

# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (28 Dec - 04 Jan 2020)

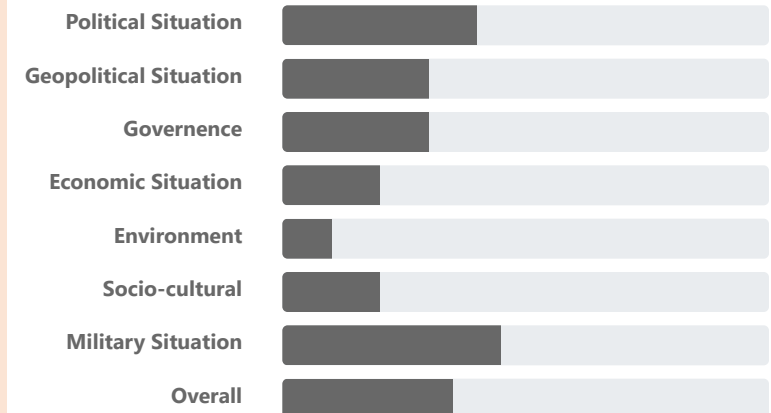
## KEY EVENTS

- 1 Total, Partners Get Hold Of Offshore Block In Egypt.**  
2020-01-04 A Total-led international consortium of oil and gas companies has signed an exploration and production agreement for the North Ras Kanayis offshore block located in the Herodotus Basin, offshore Egypt in the Mediterranean Sea. [OFFSHORE ENGINEER](#)
- 2 New Diplomatic Campaign By Athens: From The Mediterranean To India**  
2020-01-04 One of the goals of Greek diplomacy for 2021 is the continuation and expansion of cooperation with countries that share the same views with Greece. [GREEKCITYTIMES](#)
- 3 What Would A Turkey-Israel Rapprochement Mean For Regional Geopolitics?**  
2021-01-01 While diplomatic relations remain tense, both countries are signalling at potential for improved ties. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev recently stated that he was seeking to mend relations between Turkey and Israel, countries whose support played a critical role in Azerbaijan's victory over Arme... [TRT WORLD](#)
- 4 Turkey Takes Charge Of NATO High Readiness Force.**  
2020-12-30 The Turkish army will take the lead of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) on Friday, placing thousands of soldiers on standby, ready to deploy within days. [NATO](#)
- 5 Turkish Navy Announced NAVTEX Messages For Naval Drills.**  
2020-01-02 Turkish Navy published NAVTEX messages regarding firing exercises which will be conducted in the East Med on 08 January. [SHODB](#)
- 6 Top Stories 2020: International Naval Operations-Russia In The East Med**  
2020-12-30 2020 marked an active period for the Russian Navy, as it supported its presence in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea in particular. Russian submarines based in the Black Sea were conducting combat patrols in the Mediterranean, in apparent violation of the Montreux Convention. The improved Kilo-class boats are armed with Kalibr land-attack missiles that could support operations in Syria from the Eastern Mediterranean. [USNI](#)



## AI Powered Crisis Situation

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## ASSESSMENT

- Greece has increased its cooperation with Ankara's rivals and enemies disturbed by its ambitions and assertiveness. Also, Athens could not achieve its objectives within the EU as much as it wants due to the divergence of member states' interests. Greece therefore aimed to strengthen its hand with diplomatic moves outside the EU, and the proposal to engage with India against Turkey is the recent example of this policy.
- Excluded from regional initiatives and isolated among its peers, the Turkish government sets the scene for Biden administration. High-figure Turkish officials, including President Erdogan, made statements about a new page with both the US and the EU and gave warm messages towards Tel Aviv. Israel will go another election next year, and Mr Netanyahu's suspicion for Biden's foreign policy approach is no secret. Thus, 2021 can depict a very different picture. On the other hand, many Israeli analysts and policy-makers are sceptical about Turkey's recent moves and see it as a mere tactical move. Much depends on the incoming US administration, and the outcome of Israeli elections in 2021.
- While Turkey has started to implement a softer approach, the Turkish Navy continues to carry out new drills in the Eastern Mediterranean. Although the methods, governments, and contexts change, the deep-rooted problems are still there.
- Among political debates about NATO-Turkey relations and its removal from NATO, Turkish Armed Forces took over the VJTF, the spearhead force of the Alliance. The political debates and military relations seem contradictory considering Turkey's challenge to NATO and its active participation in the operations and exercises. The transatlantic military relations are the most powerful link between Turkey and the West.
- Russia enhances its military capabilities in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean. The US, the EU, and NATO focused on Greco-Turkish dispute and overlooked Russia's military build-up. As happened in the High North, after Moscow solidified its position, responding and taking necessary precautions may be too late for the West.

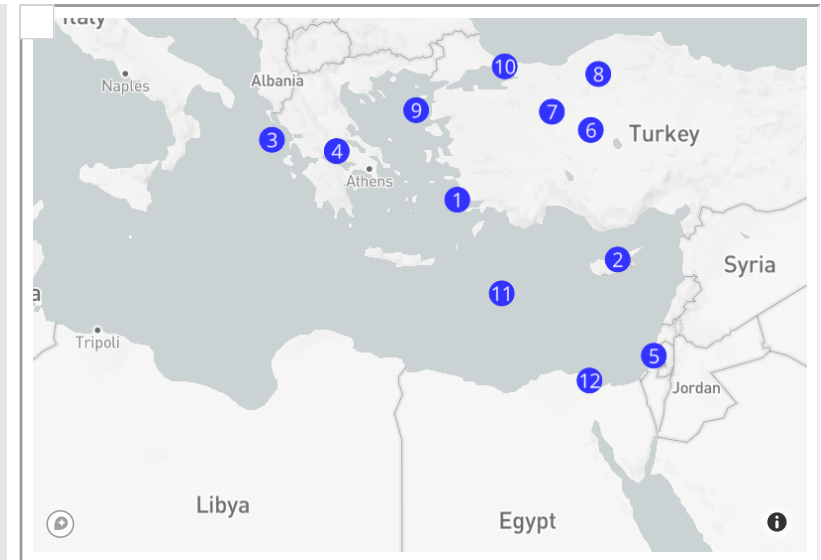
# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (04 - 11 Jan 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 Fresh Tensions In Eastern Mediterranean After Greek And Turkish Coast Guard Boats Collide.**  
2021-01-07 Tensions spiked once again in the East Med after Greek and Turkish coast guards collided. [EURONEWS](#)
- 2 US-Built Center In Cyprus To Offer Region Security Training**  
2021-01-04 A U.S.-funded center in Cyprus will help train officials from countries in the East Med and the Middle East on the latest techniques in border, customs, maritime and cyber security, the acting US secretary of homeland security said. [AP](#)
- 3 Greece Submits Bill On Western Territorial Waters Extension.**  
2021-01-09 Greek government has submitted a bill to parliament to extend its territorial waters in the Ionian Sea to 12 nautical miles, following negotiations with its regional neighbours Italy and Albania. [REUTERS](#)
- 4 Athens Eyeing Restart Of Exploratory Talks With Ankara.**  
2021-01-04 January is expected to be a month of developments in Greek-Turkish relations, with Athens reportedly eyeing a possible restart of exploratory talks with Ankara. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 5 Greece Okays \$1.68 Billion Defense Deal With Israel.**  
2021-01-05 The Defense Ministry announced that the Greece has approved a \$1.68 billion agreement to purchase 10 Aermacchi M-346 aircraft from Israel and for an Israeli defense contractor to establish a flight school for Greek air force. [TIMES OF ISRAEL](#)
- 6 Turkey Eyes More Opportunities In The Middle East As Qatar's Isolation Ends.**  
2021-01-08 As Qatar sees the end of its nearly four-year-long isolation by its Gulf neighbours, Turkey is considering the opportunities created by the thawing diplomatic relations. [AHVAL](#)
- 7 Turkish, Greek Foreign Ministers To Meet Soon.**  
2021-01-08 "There is a window of opportunity for better dialogue with Greece, right now. And we are planning to meet with Greek FM who is personally a good friend of mine, Nikos Dendias, in the coming weeks," Çavuşoğlu said. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 8 Turkey Says Talks With France To Normalise Ties Going Well.**  
2021-01-08 Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu said Turkey and France are working on a roadmap to normalise ties and talks are going well. He added Ankara was ready to improve ties with its NATO ally if Paris showed the same willingness. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 9 Turkey To Conduct Military Exercises In Aegean.**  
2021-01-08 Turkey issued new NAVTEXes reserving parts of the northern and eastern Aegean for military drills next week. [AHVAL](#)
- 10 Gulf Reconciliation And Ties With France Discussed By Erdogan And Hariri In Surprise Meeting.**  
2021-01-09 The Lebanese PM-designate Hariri held a long meeting with President Erdogan, to raise the issues of Gulf reconciliation and Turkish-French relations on top of the crisis faced by Lebanon where no government is yet in place. [ARAB WEEKLY](#)
- 11 UAE Has 'No Reason' To Be In Conflict With Turkey, Minister Says**  
2021-01-11 "We want to tell Turkey that we want normal relations with it that respect mutual sovereignty," UAE FM Anwar Gargash told Sky News Arabia. "We don't have any problems with Turkey, like border issues or other such issues," he said. [BLOOMBERG](#)
- 12 Egyptian Navy Takes Delivery Of Second El Fateh-Class Corvette ENS Port Said 976.**  
2021-01-07 The second El Fateh-class class corvette ENS Port Said 976 officially joined the Egyptian navy. [NAVY RECOGNITION](#)

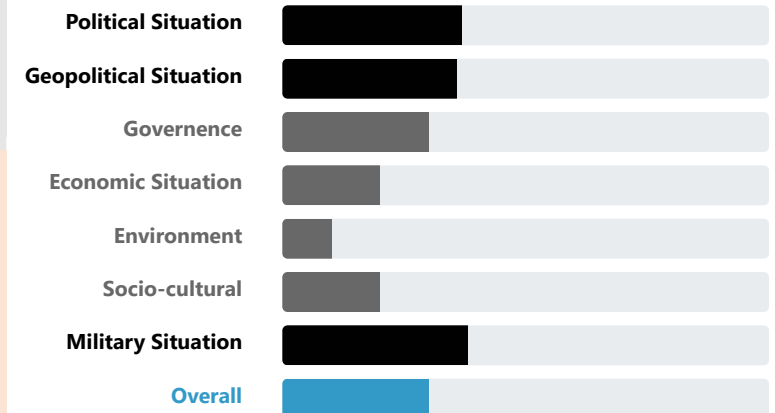
## ASSESSMENT

- The maritime border violations, dog fights between fighter jets occur from time to time between Greece and Turkey. Yet, the recent collision of Greek and Turkish military vessels has come in a fragile time when both countries struggle to normalise their relations. Amidst tensions, the chances can go by the board due to even a smallest military escalation.
- The instalment of the US-funded training centre signifies that the US sees the Republic of Cyprus as a partner in the region.
- The extension of territorial waters in the Ionian Sea after meetings with Albania and Italy provide Greece with a diplomatic strength for two reasons: (1) solving old problems enabling Athens to focus on issues in the Aegean and East Med, (2) agreeing with other regional actors on 12 NM can be used as an argument to push Ankara into more isolation about its legal claims. However, Aegean is a different sea due to its peculiar nature, and as such, the issues should be solved bilaterally.
- Greece continues to boost its defence while preparing for exploratory talks with Turkey. Athens wants to have upper hands vis-a-vis Ankara in terms of the military situation.
- The rapprochement season has come for Turkey. The incoming US administration has caused a transformation in the region before its mandate has not begun yet. The rapprochement efforts with Egypt and Israel, the reconciliation in the Gulf, warm messages against France and Saudi Arabia, and Emirati Foreign Minister's recent statement illustrates that 2021 can be a year of de-escalation.
- Turkey and Greece have engaged in diplomatic moves and toned down their rhetoric to some extent, yet they strive to solidify their moves with other means. While The Turkish Navy carries out new drills in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean, Athens strives for more politico-military cooperation with regional countries and boosts its military.



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Beyond the Horizon International Strategic Studies Group

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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (11 - 18 Jan 2020)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 SNMG-2 Started Its Deployment After The New Year.**  
2021-01-14 After leaving Rota Naval Base, the Force conducted a passage exercise with Spanish Navy units. Then, SNGM2 continued its Patrol in the Mediterranean and scheduled activities. [COM SNGM2](#)
- 2 French Carrier Strike Group To Deploy To Eastern Mediterranean And Indian Ocean**  
2021-01-14 French Armed Forces Minister: "...The Carrier Strike Group will thus deploy in the first half of 2021 in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. This commitment demonstrates, should it be necessary, our willingness to fight terrorism on an ongoing basis." [NAVAL NEWS](#)
- 3 Greece Hands Over Command Of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2**  
2021-01-12 In a ceremony held remotely, Greek Commander Captain Katsouras handed over the command of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two (SNMCMG2) on Monday. [MARCOM](#)
- 4 Turkey, Greece Set For First Exploratory Talks In Five Years**  
2021-01-12 Turkey and Greece are set to hold preliminary talks to tackle differences over maritime boundaries and offshore energy resources for the first time since the last round of similar negotiations in 2016. [BLOOMBERG BUSINESS](#)
- 5 Ankara, Athens Expected To Resume Talks At NATO Next Week**  
2021-01-15 The technical talks to discuss maritime disputes between Turkey and Greece were agreed to be held and implemented by the military delegations of the two countries. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 6 Cyprus, UAE Sign First Military Cooperation Agreement.**  
2021-01-12 Cyprus and the UAE on Tuesday signed their first military cooperation agreement. Cyprus already had military agreements with Egypt, Israel and Jordan, and its military hold training exercises with the forces of those countries. [AP](#)
- 7 Greek, American And Cypriot Joint Military Exercises Are Underway In Crete**  
2021-01-16 Special Forces from Greece, Cyprus and the United States are currently engaged in joint military exercises on the North West coast of Crete [NEOKOSMOS](#)
- 8 Turkish Cyprus Leader To Meet UN Envoy, Promote Two-State Solution - World News**  
2021-01-11 The president of the Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is expected to highlight a two-state solution during a meeting with the UN's envoy to Cyprus. Ersin Tatar is expected to meet Lute. Lute will also meet president Anastasiades. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 9 Erdoğan's EU Pivot Prompted By Incoming Biden Administration - AFP**  
2021-01-17 Erdoğan is looking to mend EU relations as he prepares to face what could potentially be a hostile U.S. administration under Joe Biden. In an unexpected turn, he has expressed on multiple occasions a desire to turn "a new page". [AHVAL](#)
- 10 'Dear Tayyip': Erdogan, Macron Exchange Letters**  
2021-01-15 The Turkish and French presidents exchange letters in which they agree to resume talks for mending ties. Macron sent back a "very positive" letter, starting with the greeting "Dear Tayyip" saying he was open to a meeting. [AL JAZEERA ENGLISH](#)
- 11 Greek Lawmakers Debate Purchase Of 18 Rafale Fighter Jets.**  
2021-01-14 Greek lawmakers will vote Thursday on a defence procurement program to purchase 18 Rafale jets, part of an armaments plan. Greece has earmarked 11.5 billion euros (\$14 billion) for the modernization of its armed force. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

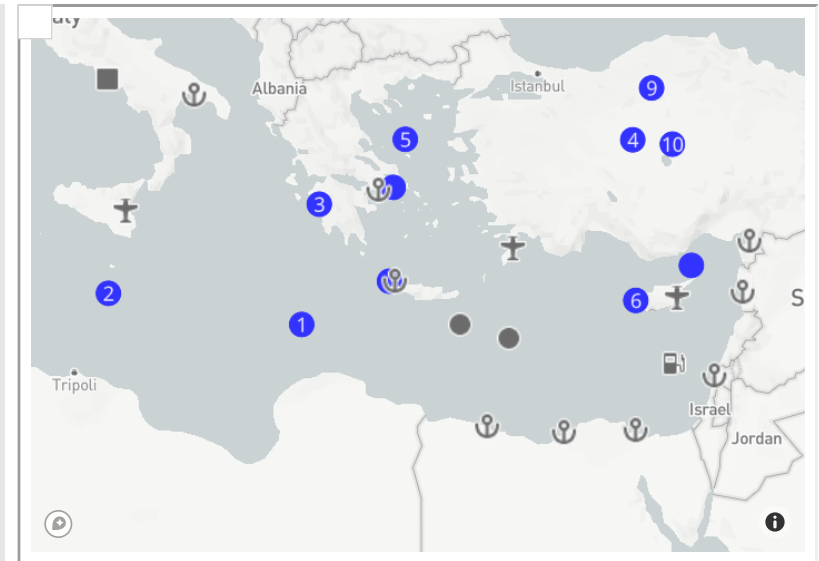
## ASSESSMENT

- After the new year, SNGM-2, a maritime component of NATO Rapid Force (NRF) is deployed in the Mediterranean. Moreover, France will dispatch its carrier Charles de Gaulle to the region. Hence, naval activity in the Mediterranean is increasing again.

Greece and Turkey will start exploratory meetings for 26th time after four years, and resume talks via the de-escalation mechanism generated under NATO's auspices. Though there will not be substantial agreement after these initiatives, they are significant for cooling tensions spiked after the recent confrontations.

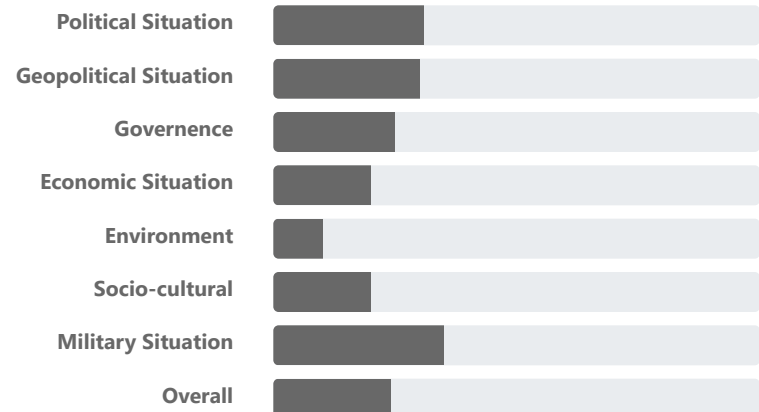
- Cyprus is becoming a more active military actor in the Mediterranean, increasing military collaboration with regional countries. The recent deal with the UAE is important in this respect.

- The rapprochement season continues. Turkey's efforts to normalise its relations with rival nations, and break isolation may bear fruit if it does not make a new turn. Confronting sanctions from the US and the EU, and the incoming US administration, Ankara has to set the scene for a new period. Nevertheless, despite warm messages among countries that exchange harsh words a couple of months ago, there is a deep distrust created by Ankara's ambitious and aggressive moves, and it is a difficult task to establish relations as nothing happened.



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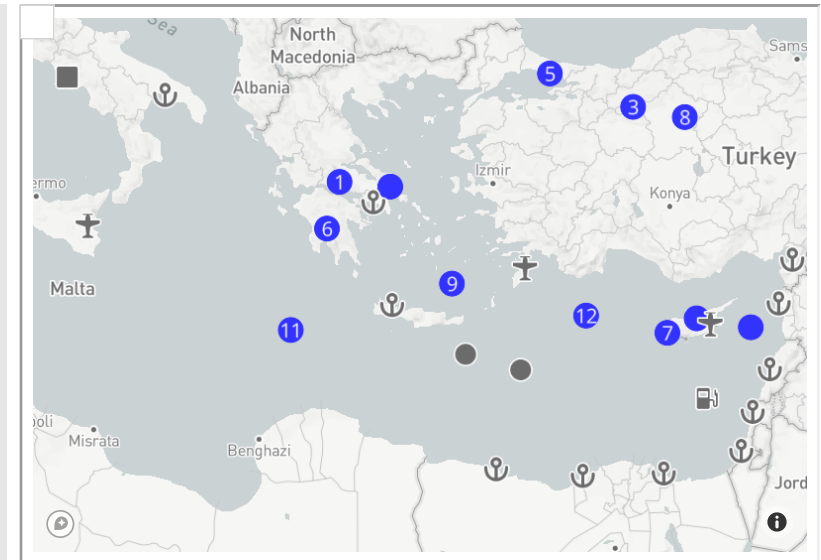
# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (18 - 25 Jan 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 Dendias To Meet NATO Chief In Brussels Monday**  
2021-01-20 Greek Foreign Minister will on Monday meet with NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg in Brussels. The meeting, which will coincide with the launch of the 61st round of exploratory talks between Athens and Ankara in Istanbul. [AHVAL](#)
- 2 PM: 'I've Always Encouraged' Erdogan To Discuss Maritime Zones**  
2021-01-21 Greek PM Mitsotakis said he has "always encouraged" Turkish President Erdogan to discuss the delimitation of maritime zones between the two countries, which is the only issue Athens recognizes as open to negotiations. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 3 EU, Turkey Cautiously Eye Improved Ties After Tough 2020**  
2021-01-21 The EU and Turkey pressed each other on Thursday to take concrete steps to improve relations long strained by disagreements over energy, migration and Ankara's human rights record. [REUTERS](#)
- 4 UN Chief Intends To Invite Cyprus Rivals To Meet Soon**  
2021-01-20 UN Secretary-General Guterres says he intends to invite the rival leaders on Cyprus to an informal meeting "as soon as practicable," but he warns that this meeting must be different and help clarify "the true extent" of their common vision ". [AP](#)
- 5 NATO Chief Welcomes Resumption Of Exploratory Talks Between Greece, Turkey**  
2021-01-22 NATO Chief Stoltenberg welcomed the continuation of NATO-brokered talks between Turkey and Greece on a military deconfliction mechanism in the East Med, as well as the resumption of exploratory talks between the two neighbours. [AHVAL](#)
- 6 Military Service Extended By Three Months, Vassilis Nedos**  
2021-01-22 Greek Defense Minister announced the extension of compulsory military service from 9 to 12 months. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 7 Mideast Must Solve Its Own Problems, Cypriot Minister Says**  
2021-01-20 The Middle East and its neighbours shouldn't expect outside powers to defuse their conflicts, but should settle their disputes among themselves, Cyprus's Foreign Minister said. [BLOOMBERG BUSINESS](#)
- 8 Greece's Move In Ionian Sea Doesn't Affect Aegean: Turkey**  
2021-01-21 Greece's extension of its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles in the Ionian Sea does not affect the Aegean Sea, the Turkish Foreign Ministry has said. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 9 French Support For Greece In Standoff With Turkey Was Just A Mirage**  
2021-01-21 The French ended up making a massive arms sale and boosting their stature within the EU... Greece agreed to buy French weapons. Immediately afterward, Mr. Macron wrote a letter to Turkey beginning with "Dear Tayyip". [TRT WORLD](#)
- 10 Qualification Mission For Russian Navy Admiral Grigorovich Frigate And Vyshny Volochyok Corvette**  
2021-01-20 The Russian frigate Admiral Grigorovich and the corvette Vyshny Volochyok fulfilled a qualification mission testing the crew's competence as part of a Navy's permanent formation training program the Mediterranean. [NAVY RECONGITION](#)
- 11 US-Greece Security Relationship Key To American Interests In East Med, Says Blinken**  
2021-01-22 Blinken expressed his commitment to further strengthening ties between the US and Greece, Israel and Cyprus. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 12 Naval Exercises In The Eastern Mediterranean.**  
2021-01-20 Turkey will conduct naval drills including firing exercises between 25-29 January coinciding the exploratory talks. Russian warships will conduct naval exercises on 25 January. [SHODB](#)

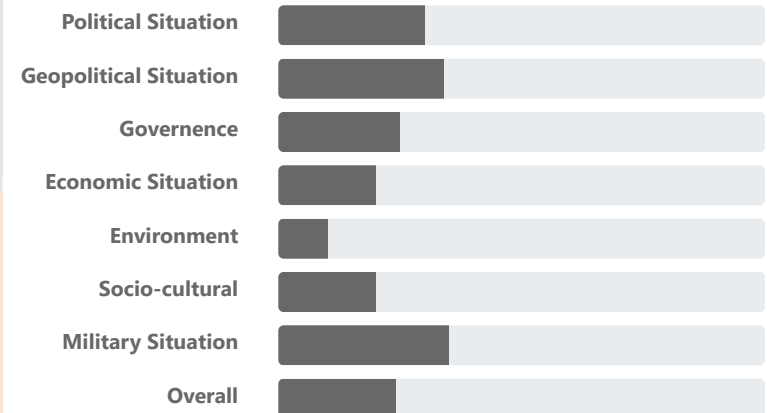
## ASSESSMENT

- European, Greek and Turkish diplomats are very busy conducting different meetings within these two weeks, and they have given warm messages before the exploratory talks held in Istanbul. Despite the tensions calmed down and the emergence positive political atmosphere, Ankara and Athens could not even agree on the agenda due to their divergence of demilitarization of some Greek Islands.
- Unlike some analysts point out, NATO seems to have a role in the disputes between Greece and Turkey. NATO may not solve problems for its members, yet it provides fora which contain the tensions.
- The Foreign Minister of Cyprus highlights a fundamental reality. For instance, even if the US becomes more active towards the region, and more aligned with Greece, it can only prevent an escalation, but not solve the underlying problems. As we have seen in the French case after the arms sale, the countries can easily change their attitude. While Germany sells weapons to Turkey, France does the same thing for the opposite side. This is international politics and foreign policy. Hence, they may easily change their roles, depending on their interest.
- While the US, the EU, NATO, Greece and Turkey is occupied with old disagreements, Moscow continues to solidify their presence in Syria and Libya day by day. The Alliance has yet to develop a full-fledged strategy for the South Flank under Russian threat. Turkey and NATO should be concerned about Russia's capabilities, and make it a priority instead of the problems in the Aegean or Mediterranean.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (25 Jan - 01 Feb 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Tentative Start To Turkey-Greece Talks After Year Of Strife

2021-01-25 The first high-level talks aimed at reducing tensions between Turkey and Greece in five years took place behind closed doors on Monday. [AP](#)

### 2 EU, US Welcome Restarted Greek-Turkish Exploratory Talks

2021-01-26 The EU and US praised the resumption of exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey on Monday, which ended a five-year hiatus after months of tensions over the East Med. [AHVAL](#)

### 3 Next Greek-Turkish Meeting Expected In March

2021-01-26 The first day of exploratory contacts between Greek and Turkish delegations on Monday in Istanbul sent out more of a political message than making concrete progress. The next talks will take place in Athens at the end of February or in March before the EU summit. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 4 EU Delays Imposing Sanctions On Turkey

2021-01-27 The EU decided to put off possible sanctions on Turkey due to positive developments unfolding in Ankara. "We did not decide to sanction Turkey today because we see that there are positive developments." Heiko Maas said. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)

### 5 Exploratory Talks With Greece 'Important Step': Turkish Presidential Spokesperson - Turkey News

2021-01-31 "This [the exploratory talks] is an important step in terms of our relations with our neighbour Greece, the EU and the balance of power in the Aegean and Eastern Med." Turkey's presidential spokesman Kalin said. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 6 United Nations Plans Cyprus Talks In March

2021-01-29 The UN plans to host multi-party talks on Cyprus in early March, Secretary-General Guterres said in a news conference on Thursday. [AHVAL](#)

### 7 Security Council Unanimously Agrees To Extend UN Cyprus Mission Amid Political Impasse.

2021-01-30 The UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) has been extended for 6 months on Wednesday. The move comes at a time when reunification talks between the two sides are at an impasse, following the collapse of talks in July 2017. [UN](#)

### 8 Greece Ratifies IGB Pipeline Agreement, EastMed Forum Foundation Treaty

2021-01-26 The foundation treaty of the EastMed Gas Forum was ratified in the Greek Parliament on Tuesday. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 9 France Unwavering Regarding Respect Of International Law, Parly Tells Kathimerini

2021-01-26 France looks forward to further strengthening its already close relations with Athens, and it is ready to sell the new-generation FDI frigates, Minister of the Armed Forces told Kathimerini after the deal signed for Rafale fighters. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 10 Berlin Says "Nein" To Greece's Request To Freeze The Sale Of Submarines To Turkey.

2021-01-28 Berlin refused again Athens' request to suspend the sale of six Type-214 subs to Turkey. [GREEK CITY TIMES](#)

### 11 Egypt And France Begin Joint Air Exercises After Egyptian-Greek Naval Drills.

2021-01-31 Egyptian-French joint air exercises have begun at an Egyptian airbase with the participation of a number of multi-mission combat aircraft. Egypt recently completed joint naval exercises on 28 in the Mediterranean with Greek forces. [ARAB NEWS](#)

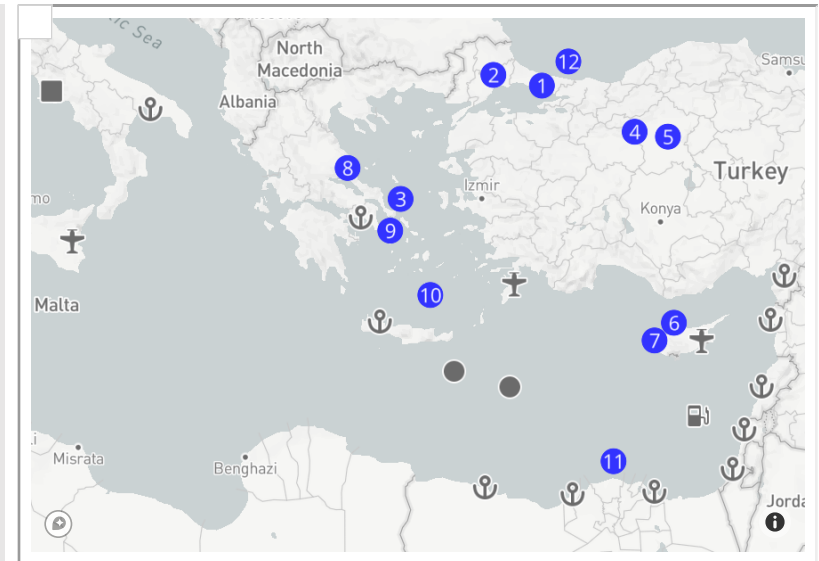
### 12 Second U.S. Destroyer Enters Black Sea, Operates Alongside NATO AIRCOM

2021-01-28 USS Porter and USS Donald Cook, Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers from US 6th Fleet, are in the Black Sea to conduct military exercises with NATO allies. [C6F](#)

## ASSESSMENT

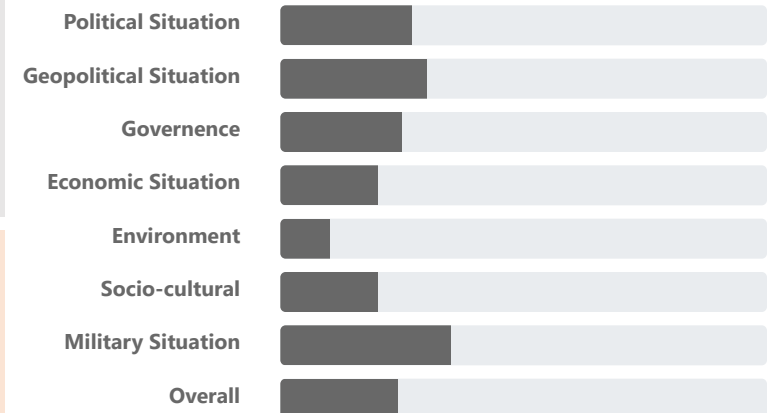
- European, Greek and Turkish diplomats were busy with exploratory talks to find a way to cool down tensions and to start negotiations. As expected, it generated a constructive atmosphere among sides. So far, it seems that there is no breakthrough from these meetings. Yet, there are two critical things which should be emphasised. First, Kalin's attendance is a salient manifestation of Turkish president's support for the process. Second, European countries do not want to sanction Turkey, but at the same time, they don't trust Ankara, and use these contacts to prevent a new escalation. Of course, a lot depends on what Washington will say about the issues over the East Med.

- While there are nice words and diplomatic moves, Greece pursues its goal to upgrade its army to challenge Ankara militarily in a possible escalation. After boosting its air force, the Navy's turn is coming, which France is willing to be the critical partner for enhancing the Greek Army. In turn, Paris implicitly expects to receive Athens' support to its operations in Africa and the EU's quest for strategic autonomy spearheaded by France. At the same time, they are in close contact with Turkey's rivals, particularly with Egypt. However, it is very early to say that this de facto alliance may bear fruit or not soon.



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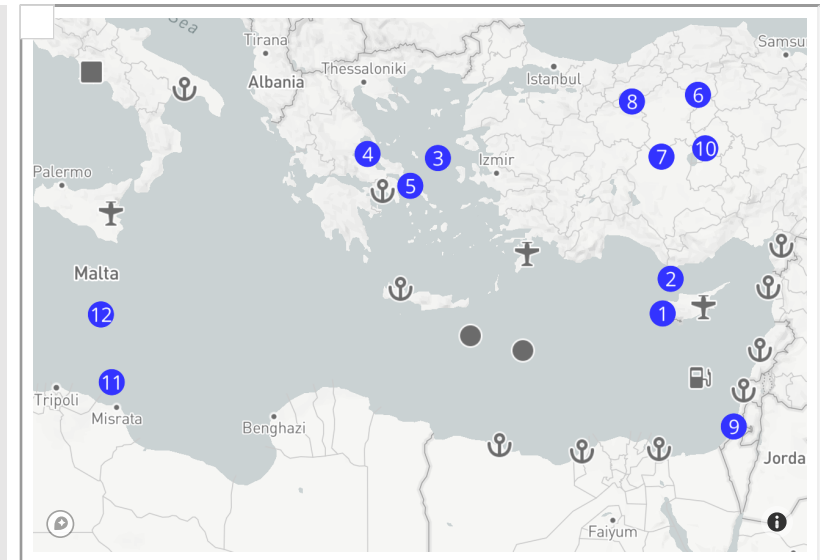
# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (01 - 08 Feb 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 Britain Urges Flexibility Ahead Of U.N. Cyprus Talks**  
2021-02-04 British Foreign Secretary Raab called for flexibility ahead of a fresh bid by the UN to heal the decades-old division of Cyprus, a dispute harming ties between Turkey and Greece and energy projects in the EastMed. [REUTERS](#)
- 2 Turkey: 'Sovereign Equality' Can Solve Cyprus Issue**  
2021-02-03 Reunifying ethnically divided Cyprus in line with the long-established formula of federation is off the table in any future peace talks and any deal should be negotiated between two equal sovereign states, Turkish foreign minister said. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 3 Turkey, Greece Hold Ninth Technical Meeting - Turkey News**  
2021-02-06 The ninth technical meeting between Turkish and Greek military delegations in Brussels concluded on Feb. 5, according to the National Defense Ministry. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 4 PM On Working Visits To Nicosia, Jerusalem Monday | Kathimerini**  
2021-02-07 Prime Minister Mitsotakis will head a delegation to Cyprus and Israel to discuss bilateral ties and developments in the East Med. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 5 Mitsotakis: Greece, Turkey To Resume Exploratory Talks By Early March | Kathimerini**  
2021-02-04 Greek and Turkish officials are likely to meet again at the end of February or in early March to revive efforts to resolve a maritime boundary dispute, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 6 We Hope S-400 Issue Can Be Resolved - US Envoy To Turkey**  
2021-02-05 "We hope that the issue of S-400 can be resolved. But if it cannot be, we will continue to focus on all the areas of our cooperation that are not directly affected by the sanctions which we put into place," The US envoy to Turkey said. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 7 France Wants Strategic, Normal Dialogue With Turkey: Envoy**  
2021-02-02 France stands ready to engage in a deep and important dialogue with Turkey, the French envoy to Turkey said, stressing that the exchange of letters between the two presidents paved the way to normalise relations. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 8 Turkey Expects Concrete Steps In Security Ties With Germany - Turkey News**  
2021-02-03 Turkey and Germany will take some concrete steps in defence and security, Turkish Defense Minister said while elaborating that the exchange of talks between him and his German counterpart was very constructive. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 9 Israel Appoints A Prominent Diplomat In Its Embassy In Ankara.**  
2021-02-04 I24News considered that the appointment of Lillian implies a very important signal by Israel bearing a hint to the Turkish President that Tel Aviv paves the way for a renewal of warmth in relations between the two countries. [RT ONLINE](#)
- 10 Gulf Reaches Out To Erdogan In Wary Move To Ease Tensions.**  
2021-02-04 The UAE and Saudi Arabia are holding out the possibility of better ties with Turkey that could benefit trade and security in a volatile region, according to people familiar with the strategy. [BLOOMBERG](#)
- 11 Libya's Factions Chose Interim Government Ahead Of Elections.**  
2021-02-05 Delegates from Libya's warring factions on Friday selected four leaders to guide the country through to national elections in December in a major — if uncertain — step toward unifying a nation with two separate governments. [SFCHRONICLE](#)
- 12 Italy Seeks To Demarcate Maritime Border With Libya.**  
2021-01-04 Italian Ambassador to Libya, Giuseppe Buccino handed over a draft memorandum of understanding to Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), aiming to demarcate their shared maritime borders. [LIBYA REVIEW](#)

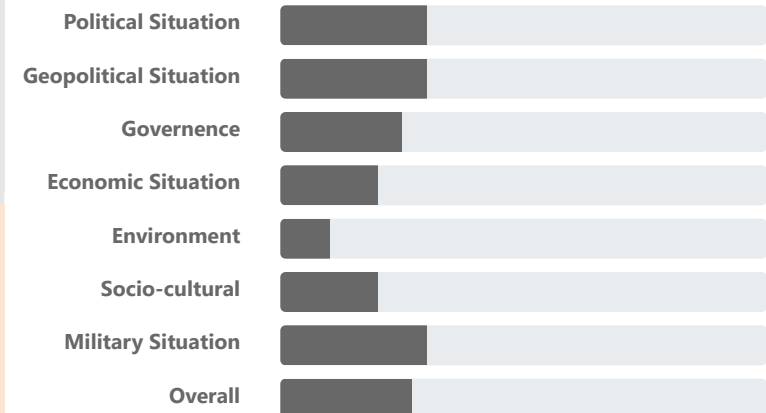
## ASSESSMENT

- This year started as a year of diplomacy which cooled down Greco-Turkish tensions to some extent. Exploratory (political) and technical (military) talks are good embarking points for improving the bilateral ties since the escalatory policies did not yield any result. Turkey's increasing assertive policy created discontent among countries, which Athens has strived to mobilize. Yet, European countries such as Germany, Italy, and Spain try to balance Greece's efforts. At the same time, Ankara has gained nothing but isolation from its policy. Considering that Mr Erdogan, UAE, and Saudi Arabia lost Trump's shield in the US, and Netanyahu is sceptical about Mr Biden, the change of US government has pushed them to come closer and to break the ice despite their mistrust against Turkey.
- Along with its military upgrades, Athens is pursuing diplomatic moves to solidify its position. Both Greece and Turkey eye for Israel's support, Tel Aviv seeks a balanced approach to them, and it does not want to harm its close ties with Athens as well. The same situation also applies to the Gulf countries. Yet, the powerful anti-Turkey sentiment in 2020 has already faded.
- The establishment of the interim government in Libya and the international support for it has turned the tide for Haftar and his supporters. This has significant implications for the rivalry in the East Med. since Libya has become a fault line among countries, e.g. Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, and UAE. Libya's situation is still fragile, but Tripoli will intensify its cooperation with Ankara because the expelled Libyan diplomat by Greece will head the government. Though Turkey seems to be at the frontline, the UN-backed government is also supported by Germany, Italy, and the US, and has warmer relations with Egypt. Italy's demarcation proposal is a recent but salient example of this support, and it will favour Turkey if it succeeds.



## AI Powered Crisis Situation

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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (08 - 15 Feb 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

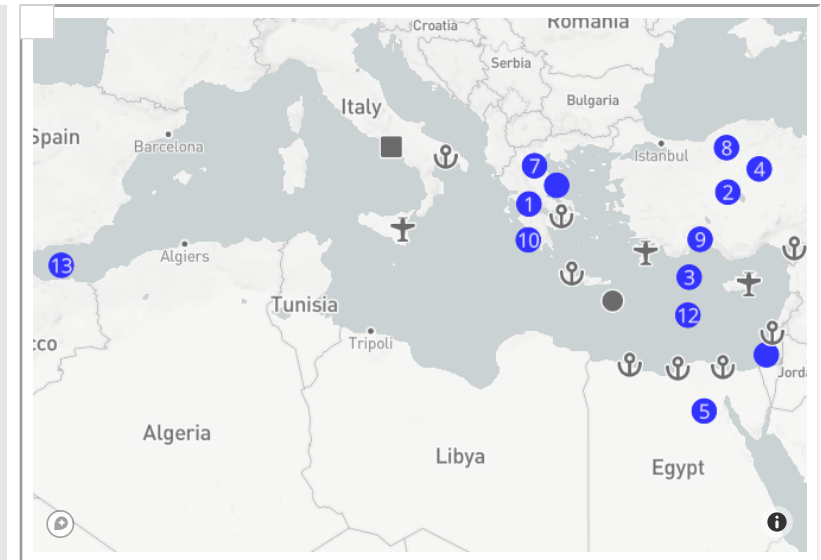
- 1 Cyprus Crucial To East Med Developments, Vassilis Nedos | Kathimerini**  
2021-02-08 An informal five-day meeting on the Cyprus issue will occur in early March before the possible 62nd round of exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey. Both sides are formidable in their positions. UK Foreign Secretary talked with all parties, and according to the statements, there is room for alternative options and possibilities. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 2 Turkey Says 2-State Solution Only Option For Divided Cyprus**  
2021-02-10 Turkish President on Wednesday ruled out discussing a federal system to reunify Cyprus again, insisting that a two-state accord is the only solution for the ethnically-split island. [AP](#)
- 3 The British Plan For Cyprus**  
2021-02-11 A British plan for Cyprus has been moving around since U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs met separately and recently with both the Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 4 Merkel, In Call With Erdogan, Welcomes East Med Progress | Kathimerini**  
2021-02-08 In a video conference with the Turkish President, German Chancellor welcomed recent positive developments in the eastern Mediterranean, Germany said in a statement on Monday. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 5 Egypt's FM Heads For Athens For Meeting On Conditions In Eastern Med.**  
2021-02-09 the Foreign Ministry said that Shoukry is scheduled to hold talks with a number of foreign ministers to discuss boosting bilateral cooperation and a host of regional and international issues of mutual interest. [AHRAM ONLINE](#)
- 6 In Athens, Turkey Foes Plan Regional Alliance | Kathimerini**  
2021-02-11 Foreign ministers and senior officials from several Persian Gulf countries sided with Greece against Turkey are meeting in Athens. Greece seeks to expand alliances to counter tension with regional rival Turkey. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 7 Athens Expands Regional Alliance With 'Philia' (Friendship) Forum, Vassilis Nedos | Kathimerini**  
2021-02-12 The forum convened in Athens is an unprecedented effort by Greece to widen its network of allies. The joint statement after the summit using inclusive language implicitly criticizes Turkey by citing those violating international law. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 8 Turkish Foreign Ministry Accused The "Philia Forum" Of Hostility Against Turkey | | Ahval**  
2021-02-13 The first Philia Forum held in Athens with attendance from Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE is hostile, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson said. [AHVAL](#)
- 9 Turkey To Purchase Fourth Drilling Ship To Expand Energy Projects.**  
2021-02-10 Turkey's state-owned oil and gas company has made a preliminary agreement to purchase a new drilling vessel to accelerate energy prospecting activities in the EastMed and the Black Sea. [AL-MONITOR](#)
- 10 Greece To Buy French Frigates After Ordering Fighter Jets | | Ahval**  
2021-02-11 Athens will buy the Belharra class frigates after the deal signed with France to procure fighter jets. [AHVAL](#)
- 11 Egypt-Israeli Gas Deal Highlights Tardy Cyprus Could Be Left Behind.**  
2021-02-14 The issue with the EastMed has always been its technical feasibility and the price tag. Also, there are murmurs of a thaw in Israeli-Turkish diplomatic relations that could re-inject life into the idea of an Israel-Turkey gas pipeline. [CYPRUSMAIL](#)
- 12 The Vyshny Volochek Corvette Equipped With "Calibers Carries Out Firing Exercise In The Mediterranean.**  
2021-02-12 RFS Vyshniy Volochek conducted drills against air/surface targets and mock-ups of floating sea mines. [TVZVEZDA](#)
- 13 OPERATION SEA GUARDIAN (OSG)-NATO Focused Security Patrols In The Western Mediterranean.**  
2021-02-08 The first OSG Focused Operation for 2021 focuses on the Alboran Sea, with a planned port visit to Morocco. [MARCOM](#)

## ASSESSMENT

- After exploratory and military talks in the last week, Greek and Turkish politicians exchanged harshed words over the disputes. Neither Ankara nor Athens are open to compromise on the issues, particularly about Cyprus for which there will be UN-mediated talks in March. While Greece insists on a bizonal federation, several Turkish officials reject this idea by urging a 2-state solution. Yet, the UK expressed its will to bring parties together for mediation. Moreover, according to the British statement, there seems room for flexibility.

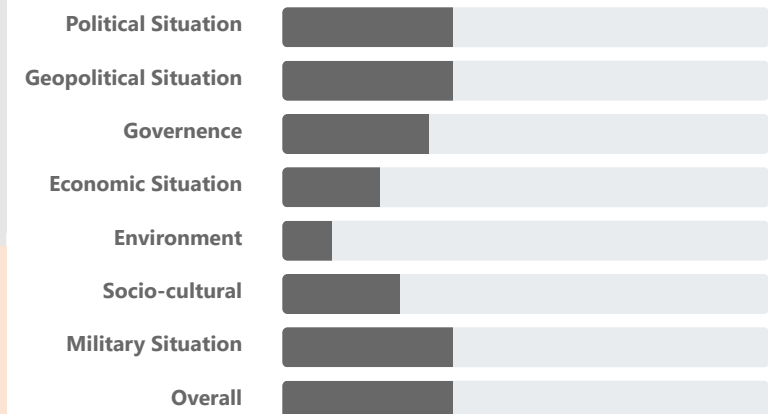
- Though the rapprochement between Turkey and the regional countries such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have calmed down the tension to some extent, the anti-Turkey alliance has continued to their initiatives. The joint statement released after the Philia Forum employed a soft language while warning Ankara for adhering to the international law and the common values. Turkey seems disturbed by their cooperation at the expense of itself. Nevertheless, the Gulf reconciliation and the softening approach between Turkey and the Gulf, as well as France and Israel, can prevent this momentum from materializing. Greece is aware of this situation and strives to modernize its military in cooperation with France and Israel. The military upgrade of Greek Army also has a cooperation dimension that aims to bring France and Israel to the Greek side due to its military procurements. Now, the pure pragmatist approach seems to drive Mediterranean politics; everything can therefore change abruptly.

- Mediterranean was busy with military exercises this week. Operation Sea Guardian was activated for the first time in 2021, and SNMG-2 held drills and paid a port visit to Haifa. Simultaneously, Russia carried out naval firing exercises, and Russian warships passed close to Haifa.



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Beyond the Horizon International Strategic Studies Group

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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (15 - 22 Feb 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Turkey Takes Over The Command Of STANDING NATO MINE COUNTERMEASURES GROUP 2

2021-02-19 Turkey assumes the command of SNMCMG2, which will conduct mine warfare exercises between 20 February and 16 April with the participation of MCM vessels from Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain and Turkey. [MARCOM](#)

### 2 USS Porter Conducts Interoperability With Hellenic Armed Forces

2021-02-19 USS Porter of US 6th Fleet carried out tactical manoeuvres and communications procedures with a Greek frigate, sub, and four F-16s to enhance command and control processes between the two NATO Allies. [NAVEUR](#)

### 3 NATO Advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare Exercise Dynamic Manta Underway In Italy.

2021-02-22 The exercise provides allies with complex warfare training to enhance their interoperability and proficiency in anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare skills. Participating Assets: five surface ships, five subs, five maritime patrol aircraft, and the French aircraft carrier from BEL, FRA, GRC, GRE ITA, SPA, TUR, USA. [MARCOM](#)

### 4 The Mine Countermeasure Ship Ivan Antonov Conducts An Exercise In Tracking Trawls In The Mediterranean.

2021-02-17 Ivan Antonov, the Black Sea Fleet's newest minesweeper, conducted a comprehensive mine countermeasure exercise in the Mediterranean under the combat training plan of the Russian Navy as part of a Mediterranean permanent group. [MILRU](#)

### 5 'Greek Cypriot Admin Intends To Harm 5+1 Cyprus Talks'

2021-02-18 The president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on Wednesday criticized his Greek Cypriot counterpart's statements on the Cyprus issue and Eastern Mediterranean. [AA](#)

### 6 FM: Greece Has Presented A Demarche Over Turkish Navtex.

2021-02-18 The Greek foreign ministry has presented a demarche over the new Turkish Navtex for research of the Turkish oceanographic vessel Cesme in the Aegean. A demarche has already been presented by the Greek Embassy in Ankara and will be followed by a written note verbale. [THENATIONALHERALD](#)

### 7 Egypt Announces Oil And Gas Bid Round For 24 Blocks, Says Ministry

2021-02-18 Egypt announced a bid round for exploration/exploitation of oil and natural gas in 24 blocks. [REUTERS](#)

### 8 Israel To Link Leviathan Gas Field To Egypt LNG Plants, Steinitz Says

2021-02-22 The Israeli and Egyptian energy ministers have agreed to build a pipeline to connect Israel's offshore Leviathan natural gas field to liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals in northern Egypt, the Israeli minister said on Sunday. [ALARABIYA](#)

### 9 Israel Is Emerging As A Pivotal Ally, High-Ranked Sources Tell Kathimerini.

2021-02-15 Israel wants to sell Greece weapons that can provide a "qualitative edge" including high-precision projectiles and systems to counter UAVs and drones that Turkey is heavily investing in while avoiding its already difficult relations with Turkey deteriorate further, but neither will it sacrifice regional alliances to improve those relations. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 10 Navy Evaluating Frigates Proposals From Six States

2021-02-22 The Hellenic Navy is evaluating six frigate proposals submitted by France, the US, the Netherlands, Germany, and the UK to bolster its military capabilities. The recent Italian proposal will also be reviewed within the next months. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 11 Greek FM To Discuss Military Ties With Saudi Arabia.

2021-02-20 Greece is eyeing the possibility of stationing a Patriot anti-missile battery on Saudi soil to help the Kingdom boost its air defenses against missile attacks on its critical infrastructure, mainly from Iran-backed Houthi militias in Yemen. [ARAB NEWS](#)

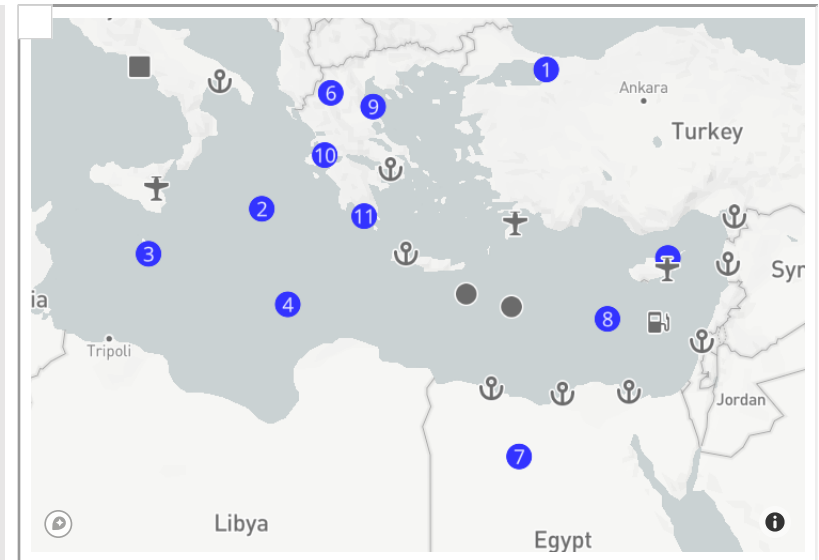
## ASSESSMENT

- Mediterranean is getting busier with military exercises. After the first activation of Operations Sea Guardian last week, SNMG-2 had left Haifa port and set sail for the Dynamic Manta-21 exercise, which commenced today, with new assets' participation. Anti-submarine warfare is one of the domains that NATO falls behind. Also, SNMCMG-2, the standing mine countermeasure unit of the NATO Response Force, was activated on Saturday. Lastly, the Russian Navy conducted a mine countermeasure exercise in the Mediterranean.

- Before the UN-led 5+1 talks, the Greek and Turkish side go against each other once again due to their conditions before the meetings. It is like a Deja Vu from the exploratory talks held in Istanbul. They couldn't even agree on where they will begin to negotiate. Cyprus requests the termination of Varosha's opening and Turkey's activities in the East. Med. Simultaneously, Turkey's NAVTEX for Turkish oceanographic vessel Cesme's activities on the opposite side of the Aegean sparked another tension before the next exploratory talks. Hence, there will not be a breakthrough in the UN-mediated talks and the next meeting between Greece and Turkey.

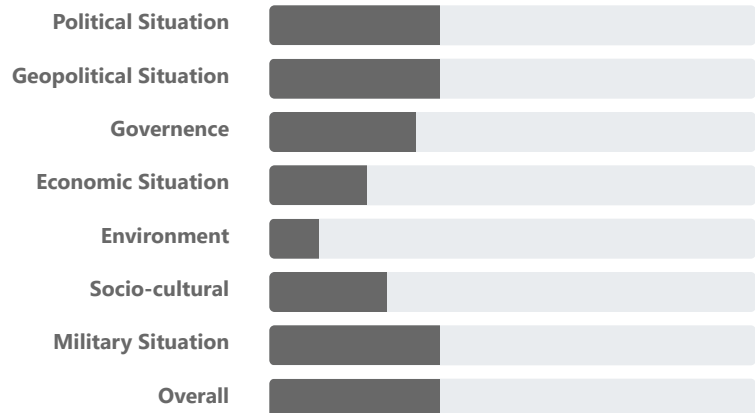
- While there is an escalation in the North of the Med. Egypt and Israel decided to construct a pipeline that will bring both countries closer in a context where Turkey is more and more isolated. Greece also eyes for a powerful relationship with Egypt and Israel. Turkey strives to break the ice and have more intimate relations with Israel to solidify its position against the new US administration. Tel Aviv doesn't want to irk Ankara to prevent deterioration and struggle to pursue a balanced approach. Of course, Israel is aware of the fact that Turkey's move is very pragmatic. Nevertheless, Netanyahu and Erdogan are the leaders with whom Biden delayed his first contact for a long time. Thus, they have a common interest.

- The recent Greek proposal to deploy Patriots in Saudi Arabia is a concrete action to materialize the political rapprochement between the countries against Turkey. They come together not because of ideology or strategic orientation but very pragmatic reasons which need further engagement to be solidified.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (22 Feb - 01 Mar 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 U.N Proposes The Date For 5+1 Talks Over Cyprus Problem.**  
2021-02-25 The UN intends to convene an informal 5+1 meeting on the Cyprus issue in Geneva from 27 to 29 April. [UN](#)
- 2 EU Will Participate As An Observer At The Cyprus Conference.**  
2021-02-26 The EU would remain committed to the issue as it believes it can play a positive and fruitful role, Michel said following the Turkish Cypriot foreign minister's statement that they don't accept the participation of the EU in the 5+1 talks. [CYPRIUS MAIL](#)
- 3 Turkish Navy Kicked Off BLUE HOMELAND-2021 Large Scale Exercise**  
2021-02-28 Turkish Ministry of Defence announced that 82 warships, 17 naval aviation assets, amphibious marine forces, Turkish Air Force units, and special operations would participate in the drills, scheduled to end on 8th March. [NAVAL NEWS](#)
- 4 U.S., Greece To Conduct Military Air Drill In Western Thrace**  
2021-02-22 The US and Greece will conduct joint air drills in Xanthi. Over 150 US helicopters arrived in Alexandroupolis (Dedeağaç) on 23 Feb within the "Defender Europe 2021" military exercise scope, Cumhuriyet newspaper reported. [AHVAL](#)
- 5 Turkey Says Greek Jets Harass Research Vessel Over Aegean Sea**  
2021-02-23 Turkey said that four Greek jets harassed Cesme, a Turkish research vessel, in the Aegean Sea but Athens denied the accusation, which comes as the two NATO members seek to resume talks over maritime disputes. [REUTERS](#)
- 6 Qatar Says To Fund \$60 Million Natural Gas Pipeline From Israel To Gaza**  
2021-02-25 Doha pledged \$60 mm to build a pipeline from Israel to Gaza with the EU's support on Gaza-side. [REUTERS](#)
- 7 Official: PA, Egypt Received Positive Signs From Israel To Develop Natural Gas Field Off Gaza**  
2021-02-25 The Palestinians and Egypt received "positive signs" from Israel to develop a natural gas field off the coast of Gaza, for which the Palestinian Investment Fund signed a deal with the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)
- 8 Greece Worries As Egypt Acts In Line With Turkish EEZ In EastMed.**  
2021-03-01 Egypt's notice of holding a tender for hydrocarbon exploration in the EastMed by recognizing the EEZ demarcated by Turkey could be a sign of a possible agreement between Ankara and Cairo, Greek media reported. [DAILY SABAH](#)
- 9 Qatar, Egypt To Appoint Envoys, Resume Work Of Embassies.**  
2021-02-25 Doha and Cairo agreed to appoint envoys and reopen their embassies after the AIUIa agreement. [ARAB NEWS](#)
- 10 French CSG Brings 'Plug-And-Fight' Carrier Capability To NATO Mediterranean ASW Exercise**  
2021-02-23 'Dynamic Manta' is taking place off Sicily between 22 Feb and 5 Mar. The French Navy's Charles de Gaulle CSG's participation provided an opportunity for NATO assets to train with the CSG as a high-value asset. [JANE'S BY IHS MARKIT](#)
- 11 UAE Steps Back From Wars As Biden Reasserts Mideast Role**  
2021-02-28 The UAE is scaling back its role in conflicts with the new US administration, a key factor. [BLOOMBERG](#)
- 12 Rare Visit To Israel By Egypt's Oil Minister Sends Signals To Biden, Erdogan**  
2021-02-22 The trip, following similar delegations of Greek and Cypriot leaders, is intended to show that the regional allies are united and coordinated, when dealing with friends and foes. [TIMES OF ISRAEL](#)
- 13 Intel: Blinken Tells Egypt That Human Rights Are 'Central' To US Relationship**  
2021-02-23 In a call with his counterpart, Blinken "raised concerns over human rights, which he emphasized would be central to the US-Egypt bilateral relationship," and Egypt's planned purchase of Su-35s, that put Cairo at risk of US sanctions. [AL-MONITOR](#)
- 14 Libyan MP's Skeptical Of New Prime Ministers Acceptance Of Turkish Military Presence In Libya**  
2021-02-28 Head of the Defence and National Security Committee of the Libyan House of Representatives, al-Mayhoub, called on the parliament to think carefully before granting confidence to the Dbaiba government. [LIBYA REVIEW](#)

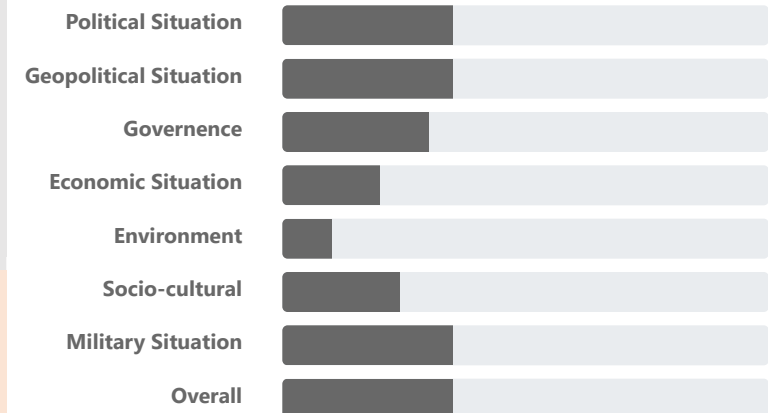
## ASSESSMENT

- The UN proposed date for 5+1 talks convened in April to seek a permanent solution. The EU will join as an observer due to concerns over its objectivity. Though the tensions calm down in the East Med, the Greco-Turkish escalation moves the Aegean Sea, where a massive exercise named Blue-Homeland is underway, and the Greek-US joint drills will be conducted as part of the Defender Europe.
- The increasing militarization of the issues and harsh rhetoric between the parties complicate the quest for reaching a path to negotiation and have a risk of creating unintended consequences such as confrontation among navies or accidents. Therefore, unless Ankara and Athens drop their maximalist and militarist approach and acknowledge to compromise, a reasonable and feasible way out seems distant because the only way to reach a settlement is to negotiate and make concessions.
- Energy can create avenues for cooperation. After Israel's affirmative signs, Egypt concluded a deal with Palestine. Qatar pledges to invest in a Gaza-Israel pipeline with the EU's support, coinciding with the re-establishing their diplomatic links by reopening their embassies. We should not forget that the UAE, which supports Haftar, held out an olive branch to Ankara after the Gulf reconciliation. All these have one common connection: the Biden administration, which may trigger a profound repositioning of the so-called alliance from the Gulf to Libya in the coming months.
- NATO assets proceed with the Dynamic Manta ASW exercise in which the French Carrier Strike Group (CSG) joined as a High-Value Asset, while SNMCMG-2 headed to the Black Sea. After its deployment in the East Med, the CSG will set sail towards the Red Sea.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (01 - 08 Mar 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Is Egypt Warming Up To Turkey's Proposition In The Eastern Mediterranean?

2021-03-03 An Egyptian map shows that Cairo identifies its Exclusive Economic Zone in the region in accordance with the Turkish offer. Then, Turkish FM stated that they could sign a maritime deal, "depending on the trajectory of the relations". [TRT WORLD](#)

### 2 Egypt Denies Turkish Claims Over Mediterranean Talks

2021-03-08 Egyptian diplomatic sources denied rumours about a demarcation deal -mentioned by several Turkish officials including, the Foreign Minister- by stating that Cairo has "no intentions" of negotiating with Turkey over the issue. [ARAB NEWS](#)

### 3 Athens And Cairo Mull Changing The Route Of EastMed Pipeline

2021-03-04 Greece and Egypt discuss the possibility of changing the route of the East-Med gas pipeline to overcome the technical difficulties and its economic viability, while Nicosia is cautious toward such a scenario, Greek journal To Vima reported. [EURACTIV](#)

### 4 Erdogan Tells Macron Cooperation Has 'Very Serious Potential'

2021-03-02 Cooperation between the two countries has "very serious potential", Erdogan told Macron. [AL JAZEERA ENGLISH](#)

### 5 Turkey Has Stopped Insulting Us But Action Still Needed, France Says.

2021-03-03 "There aren't any more insults and the language is more reassuring," Jean-Yves Le Drian told on Tuesday. A French diplomatic source said the two leaders had, however, had a "frank" exchange of views. [REUTERS](#)

### 6 Greece To Increase Army Service Amid Tension With Turkey

2021-03-06 Greece will introduce an increase in military service for conscripts serving in the army from nine to 12 months. [AP](#)

### 7 United States Ready To Sell F-35s To Greece, Says Ambassador

2021-03-04 US Ambassador to Athens Pyatt said the US was ready to sell F-35 jets to Greece, Protothema reported. [AHVAL](#)

### 8 Exercise Dynamic Manta Wraps Up In Italy.

2021-03-08 NATO exercise Dynamic Manta 2021 ended on 5 March off the Sicilian coast. Ships, subs, aircraft and personnel from seven allied nations exercised together in the Central Mediterranean for anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare training. [MARCOM](#)

### 9 IKE Strike Group Operates With Morocco In Lightning Handshake.

2021-03-03 The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (IKE CSG) is participating in Lightning Handshake, a bi-lateral maritime exercise between the US and the Moroccan Navy and Air Force during the first week of March. [NAVEUR](#)

### 10 Russia's Admiral Kasatonov Frigate Calls At The Turkish Naval Base Of Aksaz

2021-03-03 Frigate Admiral Kasatonov being on a long-distance voyage has called at the Turkish port of Akzas-Karagach in the Mediterranean Sea, the Defense Ministry's press office said. [NAVY RECONGITION](#)

### 11 Egypt, France Conduct Naval Drills In Red Sea

2021-03-07 The Egyptian and French naval forces conducted a drill at the Red Sea base. [AHRAM ONLINE](#)

### 12 Secretary-General Special Envoy For Libya Stresses The Importance Of Holding A House Of Representative Session On 8 March As An Important Step Towards Unity, Sovereignty

2021-03-07 The Special Envoy emphasises that the session for a vote of confidence is another important step towards restoring the unity and legitimacy of Libya's institutions and authorities. These efforts must not be derailed under any pretext, including the circulation of fake news, e.g. the text message about a UN investigation of bribery allegations. [UNSMIL](#)

### 13 Libyan Leader Made Secret Visit To Turkey

2021-03-05 Libya's interim PM Dbeibah made a secret visit to Ankara after his election, the Middle East Eye reported. [AHVAL](#)

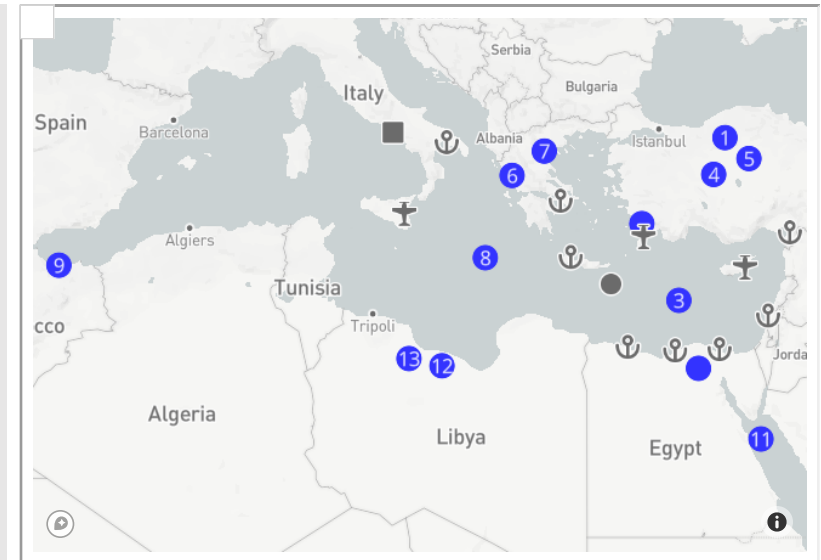
## ASSESSMENT

- Following Egypt's recognition of Turkey's continental shelf when mapping for a tender, Turkish officials, including the Turkish Foreign Minister, gave warm messages towards Cairo. This policy has a similar pattern, which Ankara has started to follow against Israel a couple of months ago, that has yet to bear fruit apart from helping to break the ice. However, Ankara seems to irk Athens with this move because there may be abrupt policy changes in the region, which may undermine its so-called alliances. The Biden Administration targets autocrats, e.g. the release of an intel report regarding the murder of Khashoggi, and keeps Israel and Turkey at arm's length. Egypt faces the risk of CAATSA sanctions -also implemented against Turkey- due to its planned procurement of the Russian jets, Cairo therefore keeps the door open for Ankara as a hedging strategy.

- The EastMed pipeline project has still substantial problems since it is not financially seen as viable by the experts, and it is planned on a contested route due to EEZ claims. The change of its route can shake the bond between the trio of Athens-Cairo-Nicosia.

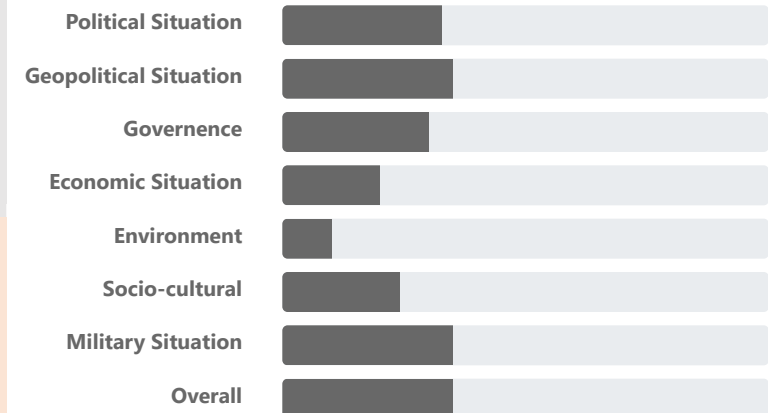
- Greece's extension of military service is an indication of its willingness to be ready against Turkey. Meanwhile, the US gives the green light for the sale of F-35s, which Turkey is ejected. This will definitely upset the balance of air power between Greece and Turkey.

- In sum, the geography of the Mediterranean requires compromises from all parties, which they avoid. Instead, they try to achieve their goals by creating faith accomplis, aggressiveness, the militarization of the issues, and blame games, sometimes for domestic reasons. Nevertheless, nobody can solve the problems of the regional nations from outside, and they cannot benefit from being in conflict with each other. Consequently, the result is crystal clear: NO COMPROMISE NO GAIN.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (08 - 15 Mar 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 Egypt Denies Turkey's Claims Of Talks On East Med, Says Committed To Greece | | Ahval**  
2021-03-08 Egypt denied claims that Ankara and Cairo began discussions to resolve differences in the East Med. [AHVAL](#)
- 2 Greece And Egypt Reach Compromise In The Eastern Mediterranean**  
2021-03-09 Athens and Cairo reached a compromise in the dispute over oil and gas exploration in the East Med. [ARAB NEWS](#)
- 3 Israel: We're Ready To Cooperate With Turkey On EastMed Project**  
2021-03-09 Israel's Energy Minister says Tel Aviv is ready to cooperate with Turkey on natural gas in the East Med. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 4 Turkey: Greece Deploying Navy Boats Near Turkish Coast**  
2021-03-08 National Defense Ministry spokeswoman: Athens sent assault boats to demilitarised islands in east Aegean in "provocative and unlawful actions" and had yet to respond to an official invitation for a 4th technical meeting at NATO. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 5 Turkey, Greece Talks To Resume On March 16 In Athens | | Ahval**  
2021-03-10 Turkish foreign ministry announced the 2nd talks to address maritime disputes held on March 16-17 [AHVAL](#)
- 6 U.S. Says Turkey Violated International Law, NATO Commitments In Mediterranean | | Ahval**  
2021-03-11 "We have criticised actions, including by Turkey, which violates international law and its NATO commitments, including its provocative actions against Greece," US Secretary of State said. [AHVAL](#)
- 7 'No Sustainable Solution In Eastern Med Without Turkey'**  
2021-03-11 There can be "no sustainable solution in that area without fair participation by Turkey," stated Italy's ambassador. He also added "We strongly believe that Turkey is part of this area. It has the longest coastline." [AA](#)
- 8 Palestine Vetoes UAE Membership To East Med Gas Forum**  
2021-03-11 Palestine vetoed the UAE's membership in the East Mediterranean Gas Forum. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)
- 9 France Joins East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF)**  
2021-03-11 France would participate in the EMGF, Egypt said, adding that the US will join as an observer. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)
- 10 Israel Signs Mediterranean Energy Agreements With Cyprus And Greece.**  
2021-03-09 Israel and Cyprus signed an agreement over gas reserves in the Mediterranean Sea located in their maritime border, resolving a nine-year standstill over the offshore resources. [MIDDLE EAST EYE](#)
- 11 Israel, France, Greece, Cyprus Come Together For Naval Military Exercise**  
2021-03-13 The Israel Navy held joint manoeuvres with Greece, Cyprus and France as part of the Noble Dina exercise. [JPOST](#)
- 12 NATO OPERATION SEA GUARDIAN (OSG) FOCUSED PATROLS RETURN TO CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN**  
2021-03-11 The flagship Hellenic Navy frigate Salmis and the Croatian missile boat Dubrovnik, supported by aircrafts and subs from Greece, Italy and Turkey, deployed to the Central Mediterranean as part of the OPERATION SEA GUARDIAN. [MARCOM](#)
- 13 BREAKING: Aldabaiba's GNU Granted Vote Of Confidence By HoR**  
2021-03-10 Abd Alhamid Aldabaiba's Government of National Unity (GNU) was granted confidence by the House of Representatives (HoR) in its reunified and quorate session in Sirte today. [LIBYA HERALD](#)

## ASSESSMENT

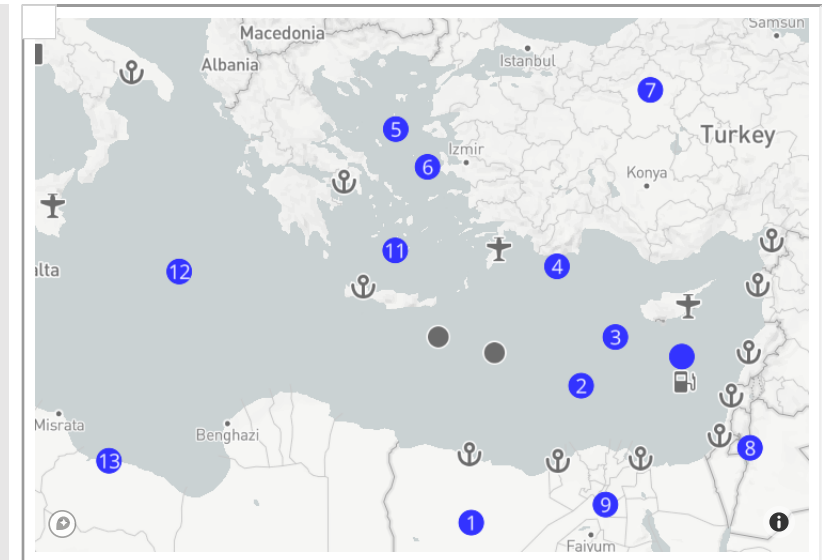
- Egypt's denial of Ankara's claim that they reached an understanding of the maritime disputes comes after Athens get in touch with Egypt to prevent any move at the expense of its interests. Cairo's message is clear: it won't risk its relations with Cyprus/Greece while keeping the door open to Ankara. This strategy bore fruit; Egypt and Greece reached a compromise after the rumours irked Greece.

- No smoke, no fire; Turkey knocked on Egypt's door after some significant events, e.g. the Gulf reconciliation, Biden's election, Egypt-Qatar contacts, the unity government in Libya, an important fault line among the countries. Moreover, Israel, Saudis, and the UAE already toned down their rhetoric for normalisation; hence, why will Egypt avoid it? Countries manifested an intention to cool down tensions. Consequently, Cairo will continue its two-sided policy. And, the next move may be the incorporation of Turkey into EMGF.

- The 2nd exploratory talks between Ankara and Athens will occur on March 16, one week before the EU Council meeting in which a common policy against Turkey will be discussed. Meanwhile, Italy and the UK, Turkey has good relations with, stated their support for the UN proposal for Cyprus and rejected a two-state model. Also, the US harshly criticised Turkey for violating international law but welcomed efforts to tamp down tensions. In this context, an escalation is improbable to occur in the region despite sporadic taunts.

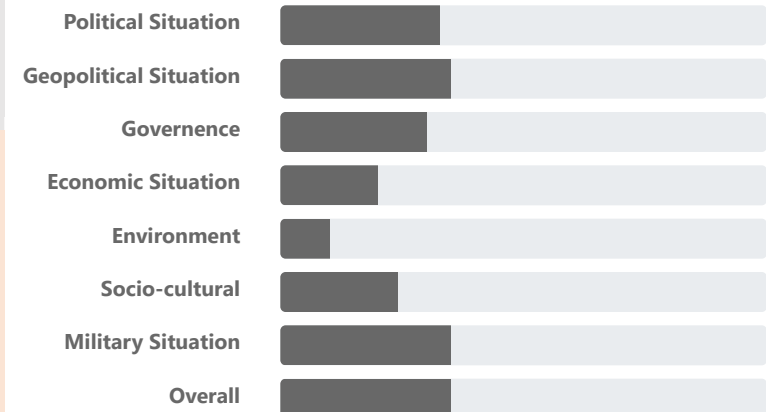
- There is an increase in naval activities in the Mediterranean. Following the Dynamic Manta, SNMG-2 headed to the Black Sea to conduct patrols. In the Central Med., the 2nd deployment of the Operations Sea Guardian commenced, and the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group carried out exercises with Greece after its joint drills with Morocco. The French Carrier Strike group left the Med. and operated with Egypt in the Red Sea. In the South Aegean, Cyprus, France, Greece, and Israel came together as part of the Noble Dina exercise. After a while, Russia reinforced its Mediterranean force significantly, coinciding with surging NATO and the US's naval activity.

- Libya reached an important milestone this week when the new government received a confidence vote from the Libyan Parliament despite the bribery claims about PM. Prime Minister Dbeibeh reiterated his support concerning the maritime deal with Ankara.



## AI Powered Crisis Situation

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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (15 - 22 Mar 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 Turkey: Israel, Greece, EU Must Seek Permission On East Med Project**  
2021-03-15 In a diplomatic note sent to the two countries' embassies and the EU delegation, Ankara says they must seek its permission before conducting any work in Turkey's continental shelf. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 2 Erdogan: Turkey's Position On East Med Won't Change**  
2021-03-16 Highlighting Ankara's position on the East Med, the Erdoğan said his country would not step back from it. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 3 EU Ready To Drop Sanctions Against Turkey Despite Calls For Tougher Action | | Ahval**  
2021-03-18 Human rights groups have called on the EU to take tougher action against Turkey as the bloc appears ready to drop the threat of sanctions, which is more evident after the recent phone call between EU and Turkish officials. [AHVAL](#)
- 4 Turkey, Greece Meet To Discuss East Mediterranean And Energy Rights**  
2021-03-16 Tuesday's (exploratory) talks will take place behind closed doors, a day after Ankara sent a diplomatic note to Israel, Greece and the EU asking them to seek permission before conducting work on Turkey's continental shelf. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 5 Turkey Says Greek FM To Visit Ankara Next Month**  
2021-03-17 Turkey's foreign minister says his Greek counterpart is set to visit Turkey for talks next month following a meeting of senior diplomats to ease long-standing tensions between the two NATO allies. [AP](#)
- 6 Greek, Turkish Armies To Have 24-Hr Hotline.**  
2021-03-20 Greece and Turkey agreed in principle to set a 24/7 open line between their army's operation centres. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 7 Pro-Govt Newspaper Lays Out Conditions For Repairing Egypt's Relations With Turkey | | Ahval**  
2021-03-15 Al-Watan newspaper shared 10 conditions to be met by Turkey before any improvement, notably, withdrawal from Libya, halting support to the Muslim brotherhood, and abiding by the international law in the East Med. [AHVAL](#)
- 8 Cairo Welcomes Turkey's Decision To Curb Criticism Of Sisi Government | | Ahval**  
2021-03-21 Egypt welcomed Ankara's move to halt criticism of President Sisi and his government by opposition TV networks based in Turkey, Egyptian Minister of State for Information said after Ankara threatened TV channels with fines. [AHVAL](#)
- 9 NATO Chief Admits 'Serious Concerns' Over Turkey, Hopes For More NATO-EU Cooperation**  
2021-03-16 The Secretary-General accepted that he is concerned, and significant divergences exist over different issues, ranging from the East Med, the decision to buy S-400, or democratic rights in Turkey in a session of the European Parliament. [EURACTIV](#)
- 10 Russia Deploys All Black Sea Submarines As NATO Kicks Off Drills**  
2021-03-19 Russia deployed all six of its Black Sea Fleet subs as a massive NATO exercise kicked off, the RIA Novosti news agency reported. The deployment is described as "unprecedented" by the Black Sea Fleet's Sub flotilla commander. [MOSCOW TIMES](#)
- 11 US, IDF Navies Conduct Combined Maritime Security Patrols In The Mediterranean**  
2021-03-15 The cruiser USS Monterey and the Israeli Sa'ar 4.5 ships conducted joint patrols in the East Med. [NAVEUR](#)
- 12 USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group Conducts Passing Exercise With The Turkish Navy.**  
2021-03-18 The Strike Group conducted a passing/communication exercise with the Turkish Navy in the Mediterranean. [NAVEUR](#)

## ASSESSMENT

- Turkey objected to the plans to build one of the longest electricity cables globally, also approved by the European Commission in 2016, due to its route. As long as the states cannot reach a solution for the maritime borders, every move will create another problem.

- Despite the concerns over deteriorating democracy and human rights issues, the EU plans to halt sanctions against Ankara in consultation with the US, which declared those issues its top priority. The European Commission and the EU Council president made no reference to these matters in their meeting with Mr Erdogan. Thus, it is likely for the EU to suspend the sanctions now implemented.

- Ankara and Athens meet via different channels, e.g. the exploratory contacts and technical talks in NATO. The former one has not produced any result. The latter did; setting up a hotline, a crucial step to preventing any escalation considering that their navies s confronted several times in recent years. Yet, unless the US throws its weight, there will not be any breakthrough from these meetings.

- After Turkish officials made statements regarding reconciliation, Cairo was hesitant to accept this olive branch by stating that actions must follow words. In this regard, the editor-in-chief of a pro-government newspaper laid out ten conditions. The confrontation in Libya and halting support for the Muslim Brotherhood seem the most prominent issues. Now, there is a unity government in Libya, and Sisi lost his faith in Haftar to an important extent. Hence, the first issue may fade over time. For the latter one, Ankara requested the opponent channels that operate from Turkey and has a considerable audience in Egypt to stop their criticism against Cairo. As a result, it is an important step when both capitals irked from the Biden administration, but not a panacea for a rapprochement.

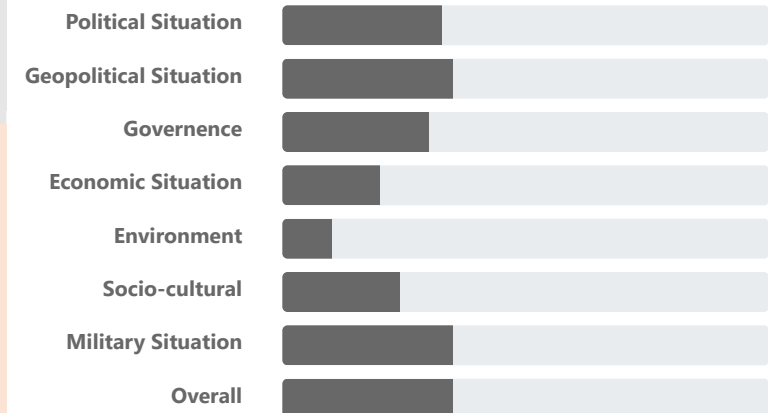
- NATO Secretary-General's remarks about the disputes between Turkey and NATO allies depict the extent of the problems that cannot be contained anymore. Generally, he underlines Turkey's significance by invoking its geography and describing it as a strategic ally.

- America's back in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The Eisenhower Strike Group conducted exercises with Morocco, Italy, Greece, Israel, Turkey along with the joint drills. Then, the Strike group's components headed to the Black Sea, where SNMCMG-2 and SNMG-2 already operate there. After years, the Black Sea saw a robust military presence to the extent that Russia has to deploy all of its subs of the Black Sea Fleet along with the reinforcements in the Mediterranean. For a long time, NATO has yet to develop a fully-fledged South strategy and show presence in the region where Moscow acquired a permanent base and deployed a task group.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (22 - 29 Mar 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 US: It's In Interest Of US, NATO To Keep Turkey As Close Ally**  
2021-03-23 "I believe we have a strong interest in keeping anchored to NATO," says US Secretary of State ahead of the NATO foreign ministers meeting while pointing out the differences, e.g. S-400 and East Med. [TBT WORLD](#)
- 2 Greece: EU Report On Turkey 'Positive' But Has 'Shortcomings'**  
2021-03-23 Greek Foreign Minister Nikolaos Dendias said yesterday that the European Union High Re... [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)
- 3 Erdoğan Discusses Bilateral Relations With German, Italian Leaders**  
2021-03-24 Turkish President spoke to Italian Prime Minister and German Chancellor over the phone, and suggests the need of upgrading the Migration Deal, customs union, and opening the new chapters in a way to membership. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 4 EU Leaders To Make Good On Trade Promises With Turkey, But Also Threaten Sanctions**  
2021-03-25 EU leaders are set to make good on a 2016 promise to deepen trade ties with Turkey, but will also warn Ankara to expect sanctions if it restarts exploration over disputed hydrocarbons in the eastern Mediterranean. [REUTERS](#)
- 5 Turkey Welcomes EU Efforts To De-Escalate Tensions In The Eastern Mediterranean**  
2021-03-26 The Turkish Foreign Ministry welcomed the EU's efforts to de-escalate tensions in a written statement by thanking the "many EU member states that have common sense" for helping to put relations on a better footing. [AHVAL](#)
- 6 No One Questions Turkey's EU Candidacy: Bloc Envoy**  
2021-03-27 Nobody questions Turkey's candidacy for EU membership, said the bloc's top diplomat in Turkey following the EU summit that tackled Turkish-EU ties. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 7 Israel Needs A Reset With Turkey To Contain Iran**  
2021-03-25 Turkey needs U.S.-friendly allies. And Israel needs a solid regional front against Iran. Paying a modest 'price' to a needy Erdogan could gain Israel a significant strategic advantage, says Nicholas Saidel. [HAREETZ](#)
- 8 Turkey Denounces Macron's 'Unacceptable' Remarks**  
2021-03-25 Ankara denounced recent remarks by the French president about Turkey [is attempting to interfere in the 2022 French elections] and its leader, calling them "unacceptable". [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 9 Egypt, France Conduct Multi-Day Naval Drill In Mediterranean**  
2021-03-22 Egyptian and French naval forces started a multi-day joint maritime drill, dubbed Cleopatra 2021, in the territorial waters of the northern fleet region in the Mediterranean, the Egyptian military spokesman said on Monday. [AHRAM ONLINE](#)
- 10 Libya's Eastern Administration Hands Power To Interim Government**  
2021-03-23 Libya's eastern administration officially handed over power to a new executive that is meant to unify the war-torn country and steer it towards elections late this year. [AL JAZEERA](#)
- 11 Council Extends The Mandate Of Operation IRINI Until 2023**  
2021-03-26 The Council extended the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED IRINI in the Mediterranean until 2023. [THE COUNCIL](#)

## ASSESSMENT

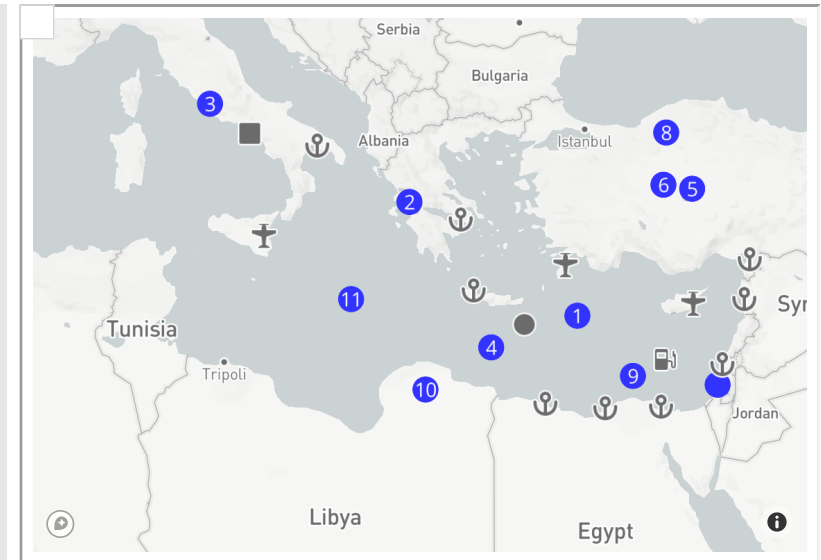
- Top US and Turkish diplomats met during the NATO meetings. Blinken outlined a double-track approach towards Ankara; cooperate whenever possible but strongly push in disagreements. In this regard, the US' approach is not different from the NATO allies' general opinion. Actually, Turkey went to great lengths and exploited this idea since it knows that a NATO without Turkey is not an option, and vice versa. Yet, the new US administration explicitly signals that Turkey will bear the consequences of its choices, unlike the Trump era.

- The EU is also seemed to follow this dual-track policy. The Union put forward important carrots, e.g. an upgrade to the Migration Deal and Customs Union, visa liberation, "provided that the current de-escalation is sustained." These issues are the same ones that Erdogan discussed with the German Chancellor and the Italian PM except for opening new chapters, which is a remote possibility considering the ties between the bloc and Turkey.

On the other hand, the EU Council meeting's conclusions stated that the block could "use the instruments and options at its disposal to defend its interests." While the conclusions lack specific measures, the report prepared by the High Representative comprises punitive measures: 1) additional asset freezes/travel bans, 2) enhancing restrictive measures to legal entities, 3) to restrictions on financial issues with the European institutions, 4) targeting important sectors for the Turkish economy like tourism, 5) import/export bans on certain technologies, all of which can cripple Turkey's economy badly considering the COVID crises, and deteriorating financial situation.

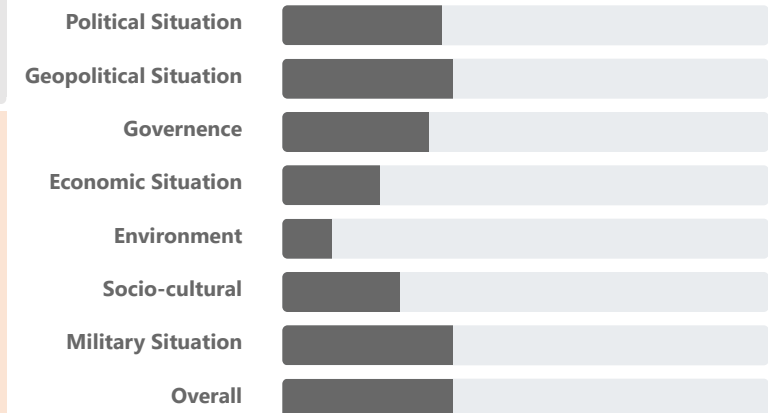
- The Romanian-led exercise Sea Shield-2021, which SNMG-2 also joined and some components have departed from the Black Sea, wrapped up this week. SNMCMG-2 calls a port in Patras, Greece, following its visit to Istanbul and activities in the Aegean Sea. Moreover, the French Navy conducted naval drills with Egypt off the coast of Egypt and with USS Eisenhower around Crete.

- A new milestone was reached in Libya after the official unification of the institutions. Nevertheless, the situation remains fragile because there is no substantial progress in the country on its way to the elections. The assassinations in recent weeks pose a danger for an escalation. Also, the UN officials' meeting with Haftar is a salient manifestation of the fact that he persists to be an important figure in politics even though he has no official position within the government.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (29 Mar - 05 Apr 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

- 1 Greece Accuses Turkey Of Trying To Provoke It With Migrant Boats**  
2021-04-02 Greece accused Turkey of trying to provoke it by pushing migrants' boats into Greek waters. [REUTERS](#)
- 2 Turkish-Greek Maritime Talks Yield No Breakthrough**  
2021-04-03 Greece and Turkey failed to reach a breakthrough during the latest round of talks on their disputes. [AHVAL](#)
- 3 Turkey To Resume East Med Activities**  
2021-04-04 The Turkish Energy Minister announced that survey ships would "soon" return to the East Med. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 4 Egypt Edging Closer To Signing East Med Demarcation Deal With Turkey.**  
2021-04-04 According to a Turkish lawmaker, Egypt is edging closer toward a deal with Turkey to demarcate maritime borders in the East Med, and "Should the demarcation agreement be signed, the EU will find itself outside of the equation." [YENI SAFAK](#)
- 5 Turkey's Relations With Saudi Arabia Improve, But Tensions With The UAE Remain**  
2021-04-01 Turkey's relationship with Saudi Arabia has warmed in recent months but this has yet to extend to the UAE, where a diplomatic chill remains, Giorgio Cafiero said. [AHVAL](#)
- 6 Israel Needs Turkey, But Is It Ready To Compromise?**  
2021-03-30 Israel and Turkey can collaborate to minimise Iranian expansionism, but it will require deft diplomacy and concessions. Israel failed to produce a stable government after multiple attempts, leading to four elections in two years. [TRT WORLD](#)
- 7 Biden Offers Full Support To Mitsotakis**  
2021-03-28 US president's call marked Washington's return to the region. "If you need anything, call me. I'm here to help," Biden reportedly told Mitsotakis – an offer which carries added significance given considering the tensions with Ankara. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 9 Human Rights Off EU's Priority List With Turkey, Human Rights Watch Says**  
2021-03-31 Geopolitics and migration issues pushed human rights off of the EU's priority list, Philippe Dam said. [AHVAL](#)
- 10 EU Officials To Visit Turkey On April 6**  
2021-03-29 EU Council and EU Commission President will visit Turkey and meet the Turkish president. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)
- 11 EU-Turkey Relations: The Need To Build Bridges**  
2021-03-30 "The EU has a strategic interest in the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Turkey," Borrell wrote on his blog. [EEAS](#)
- 12 Russian East Med Ambitions Anger The Lebanese, Confuse The Turks**  
2021-04-02 Russia joined in the race for East Med gas by activating a 2013 deal with Syria, which put Turkey under pressure and also sparked angry reactions in Lebanon. [ARAB WEEKLY](#)
- 13 USS Eisenhower Launching Anti-ISIS Missions From Mediterranean, French Carrier Takes Helm Of CTF 50**  
2021-03-31 The carrier strike group launches air missions against ISIS and will assume CTF-50 from Charles de Gaulle. [USNI](#)
- 14 Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 (SNMCG-2) Joined The Greek Navy's Drills In The Ionian Sea**  
2021-04-01 The group participates in the Greek Navy's mine warfare drills, Exercise Ariadne 21, from 30 Mar to 04 April. [MARCOM](#)

## ASSESSMENT

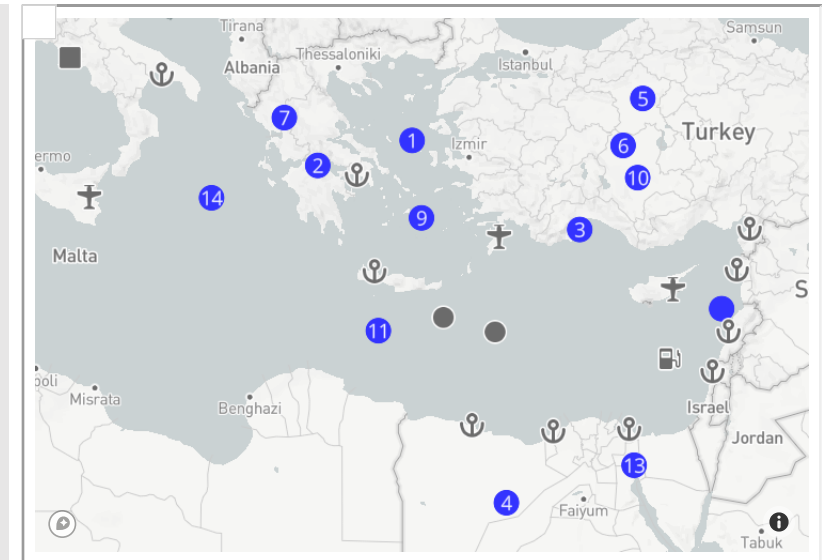
- Tensions have calmed between Ankara and Athens, yet sporadic incidents still take place. In addition to the accusations, there are rumours that their coast guard vessels collided several times in recent months, coinciding with establishing a 7/24 hotline between their armies last week. Despite the relatively quiet atmosphere, Turkey's Energy Minister's announcement regarding the return of Turkish survey vessels to the East Med can easily spark tensions.

- Considering the US's support for Athens and the punitive measures suggested in High Representative Borrell's report, Ankara will not probably go to extremes. It can also be a bluff before EU leaders visit Turkey. Moreover, even if Ankara convinces Egypt to demarcate their EEZs, the EU will not be out of the equation as asserted by a senior Turkish lawmaker. Cyprus is at the heart of the East Med; as long as Cyprus is in the EU, it will always be involved. However, the EU is composed of states with divergences over the bloc's foreign policy. Thus, the response will be determined by which camp will be dominant and the US's policies towards Turkey.

- Looking into the EU officials' signals, the dovish members seem to be in the driving seat of the decisions, despite the internal demands and criticisms that the policymakers do not adhere to the European values in their decisions. In this context, if Turkey sends the vessels to the East Med, the key issue will be the coordinates where the ships will conduct their research. Should they conduct their operations in the contested waters, then it will trigger a harsh European response.

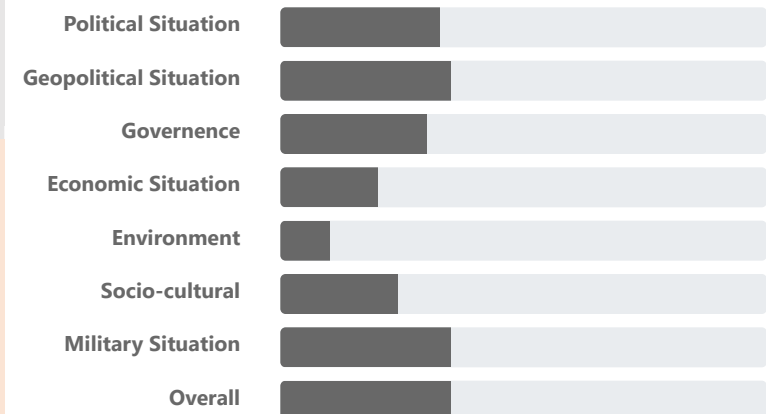
- Athens has enjoyed an ad hoc alliance composed of Arab states and Israel, which have frustrations against Ankara. Besides, the American support for Greece has a significant influence on the calculation in the East Med. Yet, it will have a side effect on the states that the Biden administration targeted. The distance between Egypt, and Saudi Arabia and Turkey have diminished significantly, and a similar situation persists for Tel Aviv considering the chill between Biden and Netanyahu.

- After the show of strength by NATO in the Black Sea, US and NATO assets proceed to their next activities. SNMCG-2 calls at Istanbul on its way back while SNMCG-2 joined MCM drills in the Ionian Sea. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group faced a delay due to the blockage in Suez Canal, and the group left the Mediterranean Sea on the 3rd of April to take over the command of CTF-50.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (05 - 12 Apr 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 EU Officials Tell Turkey Human Rights Are Key To Better Ties | EKathimerini.Com

2021-04-07 Top EU officials said they used a meeting with Turkish President to insist that any moves on the bloc's part to enhance EU-Turkey relations would be conditional on Turkey improving its record on human rights and the rule of law. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 2 Erdoğan's Talks With Top EU Officials Positive, Says Turkish Spokesperson - Turkey News

2021-04-07 Turkey's President has urged two visiting top EU officials to take concrete steps to support the "positive agenda," as it aims to improve relations with the bloc, Presidential Spokesperson Kalin has said. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 3 EU And Turkey's 'Sofagate' Blame Game Enters Round 2

2021-04-08 A day after public outcry at European Commission President being snubbed during an official meeting with Turkish President in Ankara, politicians in Brussels and the Turkish capital blamed one another for the situation. [DEUTSCHE WELLE](#)

### 4 Draghi Angers Turkey By Calling Erdogan 'A Dictator'

2021-04-08 Mario Draghi has angered Turkey by calling Erdogan "a dictator" and accusing him of humiliating European Commission president during a diplomatic visit to Ankara this week. Yet, he also stated that "One must also be ready to co-operate to ensure the interests of one's country. The right balance must be found." [FINANCIAL TIMES](#)

### 5 Turkish, UK Defense Chiefs Confirm Common Interests - Turkey News

2021-04-10 Turkey and Britain share views on many important issues, and joint action would promote these shared interests, as confirmed by a visit by Turkey's defense chief to the U.K., said an official statement on April 9. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 6 First Greece, Serbia, Cyprus Trilateral FM Meeting Concludes In Belgrade | EKathimerini.Com

2021-04-05 The foreign ministers of Greece, Serbia and Cyprus held their first trilateral meeting in Belgrade on Monday, affirming their commitment to collaboration in the Balkans and the Mediterranean region. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 7 Greece Restores Diplomatic Relations With Libya | EKathimerini.Com

2021-04-07 Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis reopened Greece's embassy in Libya on Tuesday, urging a reset of relations soured by the Tripoli government's 2019 maritime boundary agreement with Greece's Mediterranean rival Turkey. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 8 Turkey And Libya Renew Commitment To Contested Maritime Deal.

2021-04-12 Turkish president and Libyan interim PM agree to maintain 2019 Mediterranean accord that has angered Greece and Cyprus. [ALJAZEERA](#)

### 9 Turkish, Egyptian FMs Hold First Call Since Ankara's Push To Repair Ties

2021-04-10 The foreign ministers of Turkey and Egypt spoke by phone on Saturday, the Turkish foreign ministry said, their first direct contact since a push by Ankara to improve strained ties between the two countries. One day before, sources told Al Arabiya that Egypt temporarily suspends talks to normalize ties with Turkey. [AL ARABIYA](#)

### 10 Turkey Notifies Russia Of US Warships' Transit To Black Sea

2021-04-09 A source in Turkey's Foreign Ministry told TASS earlier on Friday that two US warships would enter the Black Sea through the Bosphorus Strait on April 14 and 15 and stay there until May 4-5. [TASS](#)

### 11 Turkey Will Conduct Firing Exercise In The East Med.

2021-04-07 Turkish Navy published a new NAVTEX broadcast for firing exercises which will be conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean between 12-14 April. [SHODB](#)

## ASSESSMENT

- Despite the expectations regarding a new positive agenda with Turkey, the recent visit of the top EU officials to Ankara created another crisis due to the soft gate issue for which Ankara and Brussels accused each other. It came after the arguments that concerns about migration and geopolitics outweigh the EU values, notably human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Moreover, Turkish and British Defence Ministers' statement about common values came at an interesting time since the EU has been experiencing difficulties with the UK after Brexit.

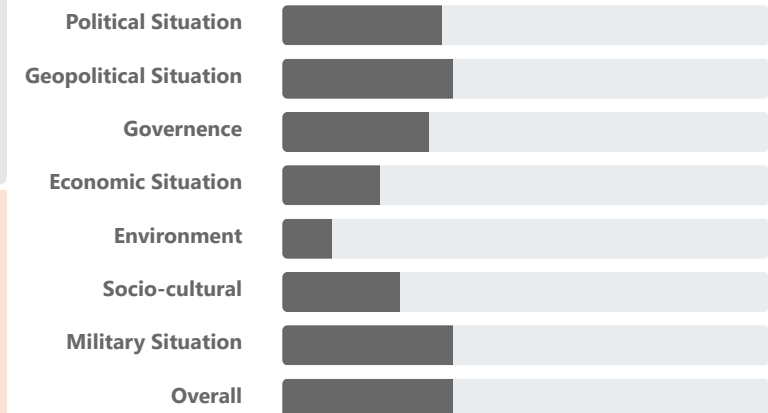
- Athens expands its diplomatic campaign in the region by reaching different countries. Serbia is the recent country with which Greece held a trilateral meeting. Even though Serbia is a landlocked country, it stated its willingness to cooperate concerning East Med. How it can be is a different question. Yet, its cooperation with Athens can only be useful to counter Turkey's influence in the Balkans, which may spread the problems between Greece and Turkey from the Aegean and East Med to the Balkans. Moreover, in a bid to normalise relations, Greece reopened its embassy in Libya and requested Tripoli to cancel the maritime accord with Turkey. After a couple of days, the interim PM with his cabinet went to Turkey and reaffirmed their commitment to the deal.

- For a while, Turkey struggles to break the ice with Egypt. Ankara has imposed restrictions on the members of the Muslim Brotherhood who live and operate from Turkey. It may be a significant step for reconciliation since Libya and the Muslim Brotherhood are the key issues for Cairo. Despite Ankara's gestures, Al Arabiya reported on Friday that Egypt had suspended the talks for normalisation. But on the next day, the foreign ministers of both countries contacted via phone, exchange good wishes with each other. As a result, Egypt seems that Cairo does not rush for a rapprochement, but left the door open for Ankara.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (12 - 19 Apr 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Turkey Vows Continued Dialogue With Greece

2021-04-15 Erdogan met with the Greek Foreign Minister before holding extensive talks with Turkish FM. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 2 Ankara Press Conference Has Diplomats Surprised | EKathimerini.Com

2021-04-16 Diplomats and journalists in Turkey expressed their surprise after a joint news conference between Greek FM Dendias and his Turkish counterpart Cavusoglu descended into an acrimonious exchange of accusations from both sides. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 3 Greece Says Resolving Differences With Turkey May Be Hard, But Not Impossible

2021-04-18 Greece cannot ignore its differences with Turkey over territorial disputes in the Mediterranean and other issues but while a solution is difficult, it is not impossible, its foreign minister told a newspaper on Sunday. [REUTERS](#)

### 4 Egypt Hails Turkey's Signals Towards Mutual Dialogue - Turkey News

2021-04-12 Cairo is "keen to establish relations and create dialogue with Turkey that goes for the interests of both countries," Egyptian Foreign Minister Shukri said in an interview. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 5 Athens, Ankara Vying For Libya Influence

2021-04-13 Greek FM Dendias stressed that Greece "is back" in Libya during his official visit to the country. The minister met with officials, notably Speaker Saleh and Deputy PM Al-Qatrani, who expressed his opposition to the maritime deal. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 6 Greece, Libya To Hold Talks Over Maritime Border Demarcation

2021-04-14 Greece and Libya agreed on the "immediate resumption" of talks to mark out their maritime zones in the Mediterranean Sea, according to Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis. [AL JAZEERA ENGLISH](#)

### 7 Lebanon's President Says New Maritime Claim Needs Government Approval

2021-04-13 Lebanon's president said a draft decree expanding its maritime claims in a dispute with Israel must be approved by the caretaker government, rejecting a request to grant it swift presidential approval. [REUTERS](#)

### 8 Greece, Cyprus, Israel, UAE Foreign Ministers Meet

2021-04-16 The foreign ministers of Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and the UAE hold a meeting in Paphos, Cyprus. The first joint meeting held between these four countries, resulting from the reconciliation between Israel and the UAE in 2020. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 9 Greece And Israel Conclude \$1.65 Billion Arms Deal After Cyprus Summit | Ahval

2021-04-18 Israel and Greece announced the conclusion of a recent arms deal that is the largest in the history of their relationship, accounting for an estimated \$1.65 billion Reuters reported. [AHVAL](#)

### 10 Standing NATO Maritime Group-2 Joins Italian Navy Led Ambitious Drills.

2021-04-12 SNMG2 participates in the Italian Navy led ambitious exercise PHIBEX 21-1 this week. [COM\\_SNMG2](#)

### 11 Iniochos 2021 Air Drills Takes Place In Greece.

2021-04-12 Iniochos 2021 exercise commences at Andravida Air Base, Greece, between 12 and 22 April with the participation of France, Israel, Spain, the UAE, and the US. [HAF](#)

### 12 SNMCMG2 Joins Italian Navy Led MCM Drills.

2021-04-14 SNMCMG2 participates in mine warfare exercise Italian MINEX-21 in the vicinity of La Spezia. [COM\\_SNMCMG2](#)

## ASSESSMENT

- A heavy atmosphere was not expected in the press conference in Ankara since after a long time Greek FM went to Turkey, and there were good statements about the issues. Actually, there is nothing new in those statements, and Dendias and Greek diplomats tried to calm down the rhetoric by saying that solutions exist regarding the disputes with Turkey.

- Foreign Minister Shukri gave a positive message in an interview after Egyptian resources stated to Al Arabiya that they slowed down the reconciliation process with Turkey last week. Turkey focused on normalising relations with two countries in the region; Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Yet, for achieving this goal, Ankara has to compromise on key issues, notably Libya and Muslim Brotherhood.

- The arms deal with Israel is a remarkable step that can also augment the Greek army, and the ad hoc coalition, which comes together for the second time, can strengthen its hand in the disputes with Ankara. Concerning Libya, Athens is a bit late to the party. The key issues are to cancel Tripoli's maritime deal with Turkey and sign a demarcation agreement with Libya. For achieving this goal, engaging with critical figures is crucial for Greece since it does not have good relations with Al Menfi and Dbeibeh. Moreover, the caretaker government won't have a desire to conclude a deal that can amplify divergences within the administration before elections.

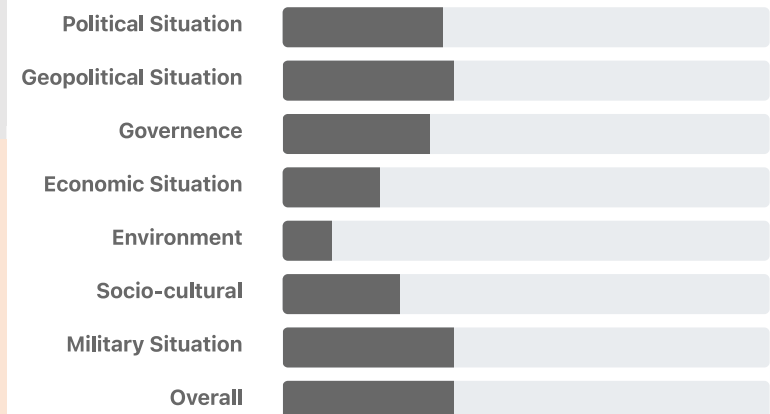
- The frozen tensions between Israel and Lebanon sparked after the draft decree. A couple of weeks ago, Moscow activated an old deal with Syria, allowing Russia to conduct exploration, which angered Lebanon and Turkey. Yet, the deteriorating economy and political instability in Lebanon makes it a remote possibility to go further. Besides, the tensions clearly illustrate a need for a regional organisation through which problems can be discussed. There is Eastern Med Gas Forum based in Cairo, which Lebanon is not a member of, but it is more like an anti-Turkey alliance than a regional forum.

- This week, SNMG-2 and SNMCMG-2 has returned to the sea and joins drills in Italy. Meanwhile, Greece organises a medium level air exercise with the participation of five different countries. Russian activities in the Mediterranean decreased due to the tensions in Ukraine, and the Russian Navy conduct military exercises in the Black Sea. There were two US destroyers around the Aegean, and the UK is expected to dispatch two warships as a response to the escalation in the Black Sea.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (19 - 26 Apr 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 In Race To Rearm, Greece Seeks Partnerships, More Hardware

2021-04-20 Greece has vowed to expand military cooperation with traditional NATO allies as well as Middle Eastern powers in a race to modernize its armed forces and face its militarily assertive neighbour Turkey. [AP](#)

### 2 'Turkey Not Accepting International Law', Greek FM Says | | Ahval

2021-04-23 Greece wants to improve its relations with Turkey, Dendias told Euronews, "But we have a problem, in order to solve an exercise [problem], we have to abide by the same rules," he said. [AHVAL](#)

### 3 Why Biden Recognized The Armenian Genocide | EKathimerini.Com

2021-04-25 By recognising the Armenian genocide, the US sent the message that it doesn't ascribe to Turkey the same importance it enjoyed for decades. The alliance will continue, but the context will be different. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 4 Meeting With Turkish President Likely: Greek Premier - Turkey News

2021-04-23 "There will be a meeting with Erdoğan. But I am not in a position to say when. The meeting will happen because we need to communicate," Greek PM Mitsotakis said. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 5 Turkey Opposes Egypt On Muslim Brotherhood In Rapprochement Snag | | Ahval

2021-04-21 Turkey is still against Egypt's labelling of the Muslim Brotherhood as terrorists, and the Muslim Brotherhood was a legitimate political movement, FM Çavuşoğlu said. It is a major snag in improving relations between the two countries. [AHVAL](#)

### 6 Turkey To Establish Egypt Friendship Group: Lawmaker - Turkey News

2021-04-21 "As the AKP group, we're going to submit our proposal on establishing a friendship group between the Republic of Turkey and Egypt..." Bülent Turan, the deputy chairman of the party's parliamentary group, told. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 7 Turkey Invites Israeli Energy Minister To Diplomacy Forum - Turkey News

2021-04-23 Turkey's invitation to the minister constitutes another important signal for reconciliation. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 8 Turkey's EU Candidacy Must Be Suspended If No Change, EU Lawmakers Say | EKathimerini.Com

2021-04-23 Turkey's EU membership negotiations should be suspended if Ankara continues its autocratic track, MEPs in the Foreign Affairs Committee stated. A decision was urgent as basic freedoms in the country are curtailed, they added. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 9 UAE-Turkey: Emirati Foreign Minister Calls Turkish Counterpart For First Time In Five Years

2021-04-23 Turkish FM Cavusoglu had a phone call with his Emirati counterpart to exchange congratulations over Ramadan. "The call request came from the Emirati government," a Turkish official told Middle East Eye. [MIDDLE EAST EYE](#)

### 10 U.S Coast Guard Strengthens Trans-Atlantic Ties With Italy

2021-04-26 USCGC Hamilton conducted operations in the Mediterranean Sea with the Italian Coast Guard and Navy. [NAVEUR](#)

### 11 Ukrainian Navy Took Part In The Inaugural Conference Of The Turkish Exercise Dogu Akdeniz 2021

2021-04-25 The drill, set to be held in the western Mediterranean, is scheduled for late 2021. [UNIAN](#)

### 12 NATO Operation Sea Guardian Sails Eastern Mediterranean

2021-04-23 The third focused patrol of Operation Sea Guardian for 2021 commenced on 21 April in the East Med. [MARCOM](#)

### 13 The Russia's Mediterranean Fleet Returns To Its Normal Level After The Warships Of Baltic Forces Left.

2021-04-24 Now, there are two subs and one frigate, corvette, oiler and repair vessel. [RUSSIANFLEETANALYSIS](#)

## ASSESSMENT

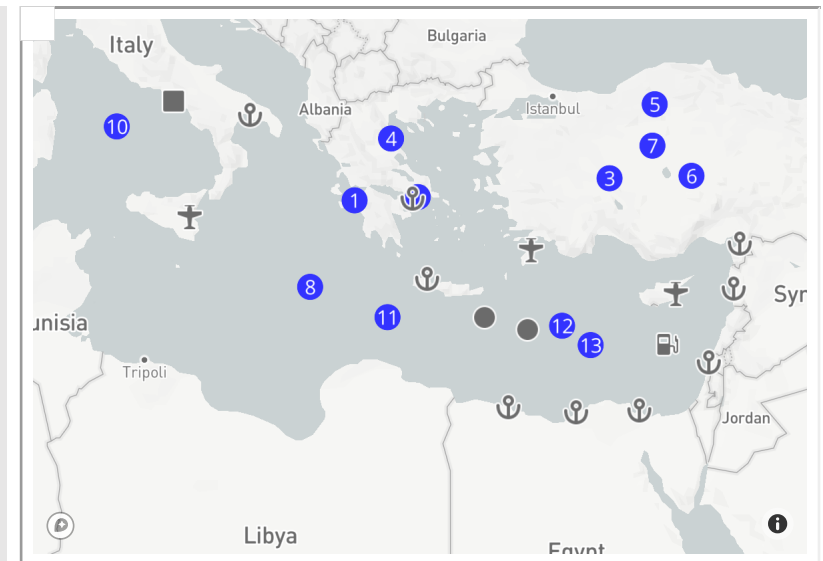
- After the showdown between the foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey, tensions have not escalated further. On the contrary, the Greek PM said his willingness to meet with Erdogan. In his appearance on Euronews, Greek FM reiterated that Turkey does not abide by international law. Considering the nature of international law, particularly the UNCLOS, his remarks are partly correct since East Med requires a maritime delimitation deal. Yet, Athens seems to have the upper hand vis-a-vis Turkey diplomatically due to Ankara's aggressive behaviours, which irked regional states, the strained relations with the US, and Greece's diplomatic campaign. As a result, Athens's discourse becomes successful in mobilizing the European and international audience. In this regard, Greece strives to upgrade its army since it does not have the same advantage in the military domain.

- Ankara still struggles to break its isolation in the region. Concerning Egypt, Turkey has imposed restrictions on the members of the Muslim Brotherhood living within its borders but rejected to designate the group as a terrorist organisation. However, the ruling party takes a new step to open new channels. Hence, Ankara will continue these efforts until it achieves a deal with respect to East Med. Also, Turkey made some progress in repairing its relations with the Gulf as well as Israel. Yet, it is too early to be hopeful about them.

- Ukraine will join the Turkish exercise Dogu Akdeniz 2021. Kyiv is one of the rarest countries with whom Ankara has good political and military relations. For instance, Turkey sold its brand-new drones to Ukraine, and they concluded military deals that can partly compensate some parts, notably for engines, for which Turkey could face problems due to the arms embargo of Western countries.

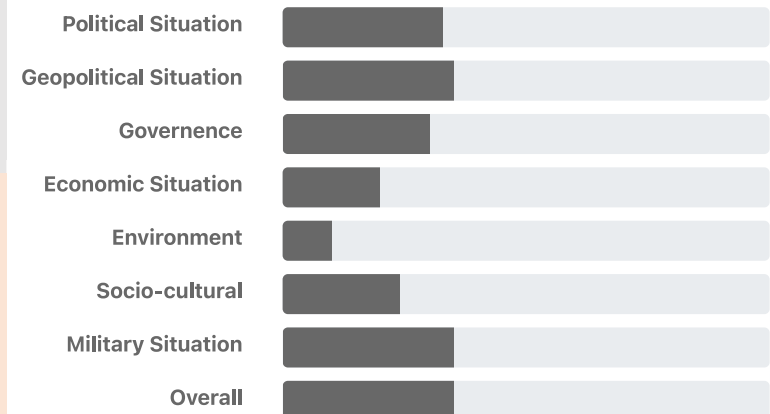
- The US cancelled its plan to send warships to the Black Sea, and Russia's Mediterranean fleet turns back to its normal level. In this regard, the UK has not reversed its decision to dispatch two warships. Now, there is one British ship HMS Trent operating in the Med.

- We will be watching UN 5+1 talks about Cyprus this week. The English newspaper Sunday Express claimed that the British ministers consider recognizing North Cyprus if the talks do not bear fruit, which may be a game-changer in the disputes.



## AI Powered Crisis Situation

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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (26 Apr - 03 May 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 U.N.'S Guterres Says Common Ground Still Elusive In Cyprus Talks

2021-04-29 The UN said on Thursday there was not enough common ground to resume negotiations on war-divided Cyprus, after a three-day summit attempting to break a four-year impasse in peace negotiations. [REUTERS](#)

### 2 Turkey, Turkish Cypriots Ink Oil, Electricity Cooperation Protocols

2021-04-30 Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) signed two cooperation protocols on April 29 to meet the energy needs of the TRNC. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 3 Russia's Lavrov Discusses Cyprus Dispute With Cypriot Counterpart - Foreign Ministry

2021-04-28 "Concerning the '5+UN' meeting on Cyprus, the Russian side reaffirmed its position in favor of reaching a solution to the Cyprus dispute based on the existing UN Security Council resolutions," the ministry said in a statement. [URDU POINT](#)

### 4 A Blue Growth Strategy For Cyprus

2021-04-30 "The [EU's Green] deal is likely to kill demand for hydrocarbons in the coming decades, which means that the Cyprus find too is going to be less significant than initially expected." [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 5 Turkey's Regional Ambitions Likely To Be Curtailed By Biden

2021-05-02 Turkey's freedom to maneuver in foreign policy is likely to be significantly curtailed under the administration of Biden, according to Michael Leigh. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 6 Hungary's Ambassador To Turkey Predicts Relations Will Only Deepen - Interview

2021-05-02 Hungary's ambassador to Turkey Viktor Matis said that he expects relations with Turkey to improve to another level in an interview with pro-government Daily Sabah that was published on Sunday. [AHVAL](#)

### 7 Turkey Lifted Nato Veto Over Egypt To Woo Cairo

2021-04-30 The Turkish government lifted a veto against Egypt's partnership activities with Nato last year as part of attempts to repair ties with Cairo, two people familiar with the matter told Middle East Eye. [MIDDLEEASTEYE](#)

### 8 Turkish Delegation To Arrive In Egypt For Reconciliation Talks

2021-05-01 The visit comes amidst a recent push, at the behest of the Turkish government, to seek rapprochement with Egypt after eight years of strained relations. [FOREIGNBRIEF](#)

### 9 UAE-Israeli Normalisation May See Its Biggest Business Deal Yet

2021-04-26 A United Arab Emirates sovereign wealth fund plans to buy a stake in an Israeli natural-gas field for as much as \$1.1 billion, in what would be the biggest business deal since the nations normalized ties last year. [ALJAZEERA ENGLISH](#)

### 10 US To Send Mediation Team For Israel-Lebanon Maritime Talks Next Week

2021-04-30 The US will send a delegation next week to mediate resumed maritime border talks between Israel and Lebanon aimed at resolving a dispute over potentially lucrative oil and gas resources in the East Med. [AL-MONITOR](#)

### 11 Advanced Multinational Exercise 'SPANISH MINEX-21'

2021-04-28 The international MCM exercise 'SPANISH MINEX-21' will take place off the Balearic coast between 26 April and 7 May. [ARMADAESPANOLA](#)

### 12 Operation Sea Guardian- The Focused Operations (FOCOPS)

2021-05-01 Operation Sea Guardian- Focused Operations (FOCOPS) commanded by our Turkish Navy were carried out with the participation of TCG ORUÇREİS (FFGH), TCG DOLUNAY (SSK) and HMS TRENT. [TURKISH NAVY](#)

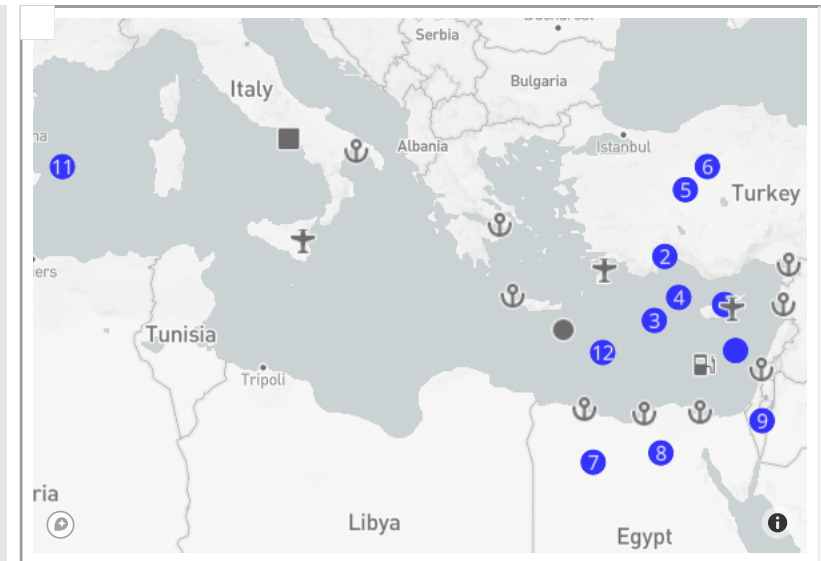
## ASSESSMENT

- Long-awaited UN-led 5+1 talks took place in Geneva on the 29th of April. As expected, there is no breakthrough since the new government of Turkish Cypriots insisted on a two-state solution which the Greek side strongly rejects. The rumours which the UK may recognize North Cyprus did not take place. The stalemate hence seems to continue for a long time. Nevertheless, after several years Greek and Turkish side return to the table via different fora, e.g. exploratory talks, technical talks in NATO, and 5+1 talks, which may ameliorate the negative atmosphere. Considering Turkey's increasing isolation and the changing US foreign policy vis-a-vis Turkey, Ankara will not be able to escalate its rhetoric and sustain its assertive foreign policy. As a result, 2021 will get calmer than 2020.

- Saudi Arabia gave signals that it is not ready for reconciliation with Ankara by closing Turkish schools within its borders. As a response, Turkey declared that it wouldn't drop the Khashoggi case. Concerning Egypt, Ankara revoked its veto regarding Egypt's partnership activities with NATO as a gesture, and a Turkish delegation conducted meetings with their counterparts to pave the way for rapprochement. Though Egypt is not so keen on repairing relations, Ankara has made important U-turns so far. When writing this assessment, the Turkish Trade minister stated that Turkey strives to improve its economic relations with Cairo. Therefore, Egypt will increase its gains from its position in which both Greece and Turkey need Cairo to have the upper hand over their maritime disputes.

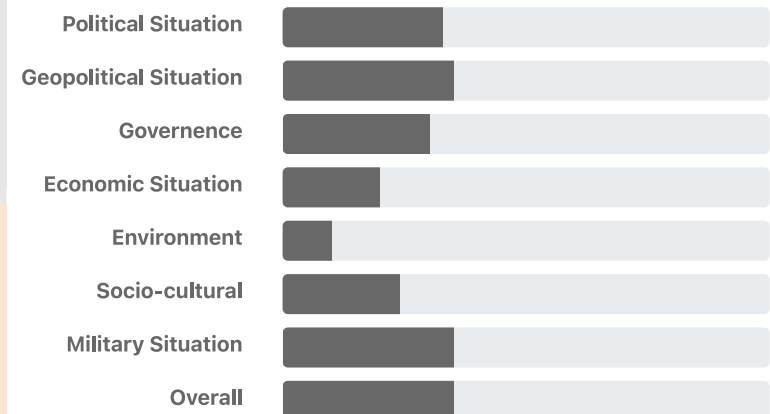
- The US decided to dispatch a conciliation delegation to broker talks between Tel Aviv and Beirut when Lebanon is experiencing financial hardship and political rift. In case of an agreement, the rich resources in the region can become instrumental in funding Lebanon's economy, which badly needs it.

- Spanish Navy organises a massive mine countermeasure exercise in the Western Mediterranean with the participation of NATO allies, notably SNMG-2, while the British and Turkish warships conducted FOCOPS in the region.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (03 - 10 May 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Egypt And Turkey Hold 'Frank' Official Talks, First Since 2013

2021-05-06 Egypt and Turkey said they had held "frank" discussions during the first official diplomatic talks between the regional rivals for eight years, a joint statement said. [AL JAZEERA ONLINE](#)

### 2 Turkey-Egypt Reconciliation Will Not Be At The Expense Of The Egyptian Opposition

2021-05-08 Speaking to Al Jazeera, Abdel Ghaffar said that Egyptian opposition groups in Turkey, which include liberals as well as Islamists, had been assured that Turkey's rapprochement with Cairo would not be at their expense. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)

### 3 Turkey, Egypt Might Have Meeting At Minister Level: FM Çavuşoğlu - Turkey News

2021-05-08 Turkey's FM Cavusoglu stated that he could soon meet with his Egyptian counterpart. He said two days of talks this week led by the deputy foreign ministers of Turkey and Egypt were held in a "positive atmosphere." [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 4 Germany Cautiously Optimistic About EU-Turkey Ties

2021-05-07 Relations between Turkey and the European Union look to be better this year after the difficulties experienced in 2020, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Thursday after he hosted his Turkish counterpart. [AHVAL](#)

### 5 Will Turkey Withdraw Troops From Libya?

2021-05-07 Libyan PM Dbeibeh said that "the Libyan-Turkish maritime agreement that serves the Libyans." But, the dust has not yet settled in Libya, and under these conditions, expecting Turkey's immediate withdrawal is premature. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 6 Libya's PM 'Hopeful' Foreign Mercenaries Will Withdraw Soon

2021-05-05 Libyan PM Dbeibah speaks to Al Jazeera about reconciliation, elections, and renegade general Khalifa Haftar. He is hopeful that thousands of foreign mercenaries will soon withdraw from the country, the PM told Al Jazeera. [AL JAZEERA ONLINE](#)

### 7 Sixth Round Of Lebanon-Israel Border Talks Postponed Over U.S. 'Preconditions'

2021-05-05 The sixth round of indirect negotiations scheduled Wednesday between Lebanon and Israel on their maritime borders have been postponed to an "unspecified" date, media reports said. [NAHARNET](#)

### 8 NATO Forces Participate In Exercise SPANISH MINEX-21

2021-05-05 SPANISH MINEX-21, a quickly-evolving mine countermeasures exercise with a realistic scenario, concluded. [MARCOM](#)

### 9 Russia To Build Floating Dock Off Syrian Coast.

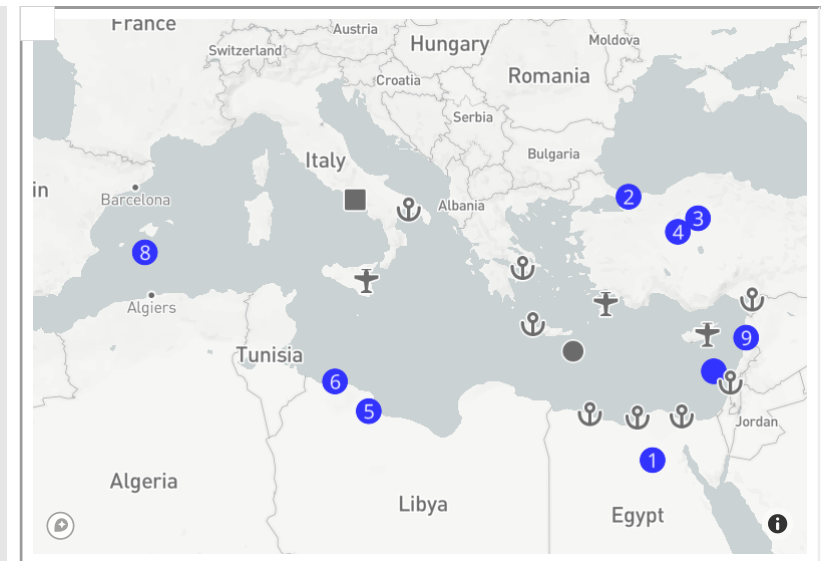
2021-05-10 Russia's repair shop in Tartus is working to build a floating dock, greatly expanding the capabilities of the military base following the major expansion of the main Hmeimim base, located in the Latakia countryside. [AL-MONITOR](#)

## ASSESSMENT

- Turkey's push to normalize relations with Egypt continues. Cairo requests different demands from Ankara because Turkey strives to break its isolation in the region. According to the news, Turkey will not sacrifice the opposition figures residing within its borders. That is questionable when we look at the extent to which the Turkish President has reverted his policy vis-a-vis Egypt completely. Meanwhile, Turkey has already put significant restrictions on opposition channels operating from Turkey. On the other hand, Egypt has kept Haftar at arm's length since the Berlin process, contributing to the reconciliation process. Despite these developments, the efforts have yet to produce concrete results, but there is a significant momentum that may bear fruit. And, it is helpful not only for bilateral relations of those countries but also for the Mediterranean region, which connotes disputes and strains.

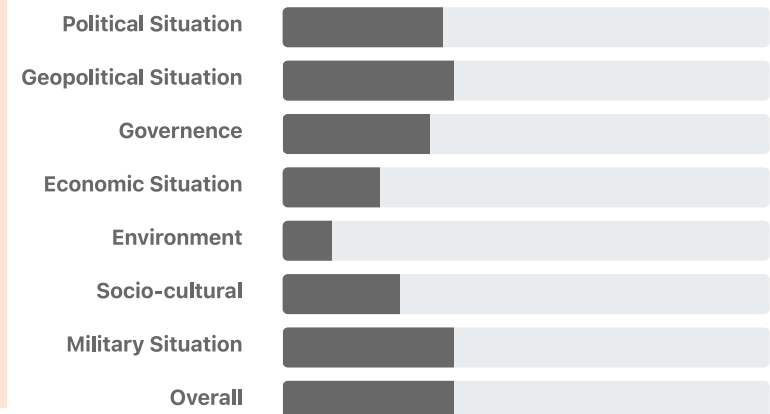
- The recent negotiations between Israel and Lebanon were put off due to the Lebanese position, which rejects any preconditions. Beirut also feels pressure from Russia in its northern maritime borders after Moscow activated an old deal enabling Russia to explore energy resources in Syrian waters. Lebanon is experiencing a political rift and financial turmoil and badly needs cash to pay its debts. Therefore, a breakthrough in the dispute with Israel can make a significant contribution to its economy.

- While NATO countries are mostly focused on the Eastern Flank of the Alliance and Ukraine, Russia has been steadily solidifying its position in the Southeastern Flank. Greco-Turkish tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean overshadowed the surging Russian presence and activity in the region. Moscow has a permanent Mediterranean Task Force composed of warships from the Black Sea Fleet. The group generally is assisted by a repair vessel. Yet, the recent enhancement by constructing a floating dock can enable Moscow to conduct overhauls and important repairs without returning to Sevastopol. As a result, Russia is a neighbour in the Mediterranean and continues to solidify its position. And, the Alliance has yet to develop a fully-fledged strategy and response to this presence.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (10 - 17 May 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Cavusoglu Reportedly Planning Athens Trip | [EKathimerini.Com](#)

2021-05-13 Reports from Ankara suggest that Turkish FM Cavusoglu plans to visit Athens in the last days of May, reciprocating last month's visit to Turkey by his Greek counterpart. Meanwhile, the chief of the Greek Army said "The possibility of an accident occurring is extremely high. Nobody knows where this will lead. We are trying not to be the ones that will lead to this accident." [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 2 Survey Charts Opinions Of Greeks, Turks On Politics, Bilateral Relations | [EKathimerini.Com](#)

2021-05-15 According to a public opinion survey, 68.1% of Greeks and 73.5% of Turks believe that they "must find a way of friendly coexistence." Also, 60% of both Greeks and Turks believe that the biggest problem is the maritime zones, the Aegean and the East Med (58.1% of Greeks and 57.8% of Turks). [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 3 Turkey May Sign Gaza Deal For Energy Rights Off Israel's Coast - Pro-Gov't Daily | | [Ahval](#)

2021-05-17 Turkey may sign a deal with Gaza's Hamas administration for water access and energy rights off the coast of Israel, pro-government Yeni Şafak newspaper reported on Monday, citing a retired admiral. [AHVAL](#)

### 4 Cyprus Welcomes France's Flagship Carrier After Operations With IKE

2021-05-24 France's aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle arrived at the port of Limassol, Cyprus last week as part of the four-month "Clemenceau 21" deployment through the Eastern Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Arabian Gulf. [NATIONAL INTEREST](#)

### 5 North African Maritime Exercise Phoenix Express Set To Begin.

2021-05-14 Thirteen nations will operate together through May 28 to increase regional cooperation, maritime domain awareness, information-sharing practices, and operational capabilities, enhancing efforts to promote safety and security in the Mediterranean Sea and territorial waters of participating North African nations. [USNAVY](#)

## ASSESSMENT

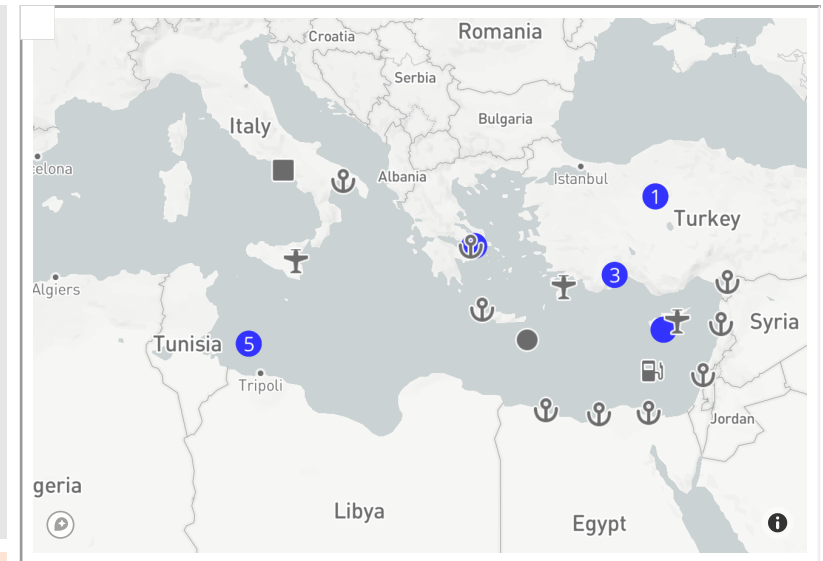
- Turkish FM Cavusoglu is planning to meet with his Greek counterpart, coinciding with the statements of the Chief of Greece's armed forces that there is a significant risk of an escalation. Despite the tensions in the meeting in Ankara last May, Turkey preferred to continue dialogue and diplomacy. It is a good sign, but these meetings should yield some concrete results instead of nice words in order to be helpful.

- According to a recent survey, the public of both countries believe that they should seek a path for "friendly coexistence." Actually, it is long known that people of both countries have good interpersonal relations and they have a lot of similarities. Hence, if diplomacy can generate a path for reconciliation, their publics are already ready for it.

- After the clashes erupted in Gaza, Ankara has been seeking tools or ways to exert pressure upon the situation. Yet, its aggressive policy in the region leaves Turkey alone in international politics. Ankara put forward a maritime deal between Palestine and Turkey to solidify Palestine's position in the international scene and acquire leverage to use in the negotiations for demarcation. However, Turkey has been struggling to normalise relations with Israel, and Ankara already suggested the same deal to Tel Aviv. Therefore, this action will diminish Turkey's credibility in the eyes of Israel as well as other actors in the region. The only benefit of such a deal can be to influence the East Med Gas Forum, where Palestine is a member.

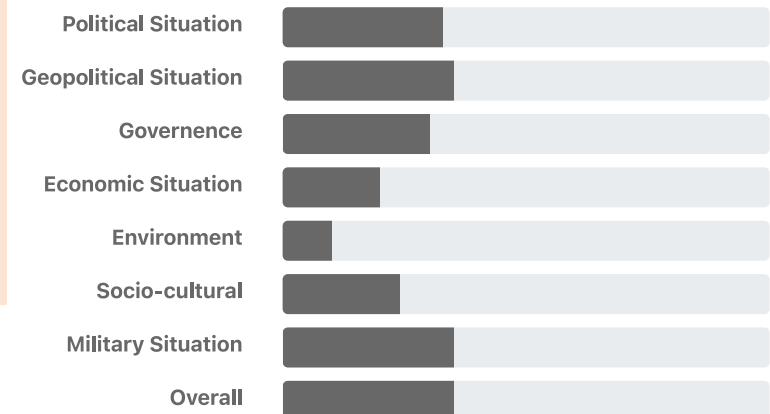
- The French aircraft carrier entered the last phase of its "Clemenceau 21" deployment and returned to the Mediterranean Sea. The ship calls a port in Limassol along with the statements that both countries have "special ties" and "excellent level of cooperation." Therefore, Paris chooses up sides clearer once again.

- SNMG-2 returned to port and is preparing for Steadfast Defender 21 exercises. Meanwhile, Phoenix Express 21 exercise will be conducted with the participation of North and South Mediterranean nations.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (24 - 31 May 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Cavusoglu Confirms Greece Visit On May 31

2021-05-26 Turkey's FM Cavusoglu said he will visit Greece on May 31 as the NATO members seek to improve ties after a dispute last year that stoked regional tensions, Turkish state media TRT reported on Wednesday. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 2 Turkey Pushes For Progress In EU Ties Ahead Of June Summit

2021-05-28 Turkey hopes to see progress with the EU at June's European leaders' meeting, Turkish presidential spokesperson said. "We expect concrete steps, especially on modernisation of the EU-Turkey Customs Union and the refugee deal," he said. [AHVAL](#)

### 3 Turkish, Greek Defense Ministry Delegations Meet

2021-05-28 The 4th round of meetings on confidence-building measures between Ankara and Athens was held virtually on May 26-27. Both sides agreed to continue talks, the Turkish National Defense Ministry said in a statement. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Ankara, Turkey. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 4 EU Countries Seek To Prolong Bloc's Funding For Gas Projects - Document

2021-05-27 EU countries will seek to prolong EU support for cross-border natural gas projects, a stance at odds with the Commission's plan to end such funding, according to a draft document. [REUTERS](#)

### 5 Turkey Resumes Sending Mercenaries To Libya

2021-05-29 The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights revealed that Turkey sent on March 8 a batch of 380 mercenaries to Libya, while another group of fighters is being prepared to be sent to Turkey with monthly salaries of \$500. [AAWSAT](#)

### 6 Turkey Starts Naval Drill In Aegean, Eastern Mediterranean

2021-05-26 The Turkish navy on May 25 started the Sea Wolf 2021 exercise of the Turkish Navy commenced on May and will conclude on June 6 in the Aegean and East Med. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 7 U.S. Navy Destroyer Joins French Carrier Strike Group In The Mediterranean

2021-05-27 USS Thomas Hudner joined the Charles de Gaulle Strike Group in Mediterranean to conduct joint operations. [NAVEUR](#)

### 8 USS Hershel "Woody" Williams Conducts Interoperability Exercises During Phoenix Express 2021

2021-05-28 USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB-4) conducts interoperability exercises with Algerian, Egyptian, Moroccan, Spanish, and Tunisian Naval forces during the at-sea portion of exercise Phoenix Express in the Mediterranean Sea, May 25, 2021. [NAVEUR](#)

### 9 Exercise Phoenix Express Concludes In Tunisia

2021-05-29 Eleven nations, including Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, and the US, worked together to promote safety & security in the Mediterranean Sea and waters of participating North African nations. [NAVEUR](#)

### 10 STANDING NAVAL FORCES (SNMG) JOIN EXERCISE STEADFAST DEFENDER 21 WITH QUEEN ELIZABETH CSG

2021-05-28 SNMG1, SNMG2, and Queen Elisabeth Carrier Strike Group (CSG) participated in exercise Steadfast Defender off the coast of Portugal between 20-28 May 2021. [MARCOM](#)

### 11 Naval Sitrep 30 May 2021

2021-05-30 Naval units in the Med Sea HMS Queen Elisabeth, Charles de Gaulle, USS Iwo Jima (LHD), USS San Antonio (LPD), USS Carter Hall (LSD), ESPS Navarra USNS Yuma, USS Laboon (DDG) + one US sub. [NATSOUTH](#)

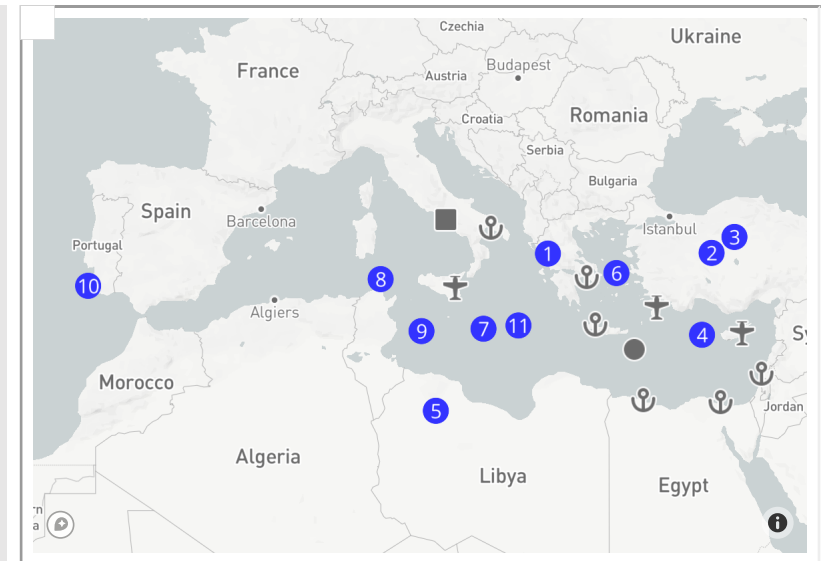
## ASSESSMENT

- Turkish FM Cavusoglu will hold a visit to Athens for a meeting with his counterpart and probably Greek PM as well. Despite the last standoff between ministers, both sides are willing to sustain de-escalation. This momentum at the political level is supported by the technical talks between the armed forces of both countries. Furthermore, Ankara strives to upgrade customs union, refugee deal, and to ink a deal for visa liberalisation, all of which are subjected to the developments in the Aegean and East Med. They are so crucial for Turkey when its economy is deteriorating day by day. Therefore, a new crisis is not expected in the short term.

- The EU expressed ambitious plans for transforming its economy into a green model by proposing the Green Deal. It was seen as a blow to the plans concerning the East Med Gas pipeline project. Actually, the project was not seen by experts as feasible and financially viable. The recent plans to extend EU funding for gas projects depict a significant divergence between the EU Commission and member states.

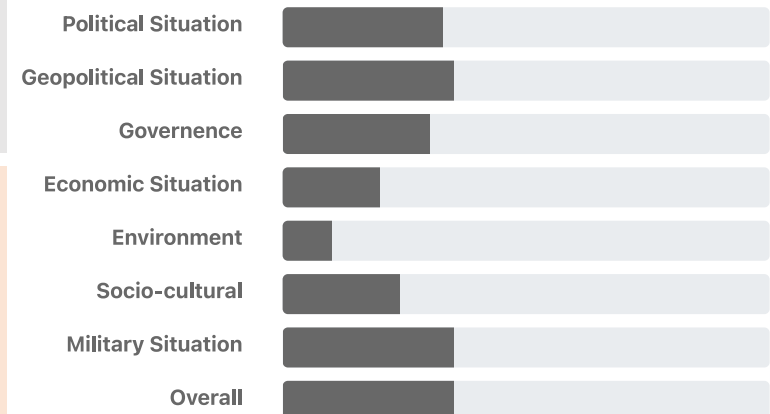
- There is a substantial increase in naval activities in the Mediterranean. The British Carrier Strike Group is en route to the Mediterranean and joined the Steadfast Defender 2021 military drills. SNMG1, SNMG2 and other naval assets from the Alliance participate in the exercise off coast Portugal. The Steadfast Defender aims to rapidly reinforce NATO forces in the European territory in case of a crisis. Meanwhile, the AFRICOM-led exercise Phoenix Express concluded this week.

- The French Carrier Strike Group (CSG) returned to the Mediterranean, and the French Carrier Charles de Gaulle called port in Cyprus in the last phase of its Clemenceau 21 operation. Subsequently, USS Thomas Hudner joined the CSG to assist joint operations.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (05 - 12 Jul 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

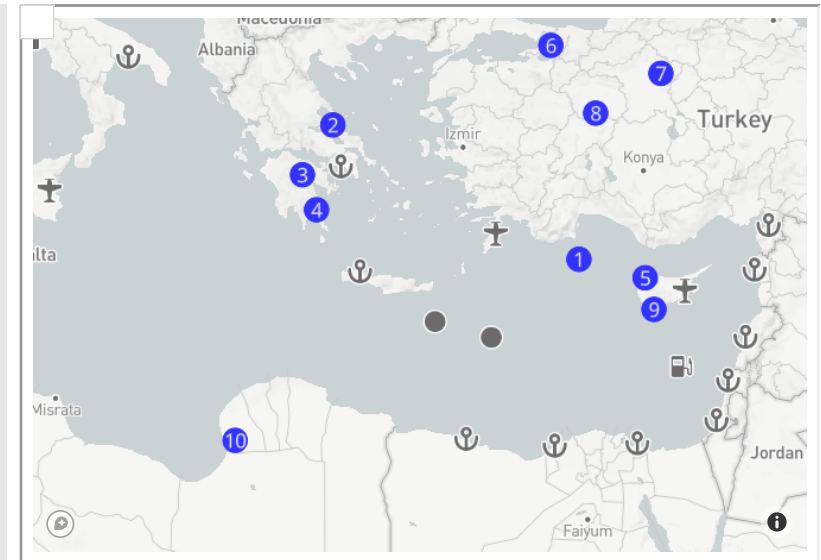
- 1 Turkish Company Applies To Explore For Oil In East Med**  
2021-07-09 Turkey's state-owned energy company TPAO has applied for a licence to explore for crude oil in the East Med, the Energy Ministry said. According to the maps, the areas are within Turkish territorial waters. [REUTERS](#)
- 2 Athens' Moves In The Eastern Mediterranean**  
2021-07-12 As part of the groundwork for the planned EastMed natural gas pipeline, Greece, Cyprus and Israel have leased a research vessel to conduct seismic surveys between Cyprus and Crete, and also between Cyprus and Israel. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 3 Turkey Still Pursuing 'Gunboat Diplomacy' In East Mediterranean - Greek FM**  
2021-07-10 Greece's FM Dendias said that Turkey is still pursuing a policy of "gunboat diplomacy" in the East Med, and He warned that if Turkey continues such policies, Ankara will leave the EU with no choice but to impose sanctions. [AHVAL](#)
- 4 Mitsotakis And Xi Reaffirm Strong Greek-Sino Relations**  
2021-07-08 Greek PM stressed China's role in consolidating stability in the East Med as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and expressed Greece's appreciation of China's firm stance regarding a settlement of the Cyprus issue. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 5 AJC, HALC Support Menendez/Van Hollen Letter On Cypriot Sovereignty**  
2021-07-10 The American Jewish Committee and the Hellenic American Leadership Council supported the letter two US Senators prepared to send to Biden asking him to speak out against Turkey's attempts to lay claim to Varosha beach. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 6 German Submarines To Give Turkey Military Edge**  
2021-07-05 According to the Economist, the construction of the six German-designed Reis-class subs at the Gölçük Naval Shipyard is a concern for Greece. "Piri Reis will join the fleet next year; five other Reis-class subs will follow in successive years. [AHVAL](#)
- 7 Why Macron And Erdogan Are Suddenly Playing Nice**  
2021-07-08 Meeting in Brussels, Macron and Erdogan agreed to a "verbal ceasefire" during what French FM described as a recovery period. The truce won't last, though. They have too much to gain from their mutual antagonism. [BLOOMBERG BUSINESS](#)
- 8 New Israeli Government Could Derail Erdoğan's Reconciliation Plans, Expert Says | Ahval**  
2021-07-09 Israel's change of government could make reconciliation with Turkey significantly more challenging, according to Louis Fishman, an expert on relations between the two countries. [AHVAL](#)
- 9 EU Border Agency Could Help Cyprus Stem Migrant Arrivals | EKathimerini.Com**  
2021-07-08 von der Leyen seeks ways to offer "more support" to Cyprus from Frontex to stem the flow of migrants to the island, is stretched to its limits and can hardly cope with the number of migrants/refugees amounts to 4% of the country. [EKATHIMERINI](#)
- 10 Libyan Speaker Of The House Says All Turkish Troops Must Leave The Country**  
2021-07-07 The political head of Libya's eastern government repeated a demand that Turkey withdraws its military forces. [AHVAL](#)

## ASSESSMENT

As usual, the defence ministers of Greece and Turkey exchanged accusations once again this week. On top of that, Greek FM stated that Ankara implements a "Gunboat Diplomacy" and threatened Ankara with EU sanctions. The application of TPAO for new licences in the East Med raise a new issue of contention between Greece and Turkey. According to Reuters, the areas are within the territorial waters of Turkey, whereas Ekathimerini reported that they extend to the EEZ of Cyprus. Meanwhile, Cyprus, Greece, and Israel have dispatched a research vessel to conduct surveys in the context of the EastMed pipeline project. During the surveys of both sides, it is likely that research ships will be escorted by their navies or disturbed by the warships of other sides, which may escalate the tensions. As a result, this can escalate the militarization of the issues.

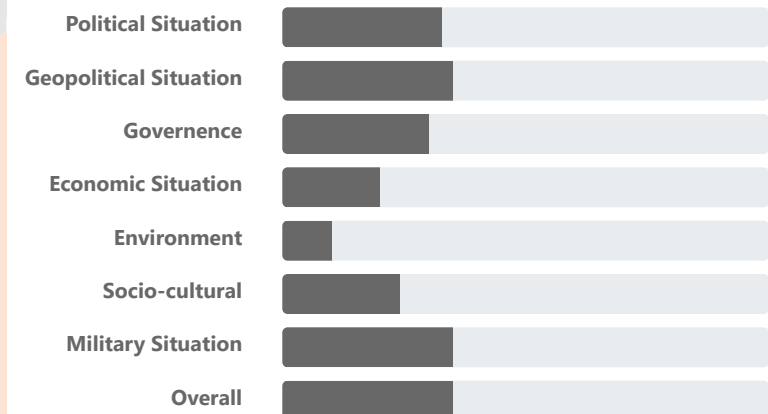
Athens continues to deepen its relations with regional countries and global powers as well to have the upper hand against Ankara. Greece became an observer in the Arab League while it enjoys having good relations with Washington. Moreover, Athens eyes support from China which it has significant trade relations. Beijing has a share of 51% in Piraeus port and is expected to increase %67, disturbing NATO and the EU.

Naval activity in the Mediterranean decreased substantially since SNMG-2, British and American warships were in the Black Sea for the Sea Breeze 2021 drills, and an important portion of the forces continues to stay for the Bulgarian-led Breeze 2021 naval exercise.



## AI Powered Crisis Situation

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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (12 - 19 Jul 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Varosha A Symbol Of Ankara's Muscle Flexing In Eastern Mediterranean

2021-07-18 Guardian: The transformation of Varosha is signalling Turkey's power play in the East Med. The commercialisation is part of Erdogan's policy to improve Ankara's leverage amid explosive tensions and hydrocarbon resources in the region. [AHVAL](#)

### 2 EU Leaders Voice Concerns Over Varosha

2021-07-13 The EU's High Representative Borrell expressed concern over developments regarding the fenced-off town of Varosha in northern Cyprus, amid Ankara's plans to change its status in violation of relevant UN resolutions. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 3 Turks Fire Warning Shots At Cypriot Boat.

2021-07-17 Ankara's aggressive disposition toward Nicosia was on display when a Turkish Coast Guard pursued and fired four warning shots at a Cypriot police boat on patrol for undocumented migrants on the island's northwest coast. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 4 Government Spokesman Says Cyprus Will Wait For Completion Of UN Investigation

2021-07-18 Cyprus will wait for the UN to complete their investigation prior to taking action, Government Spokesman said, commenting on the recent incident when a Turkish vessel opened fire on a Cypriot coast guard. [SPUTNIK](#)

### 5 President Erdoğan Set To Start Two-Day Visit To Turkish Cyprus - Turkey News

2021-07-18 Erdoğan is set to start a two-day official visit to Northern Cyprus on July 19. During his visit, he will address a special session of the Turkish Cypriot parliament and attend July 20 Peace and Freedom Day celebrations. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 6 Greece's Pragmatism Vis-A-Vis China

2021-07-14 'The Cyprus question constitutes an example where China's clout in evoking the UN framework and multilateralism will matter.' [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 7 Turkey Puts Hague Court On Table

2021-07-15 The Turkish Energy Minister ruled out the possibility of seismic surveys by Turkish vessels between Rhodes and Crete since last year's explorations had not yielded any result. Moreover, the Aegean and the East Med disputes could be deferred to the International Court of Justice, as long as Athens pursues the same approach as it did with Italy and Egypt. [AHVAL](#)

### 8 Paris Steadfast In Support For Athens, Envoy Affirms

2021-07-15 France stands by Greece in a way that cannot be doubted, the French Ambassador in Athens told Kathimerini. "France's political commitment to the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean leaves no doubt," he said. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 9 UN: Migrant Deaths On Sea Routes To Europe More Than Double

2021-07-14 The number of migrants and refugees who died on dangerous sea crossings more than doubled this year compared to the first six months of 2020, the UN's migration agency said in a new report. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 10 U.S. Navy Destroyer Assumes Air Defense Duties As Part Of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 21

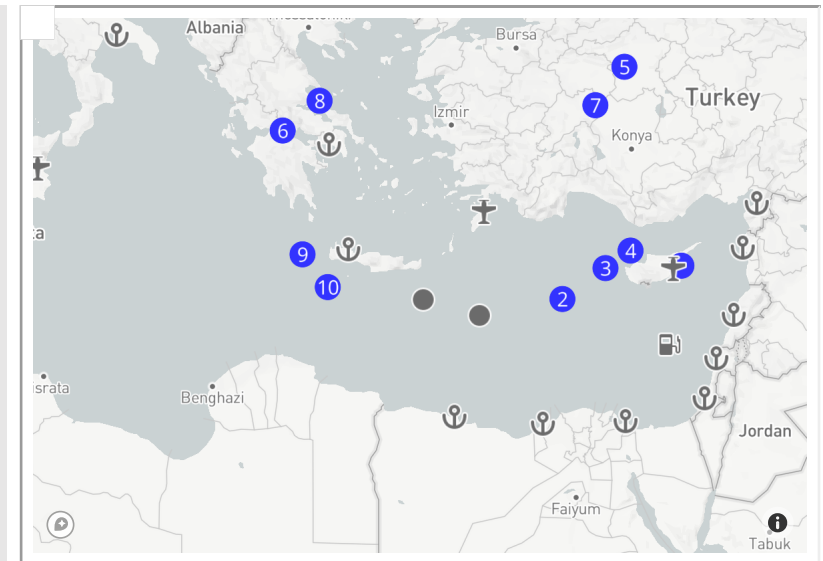
2021-07-19 While operating in the East Med, USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) assumed air defence commander for the UK's CSG to support joint operations and interoperability training. The CSG's transit of the Mediterranean Sea provided an opportunity to train and exercise with NATO Allies and regional partners to include operations with Italian and French Navies and Air Forces. [NAVEUR](#)

## ASSESSMENT

The tensions in the East Med has decreased this year significantly compared to the previous year, yet the Greco-Turkish relations are still very fragile. The transformation of Varosha, the explorations in the region and increasing naval drills and activity pose a risk that can easily spike the tensions and generate conflict. The recent firings of a Turkish Coast Guard, though it did not cause any harm, becomes another point of contention. Cyprus stated that they would wait for the UN probe before acting against it. Considering the previous clashes between French and Turkish navies and NATO's lack of response after the investigation, to what extent the UN probe will shed light on these issues is a big question mark.

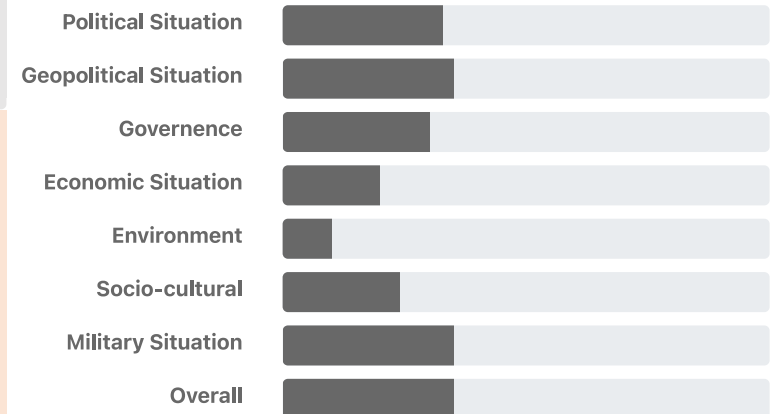
Athens wants to have good relations with the Western pact and China as well. Beijing invests in Greece and Turkey at the same time. While the Chinese have more than 50% share of Piraeus port and want to increase their share, Beijing also provided generous funds to Erdogan for his megaprojects such as Third Bridge and Istanbul Canal. According to the readout of the phone call between Mitsotakis and Jinping, the Greek PM sees China as a pillar of stability in the region and believes that Beijing will support the implementation of international law. While NATO Allies dispatching a significant amount of warships to the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea to deter China from abusing international law, the possibility of the Chinese contribution to stability in the region by respecting the international law seems so slim. Consequently, while Russia achieved a foothold in Syria, China strives to weaken the Alliance by investing large sums of money within the Belt and Road Initiative scope.

Two NATO Maritime Groups and Allied naval assets returned to the Mediterranean after participating in the Breeze 2021, a Bulgarian-led annual naval exercise.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (07 - 13 Jun 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 German Parliament Rejects Bill On Arms Embargo On Turkey

2021-06-13 Germany has rejected a bill submitted by the Left and Green parties to the country's parliament on the imposition of an arms embargo on Turkey. [GREEK CITY TIME](#)

### 2 US-Greece Defense Ties Get A Boost.

2021-06-11 US Senator Bob Menendez and Senator Marco Rubio introduced a new legislation to bolster the US' defense partnership with Greece. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 3 Turkey Says Differences With France Eased After New Libyan Govt

2021-06-09 Differences between Turkey and France over the conflict in Libya have eased since the new Libyan government took office, Turkish FM said, adding that ties between the NATO allies were on a positive trend after months of tension. [REUTERS](#)

### 4 Turkey Seeks Cooperation With Egypt On Eastern Mediterranean, Libya

2021-06-09 Turkey has underlined the need for coordination with Egypt on several important issues, pointing to ongoing discussions aimed at improving relations between the two countries. [ENGLISH AAWSAT](#)

### 5 Greece Willing To Back 'Positive' EU Agenda For Turkey

2021-06-11 Greece's PM said that his government is willing to back the EU's "positive" agenda for relations with Turkey, signaling a further easing of tension between the neighboring countries. [AP](#)

### 6 Blinken: Biden To Raise Issue Of Turkey's East Med Activities During Meeting With Erdogan

2021-06-09 US President will raise the issue of Turkey's activities in the East Med during his upcoming meeting with Turkish President, Blinken said in Congress. "Our differences with Turkey... are no secret," he said. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 7 Russia's Posture In The Mediterranean: Implications For NATO And Europe

2021-06-08 Russia's activities in the Mediterranean have created new challenges for Europe's energy interests and NATO's defense architecture. Today's transatlantic efforts should focus on NATO's policy in the region, the Russia-Turkey relationship, and multilateral conflict resolution in Libya and Syria. [CARNIEGE EUROPE](#)

### 8 Joint Exercises Carried Out By SNMG-2 And SNMCMG-2

2021-06-12 SNMG-2 and SNMCMG-2 conducted joint drills in the last week in the Mediterranean. [MARCOM](#)

### 9 French CSG Concludes 'Clemenceau 21' Deployment

2021-06-09 The French Carrier Strike Group concludes Clemenceau 21 deployment and is back in Mediterranean after numerous of missions and exercises including fight against Daesh and first ever joint exercise with the Royal Navy's CSG. [NAVALNEWS](#)

### 10 HMS Defender Heads On Black Sea Mission After Mediterranean Workout

2021-06-10 HMS Defender has completed NATO security operations in the Mediterranean and will be heading to the Black Sea after a stop in Istanbul. [ROYAL NAVY](#)

### 11 USS Laboon Enters Black Sea In Support Of NATO Allies And Partners

2021-06-11 The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Laboon (DDG 58) entered the Black Sea on a routine patrol, June 11, 2021. This is the fifth U.S. Navy ship to visit the Black Sea in 2021. [NAVEUR](#)

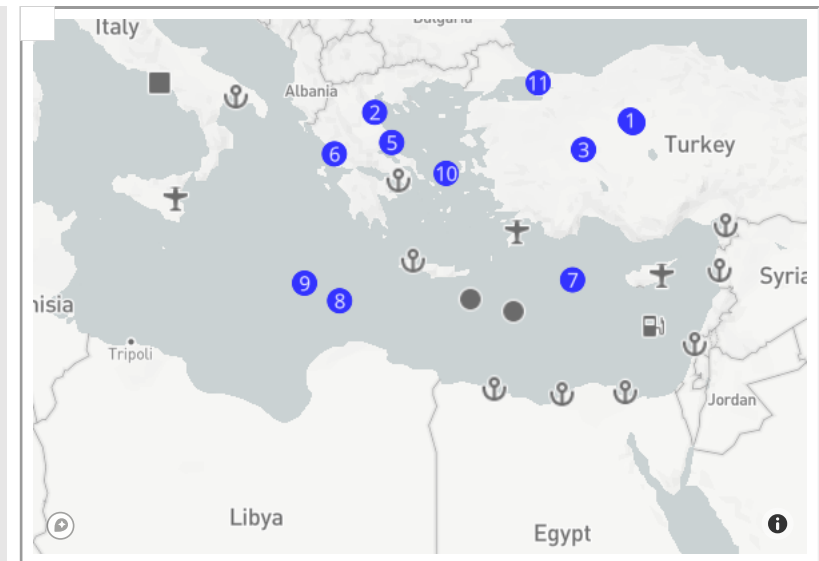
## ASSESSMENT

- The German Parliament turned down a motion regarding an arms embargo on Turkey coming after several calls from Greece on the German government, which several ministers explicitly and openly opposed. Hence, Berlin seems to continue pursuing a soft approach against Ankara.

- As pointed in earlier reports, Libya is one of the most important issues for Turkey's relations with Egypt and France. After the permanent ceasefire and the new government took office, tensions regarding Libya have eased though there is a very bumpy road ahead of the Libyan government and international community as well. Thus, it has positive implications for the East Med since it soothes the escalation to some extent.

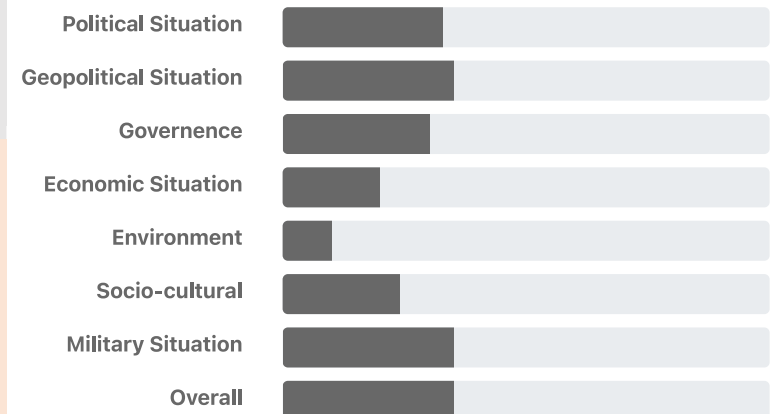
-Greece and Turkey toned down their rhetoric significantly in recent weeks. After the positive meeting of foreign ministers of both countries, the Greek president gave positive signals. In the last years, Athens could receive the support it sought neither from the EU nor from the US. Yet, with the new US administration, which explicitly criticizes and warns Ankara, the tide has turned. Moreover, Ankara has already few friends in the US Congress, where bipartisan support for Greece exists. As a result, the Turkish government lost Trump's shelter and its privilege to act against the EU and NATO in the region.

- There is considerable naval activity in the Mediterranean. Both standing groups, SNMG-1 and SNMG-2, were at sea and carried out joint exercises. HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group (CSG) operated in the region with NATO allies and calls at Italy. A detachment of the CSG, HMS Defender and HNLMS Evertsen headed to the Black Sea, where a US destroyer operates despite Russia's objections.



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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (19 Jul - 15 Aug 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Greece Takes Delivery Of 1st Of 18 French Rafale Warplanes

2021-07-21 Greece took delivery Wednesday of the first of 18 French Rafale fighter jets, part of a major military procurement plan as the country seeks to upgrade its armed forces. [AP NEWS](#)

### 2 New Egyptian Base Sends Messages Of Support To Libya, Challenge To Turkey

2021-08-05 Egypt has inaugurated a new naval base on the Mediterranean Sea, in a move that regional experts say is both a clear commitment to its war-torn neighbor Libya and an indirect warning to its rival Turkey. [BREAKING DEFENSE](#)

### 3 Dendias Welcomes Israeli Reaction To Turkey's Varosha Plans | EKathimerini.Com

2021-07-21 Greek FM Dendias welcomed Israel's reaction to Turkish plans to partially open Varosha, the southern part of Famagusta that has been fenced off and abandoned since 1974. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 4 Israel: President Reassures Greece Of Support

2021-07-22 The new Israeli President reassured his Greek counterpart that Israel continues to side with Greece and Cyprus in their dispute with Turkey. This was despite the recent friendly call between Herzog and Turkish President. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)

### 5 UN Demands Turkey, Turkish Cypriots Reverse Varosha Action

2021-07-29 The UN Security Council demanded again that Turkey and Turkish Cypriots immediately reverse all actions to reopen the abandoned Varosha and backed further talks "in the near future" on reunifying the divided Mediterranean island. [AP NEWS](#)

### 6 U.S. Secretary Of State Blinken Censures Nations For Flouting Sea Boundaries | | Ahval

2021-08-11 Blinken criticised countries for attempting to redraw sea boundaries unilaterally in a thinly veiled swipe including NATO member Turkey and said no country has the right to contravene international law and to undermine stability and security. [AHVAL](#)

### 7 Top U.S. State Department Nominee Pledges Tougher Action On Turkey | | Ahval

2021-07-21 The US should be open to working together with its European allies to sanction Turkey should it continue violating the rule of law, said Karen Donfried, nominee for Assistant Secretary of State Department for European and Eurasian Affairs. [AHVAL](#)

### 8 Congress Presses State Department On Turkey's Drone Program | | Ahval

2021-08-11 Twenty-eight members of the US House of Representatives wrote to Secretary of State to [express] concern over Turkey's armed unmanned aerial vehicle program, which has destabilised multiple regions. [AHVAL](#)

### 9 Turkish Defense Minister Urges Greece For Disarmament Of Aegean Island - Turkey News

2021-07-27 Turkey expects Greece to adopt peaceful political solutions rather than aggressive ones, Defense Minister said on July 27, calling for the disarmament of the Greek islands that have non-military status through treaties. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

### 10 Greece Rebuts Turkey's Claims About Islands | | Ahval

2021-07-28 Athens dismissed Turkish allegations expressed in a letter from Ankara to the UN regarding the militarisation regime of the Aegean islands, as completely unfounded and unsubstantiated, as well as being legally and historically incorrect. [AHVAL](#)

### 11 Greece, Cyprus And Jordan On The Same Page | EKathimerini.Com

2021-07-29 The full harmonization of Greece, Jordan and Cyprus regarding the challenges in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa, was reflected in Wednesday's Tripartite Summit in Athens. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 12 Response From Athens To Turkish Expansionism | EKathimerini.Com

2021-08-03 The letter sent by Greece's Permanent Representative to the UN Maria Theofilis may be restrained in the words it uses to describe Turkey's routine provocations and demands while it sends a very distinct message to the international community about the individual features of Ankara's revisionist policy. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 13 Germany-Turkey Ties Extremely Close And Trusting: Envoy

2021-08-05 "Our political relations are extremely close at all levels of government and covering also non-governmental organizations," Jurgen Schulz told reporters in the Turkish capital Ankara. [HURRIYET DAILY NEWS](#)

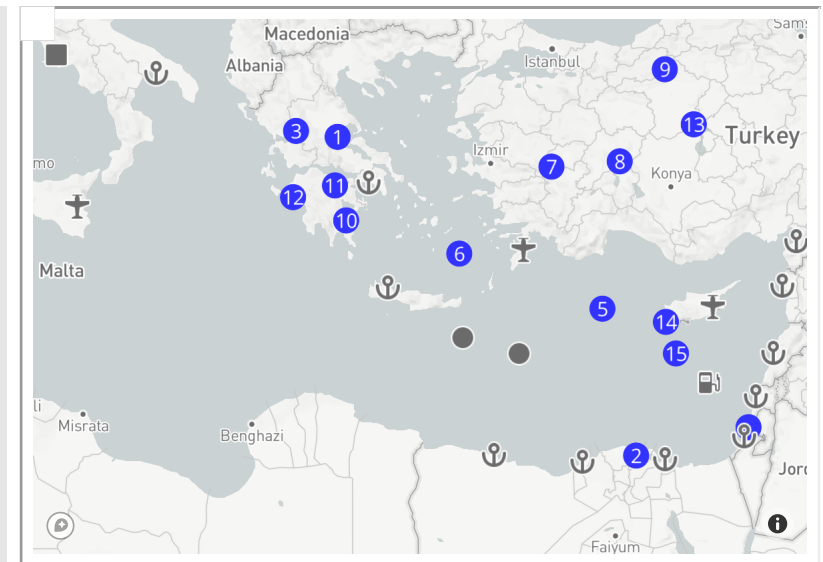
### 14 Cyprus: Climate Change, Rural Decline Boost Wildfire Risk

2021-08-13 The disappearance of rural communities in combination with climate change could make wildfires -- like those seen in many Mediterranean countries this summer -- more frequent in the future, Cyprus' environment minister said. [AP NEWS](#)

### 15 French Navy's Destroyer Conducts Exercise With Rafales In Eastern Mediterranean

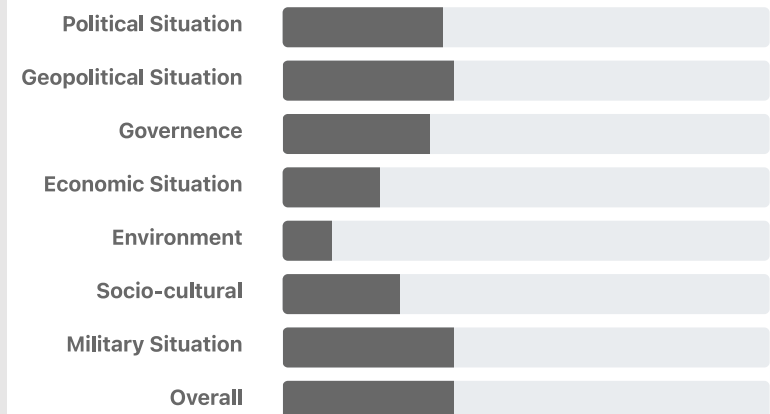
2021-07-19 The aircrafts joined the 'Forbin', which was operating in international waters south of Cyprus, to conduct an air defense exercise. This training allowed the pilots to conduct Very Low Altitude - Very High Speed training and to practice air-to-air combat with the support of radars and frigate's operations center. [NAVALNEWS](#)

## ASSESSMENT



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After the tensions with Turkey, Greece has increased its defence budget and started an ambitious programme to boost its military starting from its Air Forces. In July, Athens received 18 Rafale jets (12 used and 6 new planned), expected to replace old Mirages. With incoming Rafales, expected F-35s would alter the air balance of power between Greece and Turkey, expelled from the F-35 programme. The next goal for Athens is to upgrade its navy, for which different countries are bidding. Considering the fact that Egypt follows a similar route, the disputes in the region can be militarized easily in the future.

At the same time, Greece firmly pursues its diplomatic campaign. While solidifying its position with Egypt, Israel and the US, Athens takes other countries to its side one by one: the last one is Jordan. Concerning Varosha, the Security Council also demanded from Turkey to reverse its actions. Thus, Turkey is being squeezed and isolated internationally.

Ankara's efforts to reconcile with Egypt, Israel and other regional countries have not borne any fruits. After jests to Cairo and warm signals to Tel Aviv, both sides reiterated their support to Greece with respect to the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Turkish government could not find many friends or supporters in the international arena to its ambitious policies despite its willingness to make concessions. On top of them, the domestic scene is deteriorating for the government, complicating and imposing restraints on its foreign policy.

Two NATO Maritime Groups and Allied naval assets returned to the Mediterranean after participating in the Breeze 2021, a Bulgarian-led annual naval exercise. SNMCMG-2 visited Haifa between 2-5 August and conducted PASSEX with the Israeli Navy. The French navy conducted another exercise this year close to the south of Cyprus that can be a signal to Turkey.

Lastly, the recent forest fires in the Mediterranean region emphasized another fragility: the environment. Climate change or crisis has been felt significantly, and it seems to be an important factor of regional security in the future.

# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (16 Aug - 05 Sep 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Greece Safer With Biden As President

2021-08-30 "We're going to be building a framework in which Greece will play a critical role for peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans and beyond," Bob Menendez told Alexis Papachelas. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 2 The Significance Of US Senator Menendez's Visit To Greece And Cyprus

2021-09-01 US Senator Menendez, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was in Greece and Cyprus. He held a number of key meetings with leading officials, including Greek PM Mitsotakis and Cypriot President Anastasiades. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 3 Cyprus, Greece, Israel Affirm Values-Based Alliance

2021-08-22 The foreign ministers of Cyprus, Greece, and Israel affirmed their countries' close ties based on shared values. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 4 US Senator Menendez Criticizes Turkey Under Erdogan

2021-08-27 Menendez criticized Turkey that its current leadership is not committed to democracy and the rule of law. [AP NEWS](#)

### 5 Erdogan Says Turkish Contacts With UAE Have Made Progress

2021-08-18 Turkish president met the UAE National Security Adviser and said they discussed possible "serious investments" by the UAE in Turkey. [AL JAZEERA ONLINE](#)

### 6 U.S. Says Turkey Invaluable Partner In Region

2021-08-25 U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Turkey is a highly valued partner of the United States in the region as he consulted with allies over evacuation efforts in Afghanistan. [AHVAL](#)

### 7 Turkey's Erdogan, UAE Crown Prince Al Nahyan Discuss Bilateral Ties

2021-08-31 Turkish President spoke by phone with the UAE's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. [TRT WORLD](#)

### 8 Egypt-Turkey Set For Second Round Of Exploratory Talks

2021-08-31 Egypt's Foreign Ministry announces deputy FM Hamdi Loza will visit Ankara to help set an "optimal framework for relations and how to resume them." [TRT WORLD](#)

### 9 Turkey Sees Positive Developments In Saudi, UAE, Egypt Ties, Spokesperson Says

2021-08-26 Turkish presidential spokesman says that Ankara hopes to take steps to improve relations with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt soon, Reuters reported. "We could turn a new page with Egypt and Gulf countries ..." he added. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)

### 10 Turkey Aims To Further Boost Cooperation With Jordan: Çavuşoğlu

2021-08-17 Turkey seeks to take its cooperation with Jordan to a deeper, more comprehensive level in line with bilateral ties, Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu said. Jordan's prosperity and serenity were of great importance to his country, he added. [DAILY SABAH](#)

### 11 Turkish Drones In Northern Cyprus Heighten Regional Unease

2021-08-25 An air base hosting Turkish drones in the Northern Cyprus is ratcheting up unease among neighbouring countries, which see the station as an added instrument of instability in the turbulent East Mediterranean region. [AHVAL](#)

### 12 Is An Alliance Growing From Greece To India Against Turkey? | | Ahval

2021-08-24 A new system of alliances may be shaking shape that stretches from India to Greece that threatens to leave Turkey out in the diplomatic cold. [AHVAL](#)

### 13 Turkey Vows Reciprocal Response To New Greek Cypriot Drilling

2021-09-05 "If Greek Cypriots start drilling in the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey will too", the Turkish Vice President said. It would be unthinkable for both the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey to remain idle, he added. [GREEK CITY TIMES](#)

### 14 Egypt And Cyprus Summit: An Ambitious Eastern Mediterranean Alliance

2021-09-05 An Egyptian-Cypriot summit in Cairo on Saturday represented a new leap in relations between the two Mediterranean countries, cementing an Eastern Mediterranean alliance [EGYPT TODAY](#)

### 15 Cairo Sees Deployment Of Turkish Drones In Cyprus As 'Provocative,' Avoids Escalation.

2021-08-26 Cairo has called on the West to put an end to Turkish provocations in the eastern Mediterranean. [THE ARAB WEEKLY](#)

### 16 How The Abraham Accords Disrupted China-Israel Relations

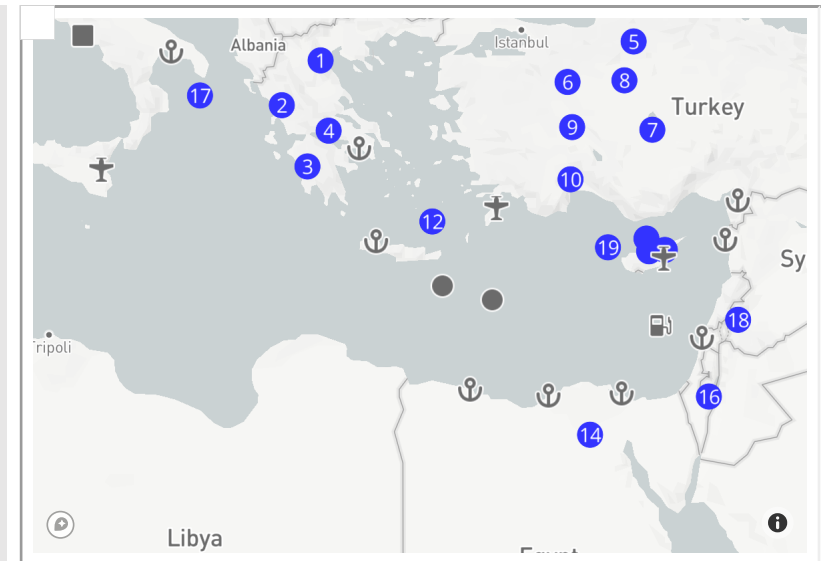
2021-08-24 After the rapprochement, China's investment momentum in Israel was overtaken by the Emiratis – just like the U.S. wanted. [THE DIPLOMAT](#)

### 17 Ministers Call For OSCE-Type Conference For The Mediterranean.

2021-09-03 Ministers from Mediterranean members of the EU said it was time to call a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean in the Helsinki spirit (the OSCE process) although admitting this would be very difficult. [EURACTIV](#)

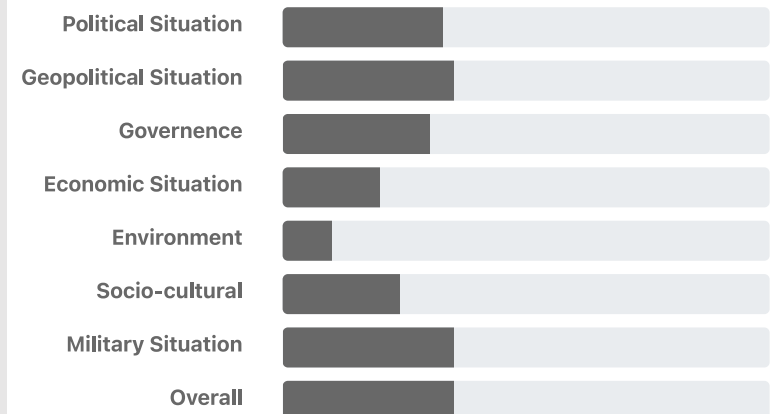
### 18 Russian Military: Syria Shot Down 22 Israeli Missiles

2021-08-21 Six Israeli fighter jets targeted facilities in the provinces of Damascus and Homs from Lebanon, says Russian army. Four Hezbollah militants were killed according to watchdog [HAARETZ](#)



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## ASSESSMENT

Last week, US Senator Menendez came to Athens to attend Greece's 200th anniversary of independence. During his visit, he held meetings with Greek and Cypriot officials. He explicitly showed his support for Greece and discontent for Turkey. The senator stated that the Biden administration would be different from Trump and act with rules and principles. Although he did not say anything new, we can understand that the US pursues a hedging strategy since the US lost its confidence in the Turkish government significantly. Greece is willing to work closely with the US, particularly in defence and security, and there is little or no scepticism towards Washington in Athens, unlike in the last decade. Should the current circumstances continue, it will be no surprise that the relocation of the critical bases and assets in Turkey could be discussed more loudly in the near future.

Meanwhile, Ankara struggles to ameliorate its relations with regional countries. With the events unfolding in Afghanistan, the Turkish government made overtures to its Western Allies, notably the US, by shouldering some burden, e.g. securing the Kabul airport though it was successful.

Ankara stopped surveys or drills in the Eastern Mediterranean as we have heard neither the name of Oruc Reis nor an announcement of NAVTEX. On the flip side, there is no new development about the ongoing investigations in the US about Turkish banks. Hence, there is a silent ceasefire.

This ceasefire does not solve the profound crisis that Turkey is becoming more and more isolated in the region. Efforts towards the Gulf countries and Egypt may improve the relations, but both sides know these rapprochements are completely transactional, which prevents a genuine relationship. For example, Turkish FM gave warm messages regarding Jordan just after a few weeks, Amman implied that it sided with Athens and Nicosia in the East Med.

China silently builds relations with regional countries by investing and procuring harbours, companies and so on. For now, Israel, a key ally of the US in the region, has impeded the developments after the pressure from Washington. Yet, it is for now.

SNMG-2 left Taranto and called a port at Souda Bay for the preparation of the Dynamic Guard exercise. SNMCMG-2 visited Malta and conducted a PASSEX exercise. At the same time, Russia also reinforced its Mediterranean task force by dispatching three more Improved Kilo Class subs to the existing two SSKs this week.

# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (01 - 25 Oct 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Macron Tells Europe To 'Stop Being Naïve' After France Signs Defence Deal With Greece

2021-09-28 Europe needs to stop being naïve for defending its interests and build its own military capacity, the French President said after Greece sealed a deal for French frigates worth about 3 billion euros (\$3.51 billion). [REUTERS](#)

### 2 Greece, France Sign A Warship Deal | | Ahval

2021-09-29 France and Greece sealed a deal for the latter's acquisition of three FDI frigates for the Hellenic Navy for €2.9 billion (\$3.38 billion) with an option for a fourth on Tuesday. [AHVAL](#)

### 3 NATO Secretary General Criticizes Greek-French Defense Pact.

2021-10-08 NATO Chief criticized the French-Greek defence deal implicitly. "What I don't believe in is efforts to try to do something outside NATO's framework or compete with or duplicate NATO because NATO remains the cornerstone, the bedrock for European security and also for North American security," Stoltenberg said at an event at the Georgetown University. [GREEK REPORTER](#)

### 4 State Department Welcomes Greece's Defense Upgrade | EKathimerini.Com

2021-09-29 The US reacted to the French-Greek defence deal, saying it supports the country's role in promoting stability in the East Med and welcomed that Greece, a NATO ally, fulfils the US-led alliance's guidelines on defence spending. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 5 Franco-Greek Alliance Ruffles Feathers

2021-09-30 It is a bit bizarre to say the pact contributes to European sovereignty," one EU diplomat told Playboy. "By all accounts, this is a traditional 19th-century defense pact between two European powers. It has definitely more to do with the pursuit of narrow national interests than with Europe." [POLITICO](#)

### 6 The French Defence Ministry Says Exclusive Economic Zones Not Part Of Greece-France Deal

2021-11-18 The French defence ministry told EURACTIV France in a written statement that exclusive economic zones are not part of the deal. [EURACTIV](#)

### 7 Turkish Navy Prevents Malta-Flagged Boat From Drilling In Mediterranean, Defence Ministry Says

2021-10-04 After the Nautical Geo vessel did not respond to the warnings and continued its attempt to violate the borders of the Turkish shelf, it was expelled by the Turkish naval forces," the defence ministry said. [SPUTNIK](#)

### 8 Turkey Renews East Med Escalation

2021-07-12 The latest request of the Turkish Petroleum Corporation for new licensing of explorations in the East Med, particularly in the area between southern Turkey and Northern Cyprus, is seen as a recent escalation by Ankara. [AHVAL](#)

### 9 European Commission: Turkey Must Respect Sovereignty Of All EU Members | EKathimerini.Com

2021-10-19 Turkey "must avoid threats and actions that damage good neighbourly relations, normalise its relations with the Republic of Cyprus..." the European Commission said in the latest enlargement report. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 10 Sanctions Back On The Table For Turkey | | Ahval

2021-10-20 The first step toward new sanctions on Turkey was decided by the EU foreign ministers at their meeting, in response to Ankara's unilateral actions in Varosha in northern Cyprus and the harassment of the Nautical Geo research ship. [AHVAL](#)

### 11 Turkey Warns Cyprus Against East Med Drilling | | Ahval

2021-10-22 In a statement, the Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson warned against any attempt to send research ships to the "Turkish Continental Shelf" and accused Greece and Cyprus of taking "steps that increase tensions." [AHVAL](#)

### 12 Nautical Geo In Block 1 Of Cyprus EEZ | EKathimerini.Com

2021-10-22 The Nautical Geo, a Greek-Cypriot research vessel under the Maltese flag, has entered block 1 within the Mediterranean island's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 13 Ankara-Cairo Relations Showing Progress, Says Egyptian FM Shoukry | | Ahval

2021-10-02 The Foreign Minister told MBC Egypt TV that while normalisation in ties had yet to reach the desired level, there was "some progress" which the sides hoped to "build on." [AHVAL](#)

### 14 Greece Vows To Link Egypt's Energy Grid To European Union

2021-10-19 Greece pledged to link Egypt to the EU's energy market with an undersea cable that would carry electricity across the Mediterranean. [AP NEWS](#)

### 15 EXCLUSIVE Israel Considering New Pipeline To Boost Gas Exports To Egypt

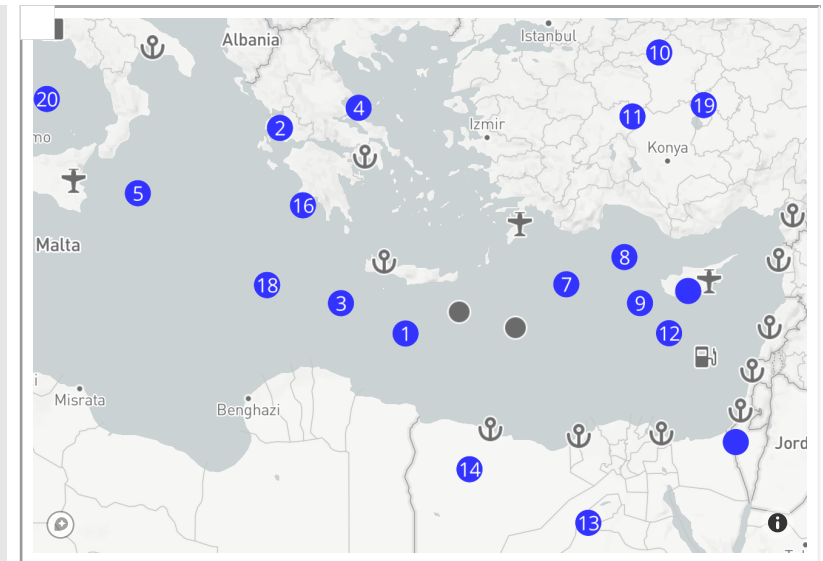
2021-10-21 Israel is considering the construction of a new onshore pipeline to Egypt to quickly boost natural gas exports to its neighbour in the wake of the recent tightening of global supplies, the Israeli energy ministry said. [REUTERS](#)

### 16 Blinken Says Renewed US-Greece Defense Deal To Advance Stability In Eastern Med | EKathimerini.Com

2021-10-15 The US and Greece signed a deal renewing their long-standing defence cooperation, a move Secretary Blinken said would allow the NATO allies to advance security in the East Med region and beyond. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

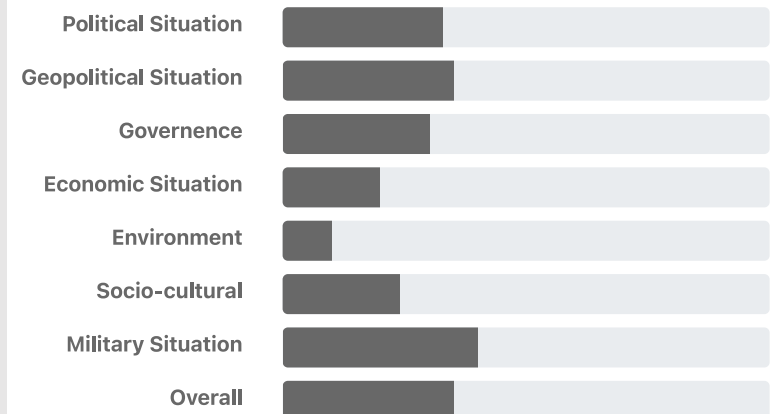
### 17 US President Reiterates Support For Comprehensive Cyprus Solution, Report Says | EKathimerini.Com

2021-10-01 US President Biden reportedly sent a letter to his Cypriot counterpart, expressing Washington's continued support for a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus issue. [EKATHIMERINI](#)



## AI Powered Crisis Situation

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**18 Private Turkish Shipyard Begins Mass Production Of Fast Patrol Boats | | Ahval**

2021-10-15 The private Ares shipyard began building 122 fast patrol boats to supply to the Turkish Coast Guard Defence News reported [AHVAL](#)

**19 Exploratory Talks Between Greece And Turkey Conclude Amidst Controversial Statements | | Ahval**

2021-10-07 The 63rd round of low-level exploratory talks in Ankara concluded amidst controversial statements by AKP spokesperson Ömer Çelik. [AHVAL](#)

**20 U.S. Sixth Fleet Participates In Italy's Mare Aperto Exercise**

2021-10-22 USS Porter, U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft and the oiler USNS Kanawha participated in the Italian-led multilateral maritime exercise Mare Aperto in the Tyrrhenian Sea along with the French. German and Turkish navies units. [NAVEUR](#)

**ASSESSMENT**

The French-Greek defence deal had different reactions from different capitals and leaders. Paris saw this deal as partial compensation for the AUKUS disaster and an opportunity to bring a European peer onboard in Mali or closer to the European defence initiatives. Meanwhile, Athens believes that the agreement would deter Ankara (though the Greek PM denies it is against Turkey) by receiving the "French Umbrella" and upgrading its navy as well as Air force. Greece and France claim that this is a "historic moment for the European Strategic Autonomy" that is still in the making. Americans are satisfied with the fact that a NATO member is increasing its defence spending incredibly, and as such, military assets purchased with that money would be employed in NATO. Germany is silent and busy with the departure of Chancellor Merkel, while NATO Chief Stoltenberg stated his discontent since the pact may widen the existing divergences within the Alliance. Of course, Ankara is not happy with the deal since it gave Greece new -but not substantial leverage - against it. It is not substantial because the recent disputes between Greece and Turkey are mainly over the EEZs (but not limited to) that France says is not within the scope of the deal.

In this complicated picture, it is very challenging to distinguish the facts and discourses. Nonetheless, one thing is clear: the issues are increasingly militarized in the region, which is not a good course for NATO, the EU, and the regional countries. It is significantly fueling the existing "security dilemma" between Greece and Turkey. News, assessments and commentaries circulate in European, Greek, and Turkish media describing war scenarios between Ankara and Athens are dangerous and far from reality. Naval warfare is a complicated phenomenon and cannot be only explained with the number of assets or range of some weapons. Especially comparisons such as German-made subs vs the French-made frigates are not meaningful. Even though a Greek Turkish war has a slim possibility, fueling grievances, e.g. the French-Greek defence agreement or Blue Homeland, will only deteriorate the current situation.

In recent years, Ankara has changed its strategic orientation and pursued a foreign and security policy, not in harmony with Western allies and regional countries, notably its intervention in Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Syria. These policies make Turkey more and more isolated. Yet, the problems in the Mediterranean has a different nature and has existed for decades, even in times when Turkey pursued pro-European or pro-Western policies. Almost two decades ago, the Greek Cypriots rejected a UN plan to unify the island, and after that, they became an EU member. Therefore, putting different problems into the same bag is not a helpful lens for grasping the real issues.

On the other hand, when looking from a European perspective, it is unclear how the deal is connected to "European Strategic Autonomy." And which part of the "European." Naturally, for France, Russian aggression against Eastern Europe may not be so significant as the problems in Mali, while it is essential for Eastern European countries.

Will Greece and Turkey change their behaviour with respect to delimitation issues? Or does Greece feel any territorial threat from Turkey? Both answers are no since both countries are not open to compromise. But war or setting the stage for it is not a solution for both sides, especially in a region where Russia is increasing and building up its military capacity day by day.

# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (26 Oct - 07 Nov 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Fresh Interest In Greek Gas

2021-10-25 The energy crisis is reviving interest in natural gas in the Southeastern Mediterranean, along with the unexplored reserves south of Crete and in the Ionian Sea that have grabbed the attention of ExxonMobil and Total. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 2 Sailing Safely In Troubled Waters

2021-11-03 The Greek PM's national security advisor wrote an article to Kathimerini in which he explains the recent Greek foreign and security policy towards the region. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 3 Greek PM Voices Concern Over West's Stance Towards Turkey

2021-10-29 The Greek PM Mitsotakis stated his concern about Western powers' response towards Turkish actions that is encouraging it to behave in an unacceptable manner. [AL JAZEERA ONLINE](#)

### 4 Bilateral Framework Inked With UK

2021-10-26 FM Dendias and his British counterpart signed an MoU on Strategic Bilateral Framework comprising 12 areas, including foreign and regional policy, defence cooperation, trade and investment digitization. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 5 Dendias Meets China Counterpart In Athens | EKathimerini.Com

2021-10-27 FM Dendias welcomed his Chinese counterpart in Athens. Talks are expected to centre on bilateral relations in a wide range of areas, including the economy, culture and tourism, and the disputes over the East Med and Cyprus. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 6 Athens, Riyadh Confirm Strategic Ties | EKathimerini.Com

2021-10-27 Greece and Saudi Arabia agreed to establish the Supreme Council of Cooperation, and the leaders discussed further deepening cooperation in the areas of mutual interest, e.g. investment, energy, tourism and defence. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 7 US Envoy: Greece Partnership No Threat To Turkey

2021-11-05 The US Ambassador Pyatt stated that the partnership between the US and Greece "is not a threat to Turkey," and the new defence deal is another step in bilateral relations, which are "at a peak, but not at the summit." [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 8 Middle East Data Cable Link Discussed In Riyadh

2021-11-01 An ambitious project to connect Greece and the Middle East, and possibly East Asia, with the installation of a large data transmission cable, was discussed during PM Mitsotakis' visit last week to Saudi Arabia. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 9 Bennett Planning Tripartite Meeting With Leaders Of Greece, Cyprus

2021-11-06 Israeli PM Bennett is reportedly set to hold a tripartite meeting with the leaders of Greece and Cyprus soon. This month, the meeting was scheduled to occur but has been pushed off as all countries are pushing to play host. [TIMES OF ISRAEL](#)

### 10 Eastern Mediterranean Energy Conference To Cover Key Issues

2021-11-06 Taking place over November 10-12 in Nicosia, the Eastern Mediterranean Energy Conference will focus on a wide range of crucial issues related to the environment, energy, international trade and issues concerning the East Med region. [CYPRUS MAIL](#)

### 11 Cyprus Holds Rig Security Drills Amid Hydrocarbon Tensions

2021-11-03 Ships and aircraft from eight nations joined annual drills to boost safety and security procedures on vessels and oil rigs off Cyprus' southern coastline amid tensions with Turkey over competing claims to hydrocarbon reserves. [AP NEWS](#)

### 12 Turkey Will Not Attend Libya Conference With Greece, Israel, Greek Cyprus

2021-11-01 Turkey will not attend a Paris conference on Libya that Greece, Israel, and the Greek Cypriot administration will participate in, Turkish President said. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)

### 13 UAE Sends \$10 Million To Turkey To Help With Reconstruction After Fires, Floods

2021-11-04 The UAE will provide \$10 million to Turkey to help it reconstruct areas affected by the floods and wildfires. The UAE said it is seeking to extend a helping hand to brotherly and friendly countries. [AHVAL](#)

### 14 Turkey Activates TURMARFOR In Dogu Akdeniz-2021 Multinational Exercise

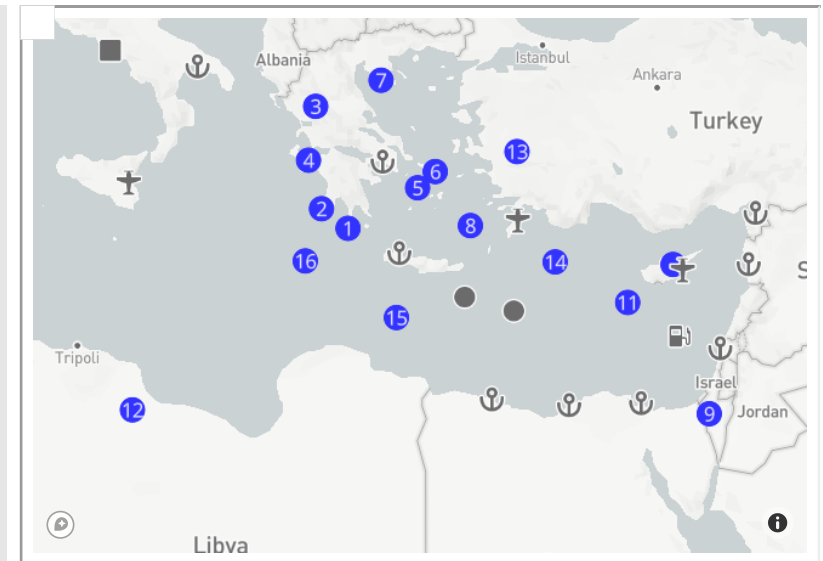
2021-11-07 35 surface ships and 5000 personnel from 10 countries (U.S., Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, South Africa, Ukraine) as well as SNMG-2 and SNMCMG-2, participate in the Dogu Akdeniz-2021 exercise. [NAVALNEWS](#)

### 15 6TH NATO OPERATION SEA GUARDIAN FOCUSED PATROL OF 2021 IS UNDERWAY

2021-11-02 On 29 October, a NATO task group set sail in the Mediterranean Sea as part of NATO's maritime security operation, Operation Sea Guardian (OSG). [MARCOM](#)

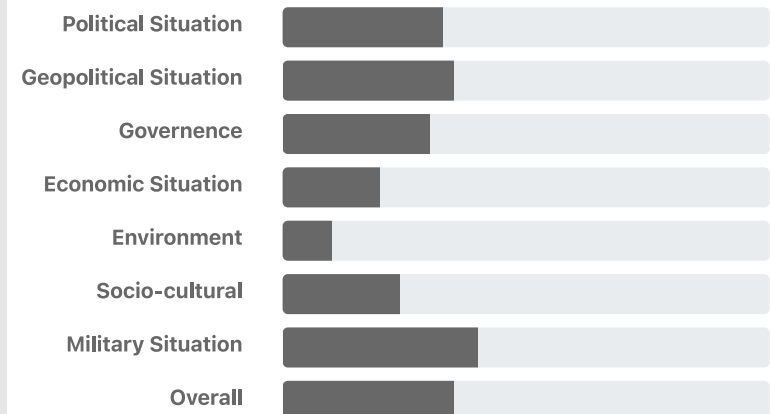
### 16 Results Report / October 2021 - EUNAVFOR MED IRINI

2021-10-31 The EEAS published the results of the EUNAVFOR MED IRINI operation from its inception till now. [EEAS](#)



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## ASSESSMENT

The current global energy crisis has become a salient manifestation of the fact that we are not entirely ready for the transformation to renewables. Despite the plannings and efforts, renewables have still a slim share in the supply side, and after the pandemic, they failed to meet the increasing demand. Hence, there is a need to exploit new energy resources until renewables increase their share in the supply side, putting the Mediterranean region into the spotlight. That can increase the temperatures in the area.

Greece inked a new deal with the UK coming after the ones agreed with France and the US. From the Greek side, London is an important actor considering that it is one of the guarantors in Cyprus, and it can have an impact on Turkey. Yet, this deal is different from the previous ones since it is a framework agreement supervised by the respective ambassadors. In sum, it seems like a post-Brexit friendship deal rather than a binding agreement.

# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (08 - 29 Nov 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 The Council Prolongs The Sanctions Regime By One Year

2021-11-11 The Council approved a decision extending the sanction regime towards Turkey for one year, after the review of the framework for restrictive measures in response to Ankara's unauthorised drilling activities in the East Med. [COUNCIL OF THE EU](#)

### 2 EU Defence Ministers Welcome Bloc's Military Blueprint But Hesitations Remain

2021-11-17 According to EU diplomats, two member states asked for Turkey to be explicitly named as a threat in the threat analysis section of the Strategic Compass, meant to spell out security challenges to the bloc. [EURACTIV](#)

### 3 The Mediterranean Battle Exposes EU Strategic Autonomy Illusion.

2021-11-22 France has signed a defence deal with Greece. In response, Spain sealed an armaments deal with Turkey to counterbalance France's increasing influence in the Eastern Med. Meanwhile, Germany will sell submarines to Ankara. [EURACTIV](#)

### 4 Athens Vexed By Madrid As Turkey Ups Overflights | EKathimerini.Com

2021-11-19 Turkish fighter jets engaged in mock dogfights with their Greek counterparts over the eastern Aegean Sea and conducted overflights and a barrage of airspace violations in a sudden escalation of tension on Thursday. According to Greek military reports, three mock dogfights took place and a total of ... [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 5 NATO SHIPS PARTICIPATE IN MEDITERRANEAN NAVAL EXERCISES

2021-11-16 NATO Standing Naval Forces participated in the Italian Navy led Exercise Mare Aperto 21, in 4-27 October and then Turkish Navy led Exercise Dogu Akdeniz 21 between 1 and 12 November 2021. [MARCOM](#)

### 6 Russia Paying 'Close Attention' To UK's Flagship Aircraft Carrier After F-35 Jet Crashes Into Sea.

2021-12-19 Russia is paying "close attention" to the UK's flagship aircraft carrier, which lost an F-35 stealth jet after it crashed into the sea, the defence secretary has revealed. [SKY NEWS](#)

### 7 French Navy To Kick Off 'POLARIS': Its Largest Ever Exercise

2021-11-16 The French Navy conducted a massive exercise comprising 6,000 French troops from the Army, Navy and Air Force. Almost half of the French Navy and naval units from Greece, Italy, Spain, the UK, and the US joined the drills. [NAVALNEWS](#)

### 8 U.S. Sixth Fleet And STRIKFORNATO Staffs Complete Operations In The Mediterranean And Black Seas

2021-11-18 The U.S. Sixth Fleet flagship, USS Mount Whitney, and embarked Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO) staffs, returned to Italy after her deployment in the East Med and the Black Sea. [NAVEUR](#)

### 9 Egypt's Army Chief-Of-Staff Attends Joint MEDUSA 11 Naval Drills In Greece

2021-11-24 A joint military drills with the participation of Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, and Saudi Arabia, dubbed Medusa-11, is underway in the Mediterranean Sea. [ARAB NEWS](#)

### 10 Greek-US Drills Reflect Deepening Ties | EKathimerini.Com

2021-11-16 The exercises that took place in the area of Xanthi, northern Greece are seen as another example of what are being described as the excellent relations developing between the US Army and the Hellenic Armed Forces. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 11 Greece On High Alert After Erdogan Threats | EKathimerini.Com

2021-11-13 Greece's armed forces in their entirety have been placed on high alert across the country following the recent threatening statements by Turkish President Erdogan about opening the border and new refugee flows. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 12 Egypt, France, Greece, Cyprus Agree On Boosting Cooperation, Advancing Regional, Global Peace

2021-11-11 The foreign ministers of Egypt, Greece, Cyprus and France discussed means of boosting cooperation in various fields including energy, climate change, combating coronavirus, and migration, a communiqué on their meeting in Athens said. [AHRAM](#)

### 13 Turkey, UAE Sign Financial Cooperation Deals As Ties Warm

2021-11-24 The UAE will create a \$10bn fund to conduct investments in Turkey, including in the health and energy fields, its state news agency WAM said. "Problems with the UAE are now behind us. We are entering a period based fully on cooperation and mutual benefit," said another official familiar with preparations the visit. [AL JAZEERA ONLINE](#)

### 14 Turkish-Libyan Trade Soars 43% Because Of Maritime Deal -Businessman | | Ahval

2021-11-27 Trade between Turkey and Libya has generate \$2.3 billion in the last two years since the two concluded a maritime deal that incensed regional powers, the head of the Turkey-Libya Business Council said. [AHVAL](#)

### 15 Greece, Italy Complete Maritime Borders Deal | EKathimerini.Com

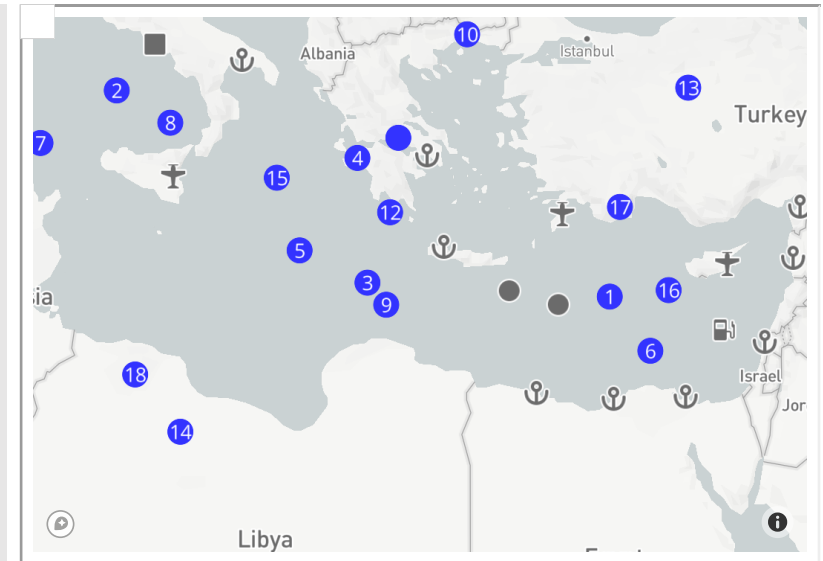
2021-11-08 Greece and Italy completed the approval of a demarcation deal delimiting an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) between the two countries. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 16 EU Interconnector: Cyprus 'Energy Isolation' Or Israeli Gas?

2021-11-11 The European Union has recently approved funding of €100m to Cyprus for the construction of the EuroAsia Interconnector to link Europe's electricity network with that of Israel and its illegal settlements in the West Bank. [EU OBSERVER](#)

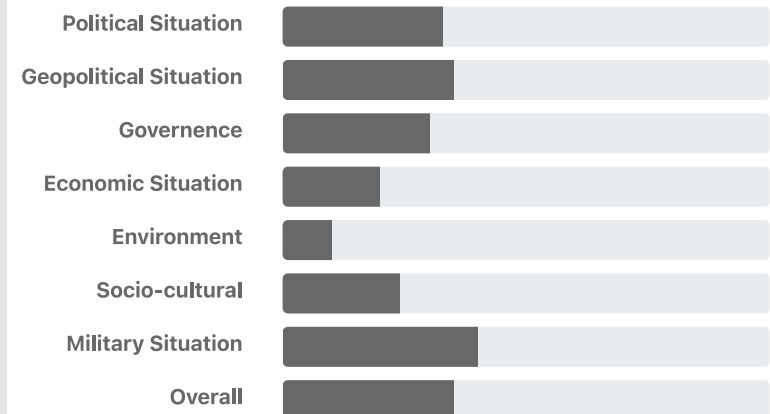
### 17 Turkey Continues Energy Exploration With Fourth Drillship, Erdogan Says

2021-11-17 Turkey continues its hydrocarbon exploration with the launch of a fourth drillship, President Erdoğan announced Wednesday. [MIDDLE EAST MONITOR](#)



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2021-11-12 The participation by PM Mitsotakis at Friday's international conference in Paris, organized by the French presidency for Libya, is seen as an appreciation of Greece's regional influence. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

#### ASSESSMENT

The extension of sanctions towards Ankara can be interpreted in several ways. Despite some improvement in the relations vis-a-vis 2020, the EU keeps sanctions on the table as a precaution while keeping the door open. Second, not all the EU members interpret the problems in the Eastern Mediterranean and attach the same significance to them. Athens generally points the finger at Berlin for the appeasement strategy, but Italy, Spain, and Hungary are also against strict measures. Some countries perceive Turkey as an ally, while others want Ankara to be designated as a threat. In sum, the threat or security perception in different European capitals are different from each other.

There was increasing naval activity in the Mediterranean. Charles de Gaulle Carrier Strike Group and the British Carrier Strike Group (CSG21) finished their journey and passed from the Mediterranean to their home ports. An F-35 crashed while the British carrier was on its way, and allies scrambled to find its wreck to prevent it from being captured by some adversaries though that possibility is so slim.

Meanwhile, the US often dispatches destroyers to the Black Sea from the 6th Fleet coinciding with the tensions in the Ukraine-Russia border. At the same time, NATO units participate in Italy and Turkey-led drills. Dogu Akdeniz-21, the Turkish-led exercise, focused on the preparation and evaluation of the Turkish Maritime Force (TURMAFOR) for its certification of NATO Response Force next year.

As mentioned, the EU imposed "light" sanctions against Ankara that pushed Athens to seek regional and intra-EU alliances. Medusa drills can be seen as a manifestation of Greece's intentions. In this sense, France, the closest Ally of Greece within the EU, flexes muscle in the region and carry out one of its largest exercises. Considering the past incidents between navies and surging militarization of the issues, a confrontation between their navies is possible during the exploration activities and surveys for natural gas resources. Greece and Turkey are already preparing for intense situations, and a war possibility is often discussed in the media and experts. Therefore, despite the mechanisms within NATO for de-escalation, an awkward incident between navies can trigger a self-fulfilling prophecy, a war between two NATO allies, that is a situation please only Russia.



# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (11 Nov - 05 Dec 2021)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1 Migratory Situation In October: Persisting Pressure On Eastern Border

2021-11-22 According to preliminary calculations, the number of illegal border crossings at the EU's external borders in the first ten months of 2021 rose nearly 70% to 160 000\* and 45% compared with 2019. [FRONTEx](#)

### 2 POLARIS 21 - Higher Ambition In High Intensity Combat Readiness

2021-12-03 The France-led multinational exercise POLARIS 21 concluded. One of the scenarios was "the rise of the fictitious crisis has led to an all-out war between two symmetrical forces deployed in a high-intensity clash." [MARINE NATIONALE](#)

### 3 Russian Naval Ships To Arrive In Egypt On Dec. 3 For Joint Drills

2021-12-02 A group of the Black Sea Fleet's ships will call at the port of Alexandria in Egypt to participate in the Bridge of Friendship 2021 Russian-Egyptian joint naval manoeuvres between 3-10 December, the Fleet's press office reported. [TASS](#)

### 4 Exercise "NIRIIS-21"

2021-12-01 NATO Maritime Groups, SNMG 2 and SNMCMG-2 composed of naval units from Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy and Romania, joined a Greece-led multinational exercise, dubbed NIIRIS 21 between 22-30 November. [HELLENIC NAVY](#)

### 5 Egypt's Army Chief-Of-Staff Attends Joint MEDUSA 11 Naval Drills In Greece

2021-11-24 Joint military drills with the participation of Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, and Saudi Arabia, dubbed Medusa-11, concluded with the Distinguished Visitor day. [ARAB NEWS](#)

### 6 EU Defence Ministers Welcome Bloc's Military Blueprint But Hesitations Remain

2021-11-17 According to EU diplomats, two member states asked for Turkey to be explicitly named as a threat in the threat analysis section of the Strategic Compass, meant to spell out security challenges to the bloc. [EURACTIV](#)

### 7 The Council Prolongs The Sanctions Regime By One Year

2021-11-11 The Council approved a decision extending the sanction regime towards Turkey for one year. [COUNCIL OF THE EU](#)

### 8 Turkey Vows To Prevent Exxon Mobil Venture Drilling Off Cyprus

2021-11-24 Turkey threatened to block any unauthorized search for gas and oil in its exclusive economic zone in the eastern Med after Cyprus awarded hydrocarbon exploration and drilling rights to a venture of Exxon Mobil and Qatar Petroleum. [BLOOMBERG](#)

### 9 US Recognizes Cyprus' Right To Develop Its Resources | EKathimerini.Com

2021-12-04 The US reiterated its support for Cyprus' natural gas exploration projects. [EKATHIMERINI](#)

### 10 A New Beginning: The Mediterranean And Israel's Regional Diplomatic Tasks

2021-12-29 Compared to the Middle East, Israel has more official ties in the Mediterranean and can thus play a more significant role in shaping and leading regional processes. [THE JERUSALEM POST](#)

### 11 Turkish-Libyan Trade Soars 43% Because Of Maritime Deal -Businessman | | Ahval

2021-11-27 Trade between Turkey and Libya has generated \$2.3 billion in the last two years since the maritime deal [AHVAL](#)

### 12 Turkey, UAE Sign Financial Cooperation Deals As Ties Warm

2021-11-24 The UAE will create a \$10bn fund to conduct investments in Turkey, including in the health and energy fields, its state news agency WAM said. [AL JAZEERA ONLINE](#)

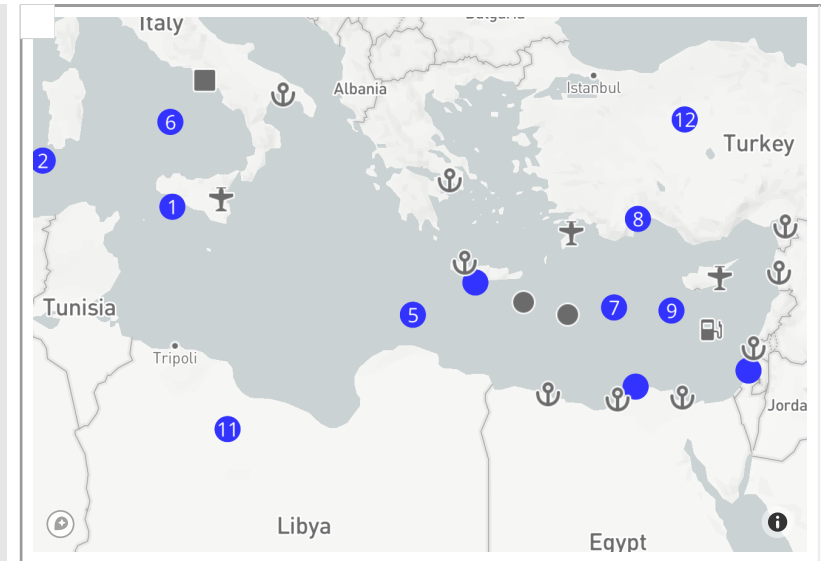
## ASSESSMENT

The massive multinational France-led exercise, dubbed POLARIS 21, comprises high-intensity combat scenarios and modern challenges such as deployments when satellite comms are disrupted. POLARIS 21 is an important exercise to note for two reasons; the scenarios and its time. "Two task forces fight against each other for six days" in the context of "an all-out war between two symmetrical forces." Considering the tensions unfolding in the Eastern Med and the scenarios played during the drills, it can be read as a show of strength as well as a rehearsal of a possible war.

The extension of sanctions towards Ankara can be interpreted in several ways. Despite some improvement in the relations vis-a-vis 2020, the EU keeps sanctions on the table as a precaution while keeping the door open. Second, not all the EU members perceive the problems in the Eastern Med and attach the same significance. Athens generally points the finger at Berlin for its appeasement strategy, but Italy, Spain, and Hungary are also against strict measures. Some countries perceive Turkey as an ally, while others want Ankara to be designated as a threat. In sum, the threat perceptions in the European capitals are different from each other.

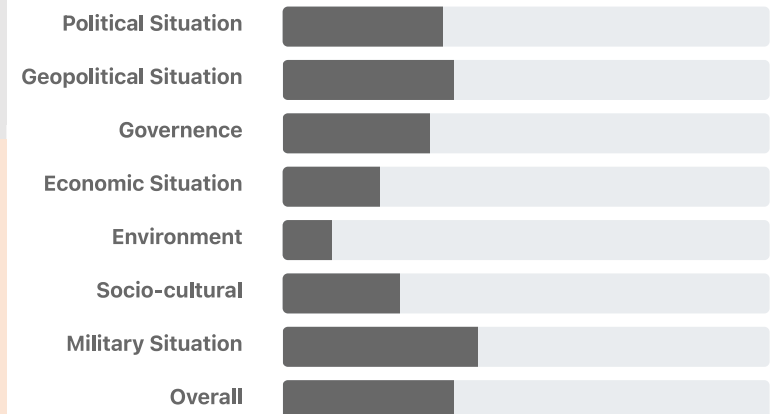
The EU imposed "light" sanctions against Ankara that pushed Athens (and Paris) to seek regional/intra-EU alliances. Medusa and other drills can be seen as a manifestation of Greece's intentions. In this sense, France, the closest Ally of Greece in the EU, flexes muscles in the region and has carried out one of its largest exercises. Considering the past incidents between navies and surging militarization of the issues, a confrontation between their navies is possible during the exploration activities and surveys for natural gas resources.

Turkey vows to deter any "unauthorized drilling" in the region, and if Ankara insists on it, it may escalate the situation significantly. Greece and Turkey are already preparing for intense situations, yet the French are in this game anymore since they signed a bilateral pact. A war possibility is discussed in the media and experts more often. Hence, despite the mechanisms within NATO for de-escalation, an awkward incident between navies can trigger a self-fulfilling prophecy, a war between two or more NATO allies, i.e. "an all-out war between two symmetrical forces", that is a situation please only Russia which has a significant presence in the Mediterranean.



## AI Powered Crisis Situation

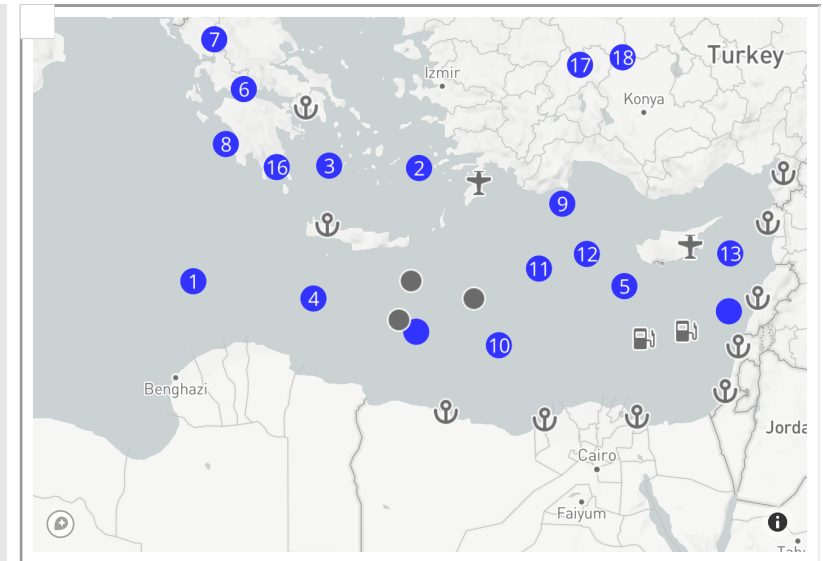
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# MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS HORIZON (13 Dec 2021 - 10 Jan 2022)

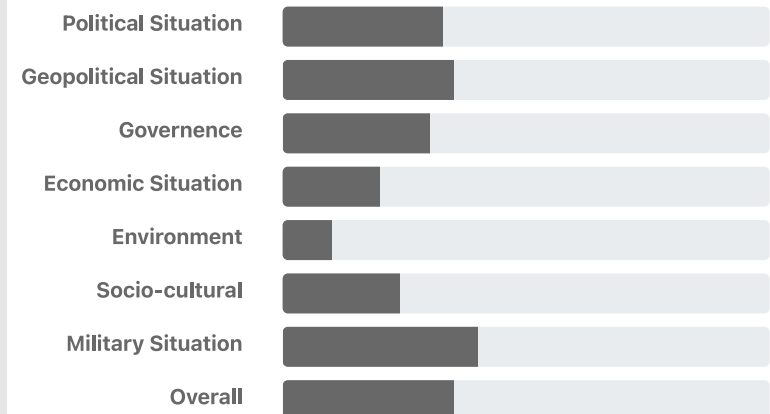
## KEY EVENTS

- 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](#)



## 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.



## 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.