, efforts are underway to hold the 64th round of exploratory contacts in Athens next month. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

ASSESSMENT

NATO kicked off a major military exercise dubbed Neptune Strike 2022 in which, since the Cold War, NATO assumed the command of an American aircraft carrier for the first time. Moreover, American, French and Italian carriers will conduct trilateral naval drills in the coming weeks. Though the Neptune Strike was planned in 2020, surging military activity is connected to the tensions in Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia dispatched warships from its Baltic Fleet to the region. Why did Moscow send them while it has a task force in the region? They may reinforce the existing Task force to monitor the NATO drills. A second possibility is that they will head to the Black Sea, where its regional Fleet is also carrying out naval exercises. In any case, it is again becoming crystal clear that security in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea are so intertwined considering the restrictions imposed by the Montreux Convention and the fact that NATO allies/partners in the region have limited naval capabilities; hence the Mediterranean is crucial for the reinforcements.

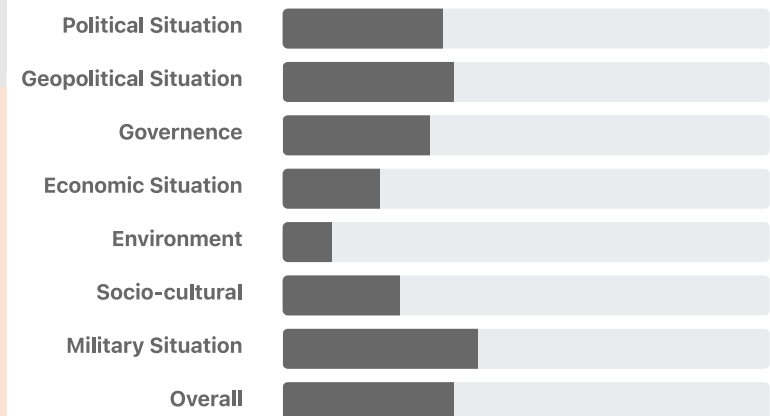
The Mediterranean also has its problems. Washington withdrew its support from the EastMed Gas Pipeline project with a non-paper citing financial viability and environmental concerns. It raised some dust in capitals. Athens and Tel Aviv did not respond publicly to the decision, while Cyprus President stated they were prepared to seek alternative solutions. On the Turkish side, Erdogan made several statements and offered a route via Turkey since Ankara strives to normalise its ties with the regional actors. EastMed project has long been a contentious issue. Constructing a pipeline under the sea is more complicated and expensive than those built on the land. Also, the EU aims to be carbon-free in the coming decades, so investing in a new pipeline does not make sense. As Nikos Tsafos from CSIS points out, the EU faces seasonal spikes, and a pipeline doesn't solve the underlying problem. The US does not support any pipeline, e.g. Keystone XL or Nord Stream 2. The decision is thus consistent with the Administration's policy.

Finally, the US has thrown its weight into supporting the trio, Athens, Nicosia, and Tel Aviv, yet it is not unlimited. In a crisis with Russia, in which Turkey's stance is vital despite the fluctuations in the relationship. Hence, Washington killed several birds with one stone. This does not mean appeasement towards Ankara. Instead, the US does not want to be distracted by a financially unfeasible project inconsistent with its environmental policy and can create disputes among allies. The US is still committed to the interconnectors and energy security in the East Med. For Greece, it means a calibration for energy policy. For Turkey, it is not a push to be a part of the pipeline project -unless it can agree with its regional peers- since Americans object to pipelines in principle. The real winner of this decision may be Egypt since it acts as a hub for LNG exports to Europe.



AI Powered Crisis Situation

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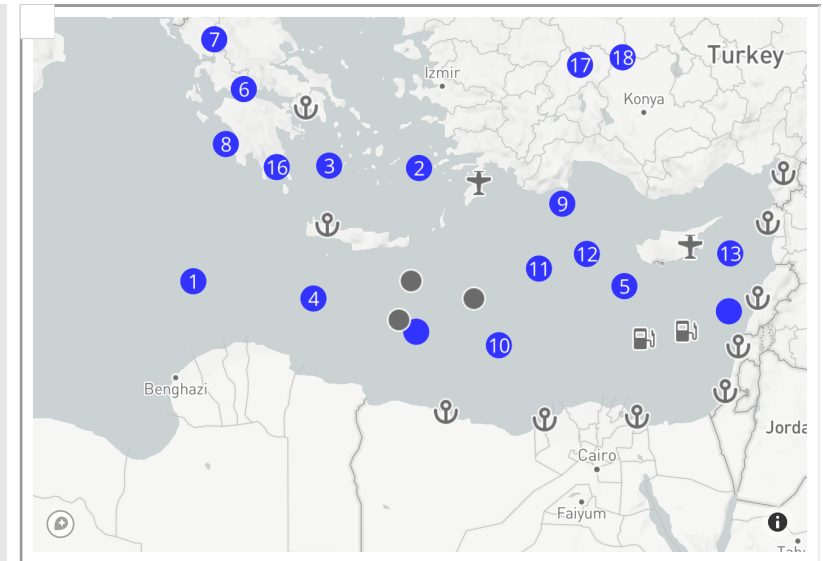
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MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (13 Dec 2021 - 10 Jan 2022)

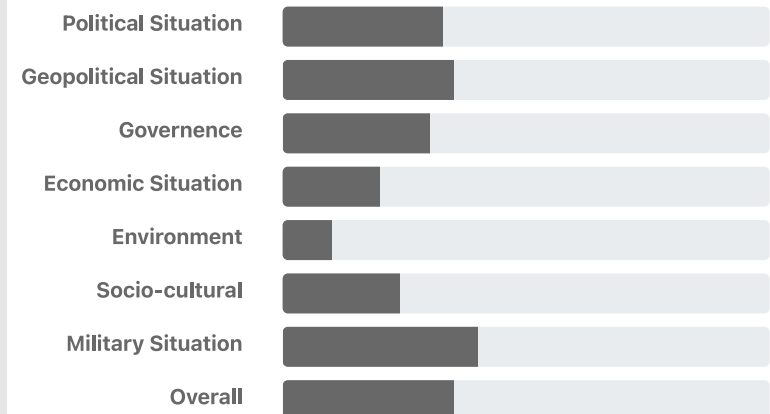
KEY EVENTS

- 1 A New Policy Brief From HRAS: CROSSING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA: SEARCHED FOR BUT NOT RESCUED**
2022-01-15 Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) published a new policy brief regarding the EU's response to the irregular migration in the Mediterranean. According to the report, more than 1,500 migrants have died or been missing partly due to the (mis)reaction of national/European authorities, notably Frontex, which showed hesitancy to conduct their responsibilities resulting from international law. Stakeholders pursue a pull& pushback policy and criminalisation of civil society organisations involved in Search and Rescue operations. The brief says, "Human rights apply at sea, as they do on land." [HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA](#)
- 2 Turkey's Nuclear Plans Threaten East Med Ecosystems**
2021-12-10 The power plant can harm the east Mediterranean region, comprising many coastal/marine ecosystems. Environmentalists expect a decline in the number of fish due to the high temperatures caused by the reactor. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 3 Greenpeace: Greek Gas Hunt An 'Unbearable' Threat To Whales**
2021-12-15 Greenpeace on Wednesday renewed calls against proposed deep-sea oil and gas exploration off southwest Greece, warning of "unbearable" consequences to endangered Mediterranean whales and dolphins. [AP NEWS](#)
- 4 US Warships Stay In Mediterranean Amid Ukraine, Russia Fears**
2021-12-28 Defense Secretary Austin ordered a U.S. Harry Truman strike group to stay in the Mediterranean Sea region rather than move on to the Middle East, amid worries about the buildup of thousands of Russian troops near the Ukraine border. [AP](#)
- 5 Spanish-Turkish Military Cooperation Revives Greek Concerns**
2021-12-17 Athens is again voicing its concern over Spain's pursuit of enhanced military cooperation with Greece's regional rival, and NATO ally, Turkey. [AHVAL](#)
- 6 State Department Approves Potential Frigate Sale To Greece, Despite Agreement With France.**
2021-12-11 The U.S. State Department on Friday approved a pair of potential deals for frigate construction and modernization with Greece, as the Hellenic Navy navigates a complex effort to upgrade its surface fleet. [DEFENSE NEWS](#)
- 7 U.S. Sees New Bright Spot In Europe: Greece**
2021-12-23 American tech companies, gas exporters and military expand activity in Greece, whose long-suffering economy bounces back [WSJ](#)
- 8 Russia-Turkey Axis Making Greece A NATO Frontline State | | Ahval**
2021-12-29 The emerging Russia-Turkey axis is overturning the power balances from the Black Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean – consequently transforming Greece into a NATO frontline state. [AHVAL](#)
- 9 Turkish Navy Published A NAVTEX Regarding Seismic Research Activities Of Oruc Reis.**
2021-12-14 Turkish Navy issued a navigational telex (Navtex) late that Oruc Reis seismic vessel will continue its seismic exploration mission off southern Turkey until January 31. [SHODD](#)
- 10 Egypt, Russia Navies Conclude Bridge Of Friendship 4 Drill In Mediterranean.**
2021-12-11 Warships of Egypt and Russia wrapped up the Bridge of Friendship 4 drills in the Egyptian territorial waters. [AHRAM](#)
- 11 Qatar's Presence In Eastern Mediterranean Benefits Egypt, Turkey**
2021-12-15 Experts believe that Qatar's increasing influence in the eastern Med may be a starting point for broader cooperation with Egypt, and it can create an opportunity for Doha to facilitate the rapprochement between Turkey and Egypt. [AL-MONITOR](#)
- 12 Turkey Says Exxon Mobil, Qatar Petroleum To Stay Out Of Its Jurisdiction In East Med**
2021-12-13 The United States and Qatar have assured Turkey that Exxon Mobil and Qatar Petroleum will stay out of Turkey's continental shelf in the eastern Mediterranean, Foreign Minister Cavusoglu said. [REUTERS](#)
- 13 Cyprus: The Next Stop Of China's Belt And Road Initiative**
2021-12-22 China and Cyprus formally announced their strategic partnership on the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic ties, which is of milestone significance to bilateral relations. The two heads of state decided to upgrade the China-Cyprus relationship to a strategic partnership during a phone conversation. [THE DIPLOMAT](#)
- 14 Israel Turns To UN Over Lebanese Tender For Drilling In Its Maritime Waters.**
2022-01-27 Israel's ambassador to the UN wrote a letter of protest on Sunday decrying Lebanon's issuance of an offshore drilling tender in disputed maritime waters. [JERUSALEM POST](#)
- 15 Israel's Bennett Talks Up Trilateral Security Alliance With Greece, Cyprus.**
2021-12-07 Bennett's approach reassures Athens and Nicosia that their trilateral security alliance ranks high on Israel's policy and is more important than normalising relations with Ankara. [AL-MONITOR](#)
- 16 Greece Hails US Senate Passage Of Partnership Act.**
2021-12-15 Greek Foreign Ministry has welcomed the adoption of the US-Greece Defense & Inter-Parliamentary Partnership Act of 2021 by the US Senate, an amendment to NDAA. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 17 EU Says Turkey's Accession Negotiations To Remain Frozen | | Ahval**
2021-12-15 No new chapters will be opened, and no current chapters will be closed in the EU's accession talks with Turkey, the Council of the EU decided in its meeting, citing colliding foreign policies of Brussels and Ankara. [AHVAL](#)



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18 German-Turkish Relations Will Remain Sour In 2022 | | Ahval

2022-01-02 The permanent decline of democracy in Turkey and the continuing disagreements between Ankara and Berlin will remain foreign policy challenges in the new period, Deutsche Welle Turkish reported. [AHVAL](#)

ASSESSMENT

- The Mediterranean Sea has seen a sharp rise in migration; as a result, it cost more lives than the previous year. According to the Missing Migrants Project pioneered by IOM, the number of missing migrants showed an almost 50 % spike from 999 (2020) to 1553 (2021) in the Central Mediterranean, the deadliest route in the region. Overall, the Mediterranean sea registered a 40 % increase from 1448 (2020) to 2041 (2021), though NGOs and experts believe the actual figures are much more than the current records.

The migration policy of the EU and the member states put geopolitics and national interests in front of the humanitarian side of the problem. According to the HRAS, national and European stakeholders become hesitant to abide by international law. Instead, they implement pushbacks and pullbacks -for which sometimes they incentivise local authorities with financial aid, criminalise NGOs and civil society involved in helping migrants. Of course, Search and Rescue operations sometimes tend to encourage migrants to cross the sea, yet, it is only a fraction of the whole picture. Now, it seems that only European Parliament follows these violations, and other agencies are not willing to investigate, let alone prevent or punish the violations.

- In the Eastern Mediterranean, not only relationship among the countries, but the environment also suffers from a lack of collaboration and consultation among the regional peers. No regional organisation exists, e.g. Arctic Council, which can provide a platform for regional discussions. Currently, there is East Med Gas Forum, but as its name suggests, it is a forum for exploiting natural resources. Therefore, the scramble for energy is at the expense of the environment.

- We frequently hear about the tensions between Greece and Turkey, but it is not the only dispute in the region. Lebanon and Israel disagree with the delimitation of maritime zones. Considering the financial breakdown of Lebanon, the stalling in the process of JCPOA, which may encourage Iran to rekindle the activities of Hezbollah, Lebanon can be a hot spot in the near future.

- Turkey has been an essential ally for NATO since its membership in the alliance. Recent changes in Ankara's foreign policy and preferences triggered a new way of thinking in the US. Of course, the change of the government in Greece and its alignment towards Washington is also a significant factor. Athens has left its traditional balanced approach and showed a willingness to collaborate more closely with the US as well as boost its military. Consequently, Greece receives more support from Washington to be a powerful regional actor and ally.