



EUROPEAN UNION  
Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe

## **Weekly Media Report of developments related to the Council of Europe**

16 - 22 April 2016

The Weekly Media Report gives an overview of recent news in international media. Please note that the Report does not constitute a formal communication, does not represent the official position of the Delegation and does not commit the European Union in any way.

Ce rapport donne un aperçu de nouvelles récentes dans les médias internationaux. Ce rapport n'est pas une communication formelle, ne représente pas la position officielle de la Délégation et n'engage en aucun cas l'Union Européenne.

### **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – EU-Turkey Deal**

#### **[Council of Europe condemns EU's refugee deal with Turkey](#)**

*20/04/16 – The Guardian / International*

Europe's leading human rights body has issued a stinging indictment of the EU's refugee deal with Turkey, which it said at worst exceeds the limits of what is permissible under international law.

A report from the Council of Europe's assembly listed numerous concerns on human rights, from keeping migrants in overcrowded and insanitary detention centres on the Greek islands to inadequate legal protection for people seeking to appeal against rejection of an asylum claim.

The report also condemned Europe's "shamefully slow" progress on relocating refugees from Greece to other countries. Only 937 out of a promised 160,000 had been found homes as of March.



The EU-Turkey agreement “at best strains and at worst exceeds the limits of what is permissible under European and international law”, states the report by the Dutch parliamentarian Tineke Strik.

“Even on paper, it raises many serious questions of compatibility with basic norms on refugees’ and migrants’ rights. It has so far given every indication of being even more problematic in practice.”

The EU has faced a barrage of criticism about the bargain it struck with Turkey at a summit in March. Turkey, already hosting 3.1 million refugees, agreed to take back irregular migrants from Europe, in exchange for an end to visa restrictions, as well as progress on EU accession talks. European leaders also promised to resettle up to 72,000 Syrian refugees living in Turkey and provide €3bn (£2.3bn) in humanitarian funding.

### **[EU reiterates Ankara must meet conditions if visa requirements to be lifted](#)**

*20/04/16 – Deutsche Welle – Germany*

The European Commission will present its third visa liberalization progress report for Turkey on May 4, the body said in a statement Wednesday. If passed, the proposals could come into effect by the end of June.

"Visa liberalization is a matter of criteria. The criteria will not be watered down in the case of Turkey," Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said in a speech to the Council of Europe, the continent's human rights watchdog.

"If Turkey takes the necessary measures to fulfil the remaining benchmarks, the report will be accompanied by a legislative proposal for transferring Turkey to the visa-free list," a statement from Juncker said.

## **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – Nadiya Savchenko**

### **[Pace President calls on Kremlin to release Savchenko](#)**

*18/04/16 – Ukrinform / Ukraine*

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Pedro Agramunt, has called on Russia to release illegally detained Ukrainian MP Nadiya Savchenko and other prisoners.

He said this while delivering his traditional address to the participants of the first plenary meeting of the Assembly’s spring session, an Ukrinform own correspondent in France reports.

"At the beginning of the April 2016 part-session, I have to reiterate once again my serious concerns about the situation of our member, Nadiya Savchenko, who remains in detention in the Russian Federation. I deplore her continued detention and call once again for her release, including in line with the provisions of the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe, and Russia’s commitments under the Minsk agreements," he said.



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## **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – Nagorno-Karabakh**

### **[PACE delegates avoid discussing Nagorno Karabakh issue in Assembly session](#)**

*18/04/16 – Armenpress / Armenia*

Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), where the Assembly agenda is being prepared and approved, discussed the proposal of making a debate the issue of the situation tension in Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone in the upcoming session on April 18.

"Armenpress" reports, the head of the Armenian delegation to the PACE, Vice-President of the National Assembly Hermine Naghdalyan expressed the opinion that the issue will more likely not to be put on the daily agenda since the current sentiments suggest that the PACE aims to avoid from the further escalation of the situation.

### **[PACE Bureau rejects proposals on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict](#)**

*18/04/16 – News.Az / Azerbaijan*

The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) held on Monday a debate on the recent escalation on the line of contact between Azerbaijani and Armenian troops.

During the debate, three documents on what happened on the contact line of Azerbaijani and Armenian troops were offered by the Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations and by Rene Ruka on behalf of the French delegations. However, none of the proposals were approved, APA correspondent reported.

## **Secretary General**

### **[Council of Europe Reaffirms Support for Georgia's Territorial Integrity](#)**

*21/04/16 – Georgia Today / Georgia*

The Council of Europe's Secretary-General Thorbjorn Jagland on Wednesday reiterated the organization's support for Georgia's territorial integrity and the efforts by the government of Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili to protect human rights and strengthen democracy in Georgia's Russian-backed breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

At a joint press conference with Kvirikashvili at the body's Strasbourg headquarters, Jagland took the time to stress the importance of Georgia's membership in the organization and the Council of Europe's priority to preserve Georgia's internationally recognized borders and the rights of citizens in the country's breakaway regions.

"The Council of Europe requires full access to all developments in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We intend to implement certain measures with the full support of the Georgian



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government. The council must utilize the tools it possesses to protect the human rights of the residents of these key Georgian regions," Jagland said.

Jagland praised the Georgian government's ambitious action plans that aim to empower democracy as well as strengthen human rights and the rule of law in Georgia.

### [Part of Crimea report presented in Council of Europe distorts real situation – Chubarov](#)

*21/04/16 – UNIAN / Ukraine*

Part of the report on human rights in Crimea, presented at the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on April 13 does not show the real situation on the peninsula, according to Refat Chubarov, head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people and MP from the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko, who spoke at a briefing on Thursday.

"Our official comment will come next week, but I want to say that much of the conclusions do not show the situation that prevails in Crimea," Chubarov said, according to an UNIAN correspondent.

He noted that the report should be an internal document of the Council of Europe, but it was made public anyway.

"There is no report of the Council of Europe, there is a Stoudmann report [Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann (Switzerland)], which has the status of an internal document. It was submitted to the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe and published on its website. This report is highly controversial from our point of view. Neither the Russian side, nor the Ukrainian side liked it. And especially the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people didn't like it," Chubarov said.

According to the head of the Mejlis, the Ukrainian side believed that this report will be an internal paper, not for distribution, which would still be taken into account by the Council of Europe.

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