

JUNE 15 - 21, 2020 – VOL. 3 - ISSUE 25



**Hermes Institute of
International Affairs,
Security & Geoeconomy**

SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

AT A GLANCE



SOUTHEAST EUROPE DIRECTORATE

PROVIDING KNOWLEDGE TO THOSE WHO SHAPE THE FUTURE

“SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE AT A GLANCE” (ISSN: 2654-0304) is a weekly review of the most significant current political, economic, energy, defense, and security news of Southeastern Europe. It covers 14 countries; Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey. However Greece enjoys its own weekly review for a more detailed presentation of its current affairs (GREECE AT A GLANCE).

This ambitious newsletter aspires to become an informative “tool” for anyone who is interested in the region and wishes to have knowledge of the non-stop current developments and challenges. “HERMES” Institute is not a news agency and it is not one of its ambitions to become one but it is strongly believed that today’s events provide the necessary material to understand the future and to analyze situations that may affect in peace, stability, and growth of the region.

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ALBANIA: June 19th, the Albanian Government has approved and sent to the Assembly a draft law on coastal management. This will give the state the right to repurchase any private land along the coast and obliges that any redevelopment must be done via Public – Private Partnership (PPP) or strategic investment. The law is a violation of the right to property that is protected by the Albanian Constitution, international conventions, and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. Under these laws, the owner has the right to enjoy, buy, or sell the property at his own discretion. This draft law interferes with the will of the owner of the land or property, forcing them to sell the property to the state. Article 23 also gives the state the right to pre-purchase the land if the owner intends on selling it. This means that if a private owner wants to sell his property, he must first offer it to the state. If the state refuses to buy it, only then can he sell the land to anyone he wishes. It is likely that the state would have standard rates or fixed fees for properties in this category. Another provision of the law, Article 22, prohibits the development of the property by the owner. It states that it is not allowed to issue building permits on the seashore, except for concession/PPP contracts, strategic investments and constructions for public infrastructure. If an owner wants to build even one apartment for himself on land on the coast, he cannot do so as the Government has limited construction projects to PPPs or “*strategic investments*.” Again, this interferes with the owner’s right to freely enjoy his property. Regarding the ban on building on a plot of land, this constitutes a violation of Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR. Since 2015, the Rama Government through a series of laws such as

Public - Private Partnership, Strategic Investment, Tourism Law, Strategic Investment Corporation, and public expropriation has had the sole purpose of benefiting the state and large companies, rather than the public. Furthermore, they are not in line with EU law. Since then, a number of strategic investments have been granted to investments on the coast that have no public interest. As a result, the Government handed over prime real estate at absolutely no cost. If the law is passed, it could essentially bring an end to all private ownership of property on the coastline of Albania. It would also prevent anyone who remained from doing any private personal or business development on their property. (www.exit.al)

- June 19th, the United Nations have accused Albania along with several other countries of sending weapons to the Democratic Republic of Congo. A Spokesperson for the Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama has said that the claims are “*totally untrue*.” While the country is not subject to sanctions, those sending weapons are required to notify the UN as required by a 2004 resolution. A report from UN experts said that several countries have “*delivered significant quantities of arms, ammunition, equipment and military vehicles*” to the country’s military. These have included civilian helicopters transferred for military use. The report is confidential but was obtained by the AFP this week. Other countries named by the UN include Romania, Turkey, South Africa, Israel, China, Iran, the UK, North Korea, Sudan and the United States. “*Over the last decade, a large part of the air logistics of FARDC (the military) relied on a fleet of foreign civilian-registered cargo carriers operating in contravention of international and national civil aviation norms and regulations,*” it states. “*Some*

of the material delivered to FARDC was later diverted to armed groups in eastern DR Congo,” the report continues. The UN warns that arms being sent to the DR Congo Military are ending up in the hands of militias. The country has been gripped in militia violence for several years and around 1000 people have died, and 500,000 more have fled their homes in the last few months alone. (www.exit.al.com)

- June 19th, the European Parliament has included in the resolution on the opening of negotiations with Albania, the 15 conditions set by the EU, which Albania must have met before holding of the First Intergovernmental Conference. At the June 18th, 2020 meeting, the EP voted with 388 votes in favor, 280 against and 19 abstentions, the amendment that the Group of European People’s Parties (EPP) had requested for the resolution drafted by MEP Tonino Picula. The text of the resolution will now include the following “[The European Parliament] emphasizes the 15 conditions set by the Council of the European Union that Albania must have met before convening the first Intergovernmental Conference with the Member States.” The request for the amendment was made because according to the EPP, Picula’s resolution is general and did not mention the conditions that Albania had to meet by the first quarter of 2021, when the First Intergovernmental Conference will be held. Prime Minister Edi Rama categorically denied the existence of the conditions last week, adding they were “non-existent” and people should stop talking about it. Conditions include prosecuting politicians and officials implicated in vote-buying (this would include Head of the electoral reform committee Damian Gjijnuri and potentially Rama himself), ensuring the media law is in line with

Venice Commission recommendations (essentially scrapping it completely), and ensuring the High Court and Constitutional Court are operational. (www.exit.al)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

The EU has set 15 conditions Albania should meet before starting of accession negotiations on first quarter of 2021. Conditions relate to electoral reform, justice, minority rights, media freedom and fight against corruption and organized crime. These conditions show that accession negotiations with the EU would be a painful and long procedure. Actually, the EU asks from Albania to establish constitutional and institutional order in the country before accession negotiations. Timeline is strict and it is doubtful if Albania will fulfill its obligations until the first quarter of 2021. Although electoral reform has been agreed it is still doubtful that it will be adopted by the Parliament. Constitutional and High Courts are not yet functional affecting on justice transparency, independency and citizen’s confidence. Potential economic crisis in coming period deteriorating citizens’ living conditions may cause a social and political outbreak. Above all, it should be underlined that corruption, organized crime (and especially links of state’s politics with organized crime), money laundering and smuggling remain as “open sores” for the country.



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA:

June 15th, elections must take place as scheduled by the Central Election Commission and funds for that must be ensured, Bosnia Presidency Chairman Sefik Dzaferovic told N1, adding that anyone preventing this from happening will be

held responsible. Dzaferovic said he hoped the Council of Ministers, Bosnia's executive authority, would adopt the 2020 budget proposal this week, deliver it to the Presidency, which would send it to the Parliament for the final adoption. Asked who is obstructing the budget adoption at the moment, Dzaferovic briefly replied that the Finance and Treasury Ministry has not yet submitted the budget proposal. As for the Mostar elections, the local vote that has been on hold in this city since 2008 due to political disagreements on the city's statute, the Presidency Chairman said the EU-mediated talks on this matter are likely to result in a solution acceptable to all sides. *"Any solution reached in talks between (the main Bosniak and Croat political parties) the SDA and HDZ BiH, held under auspices of the international community will, of course, be presented to all other political parties and anything that will be done will be done in line with the (decisions of)the European Court of Human Rights and the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina,"* he stressed. Dzaferovic, who is the Party of Democratic Action's (Stranka Demokratske Akcije – SDA) senior member, refused to unveil the details of the agreement, noting that he was not directly involved in the talks but that he was informed that there were few matters left to be agreed on. (www.ba.n1info.com)

- June 17th, after a twelve-year deadlock, political leaders signed an agreement on Wednesday enabling the local elections in the southern city of Mostar to take place for the first time after 2008. The agreement was signed by Bakir Izetbegovic and Dragan Covic, the leaders of the Party of Democratic Action's (Stranka Demokratske Akcije – SDA) and the Croatian Democratic

Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hrvatska Demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine or HDZ BiH), in presence of foreign Ambassadors and Mostar's local politicians. Addressing the reporters, Covic said that one part of the deal treats the issue of local elections in Mostar and the City Statute, while another part refers to the State Election Law provisions that ensure legitimate representation of Bosnia's constituent peoples in the state institutions. *"A new Statute has been defined and it will be adopted in the first next session of the Mostar City Council. Now it is certain that the vote will take place in Mostar within the local elections,"* he said, adding that the two parties will submit next week into parliamentary procedure the proposal of changes to the Election Law concerning Mostar. According to Covic, the second part of the agreement obliges the leaders to start talks on the Election Law within three months and to agree on the details within six months. The changes should be adopted by the State Parliament by the end of next year. The local elections in the City of Mostar were last held in 2008. Two years later, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina acted upon motion of Croat representatives in the state Parliament, assessing as unconstitutional parts of the Bosnia's Election Law which refer to the City Statute. The Court tasked the state Parliament in 2010 to amend the Election Law regarding the provisions which treat the electoral rules in that city but this did not happen to date and Mostar elections remain the subject of political disagreements, mostly of two main parties in this city, the SDA and HDZ BiH which signed the deal today. Talks that intensified over the past weeks were held under auspices of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *"This is a big day for*

Bosnia and Herzegovina and this city,” Izetbegovic said addressing the reporters after the meeting. Explaining the agreement on Mostar elections, he said they accepted a model that would “*proportionally follow the number of voters in constituencies.*” “*The agreement itself was drafted in a way that Mostar will be ruled jointly. That means lots of blockades, slowed down processes but that’s how it is at this moment. I am not sure if this generation of politicians will live to see a more normal Statute but some in the future it will,*” he added. As for the winners in these talks, he said those are “*the citizens and voters of Mostar.*” Changes to the Election Law that would affirm the principle of the civil, which the leaders agreed to harmonize by the end of the next year, is not a simple yet not impossible mission, according to Izetbegovic who hopes for the help of the Venice Commission's experts. EU Ambassador Johann Sattler, who was among the foreign officials that witnessed the signing of the document, welcomed the agreement, thanking everyone for the cooperation. “*Holding the free democratic elections and local elections in the City of Mostar is one of the 14 priorities that the European Commission set for local authorities (in its Opinion on the country’s membership application,*” said Sattler. The EU welcomes the commitment of the two political parties to resume work on the remaining issues including the elimination of discriminatory provisions of the Election Law, which will enable all citizens to elect and be elected, he added. The US Ambassador Eric Nelson, UK Ambassador Matthew Field, the International Administrator in Bosnia, High Representative Valentin Inzko, and Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia Kathleen Kavalec also attended the Mostar meeting. (www.ba.n1info.com)

- June 18th, Bosnia's Council of Ministers adopted the state budget for 2020, Finance Minister Vjekoslav Bevanda told the reporters following the Council's session on Thursday. After months of delay, the state Ministers agreed on the adoption of the state budget that stipulates 4.2 million marks (approximately 2.1 million euro) for the local elections set to take place later this year. According to Bosnia's Election Law, the local elections are partly funded by the state budget (50%), while the rest (50%) is earmarked in the budgets of local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Central Election Commission initially scheduled the local vote for October 4th, 2020 but had to postpone it for November 15th, 2020 as the funding was uncertain at that moment. (www.ba.n1info.com)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Last week was a very important week for Bosnia marking concrete steps for the exit of the country from the political stalemate has entered long time ago. Political agreement of SDA and HDZ BiH on local elections in the city of Mostar is a significant step for political normality in Bosnia. Last elections in Mostar were held back in 2008 due to unconstitutional provisions of the electoral law. It seems that in the coming local elections citizens of Mostar will have the chance to elect their local representatives. It should be noted also the good will and cooperation of Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Bosnian Croats for resolving the issue. Another important step is that the Council of Ministers reached an agreement adopting the 2020 state budget. The problematic institutional framework of the Dayton Accord is the main reason for these long time decisions which affects state’s political and economic

stability. Most probably local elections will be held on November 15th, 2020 since state funding was secured by the budget adoption. Political instability, poor economic performances, entities' rivalries, and problematic framework of state's structure (due to Dayton Accord) have left Bosnia far behind other Western Balkan countries towards the EU. Furthermore, nationalistic rhetoric and actions from the three entities creates certain conditions of mutual mistrust and work as a factor of potential destabilization. Muslim countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iran maintain a permanent presence through financial donations and investments. Lately, Turkey seeks to be engaged deeper in Bosnia's Armed Forces training and modernization. Migration issue turns to become a problem of social turbulence for the regions which hosts reception structures for migrants.



BULGARIA: June 18th, Bulgaria's President Rumen Radev will impose a partial veto on the amendments to the Ministry of Interior Act. The texts that provoked many discussions envisage establishment of a new directorate. Practically, it duplicates functions of the National Service for Protection which is subordinate to the Bulgarian President. This would lead to serious problems in the coordination and the organization of the protection, Bulgaria's Head of state contends. (www.novinite.com)

- June 18th, analysis show that autumn will be a hard period as in many places real unemployment will be felt then, President Rumen Radev said. The COVID-19 crisis has proved once again how necessary financial decentralization of municipalities in Bulgaria is Radev said during his visit to Kresna. The crisis has also shown the

big problem - there are billions set aside, but no administrative capacity in order for the funds to reach those in need, the head of state added. Radev pointed out that it was not too late to overcome the crisis, but the capacity of the state must be used and all of the most affected people must be reached, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises. (www.novinite.com)

- June 19th, eleven NATO Defense Ministers launched an initiative to create a network of training facilities for pilots across the European continent, NATO said in a statement. The Defense Ministers of Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey signed a Letter of Intent confirming the establishment of the NATO Flight Training Europe (NFTE) initiative, in order join forces for the training of fighter jet, helicopter, fixed wing and drone pilots, the statement said. Several smaller European allies have annual pilot training requirements at a scale that does not justify the establishment or continuation of national flight centers. The multinational NATO Flight Training Europe initiative will address the requirements of these nations, it said. The signature of the corresponding Letter of Intent was added virtually from the capitals of participating nations, just after the conclusion of the meeting of NATO Defense Ministers this week. Under this agreement, the eleven allies will investigate options for setting up a European network of training facilities for air-crews, benefiting as much as possible from already existing training structures. *"This multinational cooperation will increase European training facilities and enable air-crews to train closer to home. As such, it serves as an excellent example of transatlantic*

burden sharing,” NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoana said. The initiative will provide for cost savings and increased interoperability among participating Allies and will benefit the overall readiness of NATO air forces, the statement said. (www.sofiaglobe.com)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Bulgaria records high COVID-19 cases bringing back concerns for spread of the pandemic. The economic repercussions of COVID-19 are also a major concern for the country, as the President Rumen Radev highlighted. Bulgaria enjoys political stability. Migration poses a national security threat but currently situation is under control since migrant and refugee flows coming from Turkey are not increased. Nevertheless, situation is closely monitored by Bulgarian authorities. Corruption and organized crime remain significant obstacles for the country's development and should be addressed decisively. The country pays special attention to energy security developing several projects. Modernization of Armed Forces is a top priority for Bulgaria and huge armament projects are ongoing (fighter jets, armored vehicles, vessels etc). However, military operational capability of the state is questioned especially in the Air Force. Bulgarian Armed Forces are far from NATO standards.



CROATIA: June 15th, the European Commission (EC) plans to send officials to the Croatian border to monitor border Police activity, after fresh allegations surfaced of migrants and asylum seekers being beaten and abused on the Croatian borders, EUobserver reported on Monday. The monitoring mission, which will be

sent when the coronavirus pandemic dies down, intends “to ensure that the activities of the Croatian border guards remain fully compliant with the respect of fundamental rights,” an EC Spokesperson said on Friday, EUobserver wrote. Last week, Amnesty International reported that a group of asylum seekers were bound and tortured by Croatian Police officers who jeered them and smeared food on their wounds. Amnesty International said they had spoken to six men who, along with ten other asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Pakistan, were caught by a group of some 10 men dressed in uniforms and balaclavas near the Plitvice Lake in late May. According to the migrants, the uniformed men had beaten them with batons and pistol grips. “The European Union can no longer remain silent and willfully ignore the violence and abuses by Croatian police on its external borders. Their silence is allowing, and even encouraging, the perpetrators of this abuse to continue without consequences. The European Commission must investigate the latest reports of horrifying police violence against migrants and asylum-seekers,” Massimo Moratti, Deputy Director of the Europe Office, said at the time. Allegations against Croatian border Police of mistreating incoming migrants and forcing them back to Bosnia and Herzegovina without allowing them to request asylum have been mounting for months, but Croatian authorities have repeatedly denied all accusations. Last month, the British daily “The Guardian” reported it had obtained photographs of migrants who were allegedly abused and humiliated by the Croatian border Police after being caught attempting to cross the border from Bosnia. The Police had allegedly spray-painted crosses on their heads. The UN has requested that the Croatian Government investigate allegations.

The Guardian on Monday also accused EU officials of “*covering up*” evidence on the failure on the part of Croatian Government in protecting migrants from alleged abuse at the hands of the border Police. The daily reported they had seen internal emails from the EC which revealed that the officials in Brussels, fearing backlash, had decided against uncovering Croatia’s lack of commitment in monitoring the border, a mechanism funded by the EU. Croatian Interior Minister, Davor Bozinovic, commented on the latest accusations on Friday, Croatian state agency Hina reported, once again denying all reports and saying that “*Croatian Police is protecting the border and preventing illegal entry. In any case, our message is that we will respect Croatian and European laws and no one will stop us from protecting the Croatian border from illegal crossings, regardless of where the pressure comes from.*” (www.hr.n1info.com)

- June 17th, State Electoral Commission Vice President Ana Lovrin said on Wednesday they received 190 slates and 17 minority candidacies for the July 5th, 2020 parliamentary election. More slates were submitted than four years ago but less candidacies for Constituency 12, where ethnic minorities elect their MPs. In 2016, 177 slates and 29 minority candidacies were submitted. A record 313 slates were submitted for the 2011 parliamentary election. Lovrin said the Commission now had 48 hours to check the validity of the lists of candidates and publish them by constituency, after which electioneering begins. She added that the valid lists could be published on Thursday afternoon. Voters will elect 151 MPs, 140 in ten constituencies in Croatia three will be elected by Croats residing abroad, and eight by ethnic minorities. On

Tuesday, the last day for doing so, independent slates were submitted by MP Marin Skibola, Dino Debeljuh, Irena Francekovic and Damir Gruenbaum. Slates were also submitted by Zeljko Kerum with his Croatian Civic Party, Milivoj Spika's Bloc Pensioners Together, the Kvarner Union, the Croatian Unity Party, the coalition of the Veterans Patriotic Party of Croatia and the Croatian Veterans People's Party, the Croatian Order Party, the Croatian Future Party, the Movement for a Modern Croatia, the Hrvatski Vidik party, the Croatian Democratic Party, Free Croatia, and the Party With a First and Last Name. (www.hr.n1info.com)

- June 18th, the European Parliament continued its plenary session today with a debate on the situation in the Schengen area and the external borders of the European Union. Croatia received majority support for joining the Schengen border. Also addressed was the issue of continued EU enlargement in the region, an issue Croatia has long advocated, and one it made a point of during its presidency of the Council of the European Union. “*European Parliament supports the policy of enlargement. It is the expression of a collective effort to ensure that the policy of enlargement be seen as a process that is important for reform of the European Union as well. The policy of enlargement cannot be viewed as some sort of second rate policy or political process,*” said Croatian MEP Tonino Picula (SDP/S&D). Meanwhile, in the fall a union-wide debate on the future of Europe is expected to begin. The two year project, known as the Conference on the Future of Europe, is being chaired by the European Commission Vice-president and the Commissioner for Democracy and Demography, Croatia’s Dubravka Suica (HDZ/EPP), who

explained why the project has been delayed “The problem is not with the European Commission or the European Parliament, the problems is the inability to reach an agreement within the Council, because all three institutions are supposed to sign a joint declaration that would in fact be the foundational document from which we would initiate the Conference on the Future of Europe, and this is one of the primary reasons that we have not initiated it yet, obviously that together with the coronavirus pandemic.” (www.glashrvatske.com)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Croatia moves towards parliamentary elections scheduled for July 5th, 2020. Taking into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic repercussions, elections are critical for the country's future. The new Government will have hard work to bring the country back to growth. Croatia is close to the Schengen Zone enjoying support in the EU. Corruption remains a significant problem of state politics and despite some steps for improving current conditions there is a lot of work should be implemented. Croatia – Slovenia border dispute remains active, but COVID-19 pandemic and pre-electoral period in Croatia have downsized current situation. Croatia seeks to maintain its influence in neighboring Bosnia through the Croatian entity in that country. Croatia implements a policy of Armed Forces' modernization trying to form a reliable and well equipped force according to NATO standards. However, the current COVID-19 pandemic may affect the ambitious modernization plans due the economic repercussions in the country. Croatian Air Force

is far from NATO standards and actually the country lacks an operational air power.



CYPRUS: June 15th, President Nicos Anastasiades on Sunday evening briefed European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during a telephone call of Turkey's continued illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean region, stressing the need for decisive measures at EU level. In a written statement, Government Spokesperson Kyriacos Koushos said that they also discussed the multiannual financial framework and that Anastasiades said the European Commission's proposal is a good basis for discussion and outlined in depth Cyprus' positions and requests. According to Koushos, the President referred to Cyprus' particularities due to its geographic position and the connectivity problems it faces as an island state as well as of the disproportionate migratory pressures it is faced with, asking the Commission to help the country deal with all these different challenges. “The Cypriot economy, which is based on the sectors of tourism and services, has been significantly hit, pointing out the need of further support from the EU,” Koushos added. Anastasiades briefed the European Commission President over recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and continued Turkish violations within Cyprus' maritime zones, the Government Spokesperson said. Anastasiades showed “Turkey's destabilizing role on the Eastern Mediterranean, the illegal actions that place the wider region's security and stability in danger and stressed the need for the EU to take more decisive measures so that the unacceptable Turkish goals can be deterred and for more pressure to be placed on Ankara, both to

end its illegal drillings and to prevent any incidents which would undermine stability and security in the region,” Koushos said. Turkish drill ship Yavuz arrived in April in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Cyprus after Ankara announced another attempt to drill a well in blocks licensed to international companies. This is the sixth time Turkey attempts to drill within the EEZ and continental shelf of Cyprus, this time in an area that covers part of exploration blocks 6 and 7, which have been licensed to ENI and TOTAL. In a statement on May 15th, 2020 the EU Foreign Ministers deplored the fact that Turkey has not yet responded to EU calls to cease such activities and reiterated their call on Ankara to show restraint, refrain from such actions, and respect the sovereignty and sovereign rights of Cyprus, in accordance with international law. (www.cyprus-mail.com)

- June 16th, NOBLE ENERGY, the primary concession holder on the “Aphrodite” gas field, has signaled they are putting on hold plans to develop and monetize the reservoir, while reiterating their commitment to the project. In a statement provided to daily “*Politis*” the US company said that tumbling commodity prices due to the economic fallout linked to the global coronavirus situation, have led them to “reconfigure” their work schedule in Cyprus as well. While avoiding the term “delay” it could be inferred that NOBLE was hinting at exactly that. “*Reacting to the new state of play due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the drop in commodity prices, we are reconfiguring our work schedule in Cyprus, but we are keeping with our commitments to the Cypriot Government,*” the company said. It added “*We shall continue working with the Government and our partners, shaping the*

development plan for the Aphrodite reservoir according to global demand for natural gas and prevailing market conditions.” On its global operations, the US company said it has cut back on capital expenditures planned for 2020 by approximately 900 million US dollars, and also slashed operational costs and general and administrative expenses by 225 million US dollars. “*NOBLE ENERGY is in a position to effectively deal with the current situation. The company remains financially robust, with high liquidity and a reduced cost structure. On May 18th, Moody’s Investors Service confirmed NOBLE ENERGY’s Baa3 credit rating,*” the company said. In mid-April, NOBLE ENERGY’s shares took a tumble after the oil and gas producer said it was slashing its dividend by 83%, further reducing planned capital expenditures and implementing employee furloughs and part-time programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the decline in oil and gas demand and prices. The company declared a quarterly dividend of 2 cents a share, down from a previous payout of 12 cents a share. In November 2019, the Cyprus Government granted the NOBLE – SHELL - DELEK consortium an exploitation license for the Aphrodite gas field. The companies intended to pipe the gas to neighboring Egypt. According to “*Politis,*” at the time the consortium’s envisioned timetable went as follows; a second appraisal drilling (A3) at the reservoir by late November 2021; the carrying out of the Front End Engineering Design by end of 2021; a final investment decision within 2022; followed by a Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement; and the commencement of building a pipeline and other infrastructures to export the gas inside 2023, with an estimate time of completion and beginning of sales sometime in 2025. Discovered in late 2011,

the Aphrodite play holds an estimated 4.5 trillion cubic feet of gas. The concession is jointly owned by DELEK DRILLING (30%), NOBLE ENERGY (35%) and SHELL (35%). (www.cyprus-mail.com)

- June 21st, “prime minister” in the north Ersin Tatar is reportedly angered by comments made by Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci about a reshuffle while “labor minister” Faiz Sucuoglu said he was shocked when he heard the rumors and tendered his resignation. Tatar has reportedly said he has no plans to replace any “minister” other than the “minister of tourism,” which he has already announced. “The reference in the press of a private consultation between the ‘prime minister’ and the ‘president’ on the issue of a reshuffle is not in line with political ethics,” Tatar said. Whatever has been said in the press about the “minister of labor” does not correspond to reality, he added. He said, he had told Akinci only about replacing the “minister of tourism.” Besides that, any exchange between a “president and a prime minister I am convinced that their publication in the press is not in line with political ethics.” In the meantime, Sucuoglu was shocked when he learned in a report in Kibris he is set to be replaced by an “MP” of the National Unity Party (Ulusal Birlik Partisi - UBP) at Tatar’s request but Akinci has vetoed the move. He is now in talks with the UBP party and will make an announcement on Monday. (www.cyprus-mail.com)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Cyprus continues its diplomatic efforts pushing the EU for stricter sanctions against Turkey due to the latter’s aggressive actions against Cypriot sovereign rights. Turkish drills in the Cypriot

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) constitute a direct violation of the international law and a threat against Cypriot national security. So far Cyprus enjoys the EU support but only in rhetorical level since the union lacks of comprehensive military capabilities. Cyprus cannot stop the Turkish activity so far, failing to protect its sovereign rights. Turkey has simply refused to withdraw from a region that it is considered as its strategic extension where vital geostrategic and geoeconomic interests are at stake. Cyprus lacks adequate military means (especially aeronautical forces) to deter Turkey from continuing its activity. However, it is not expected escalation of situation in the near future since energy companies have postponed their scheduled drills within the Cypriot EEZ. It is certain that Turkey will not accept “fait accompli” in a region considered as part of its strategic interests. Besides, Turkey maintains a significant military force on the island (Army Corps size) which poses a permanent threat against the Cypriot republic. Besides, Cypriot energy projects are questioned since the oil and gas companies postponed their activities in the region claiming COVID-19 and low oil prices as the main reasons. In general, Cypriot energy plans have “stuck” and Cypriot gas is far from exploitation yet. In the occupied north, the political rivalry between the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akinci (Erdogan’s “black ship”) and the so-called “prime minister” Ersin Tatar is getting worse and worse creating a “political vacuum” affecting the decision-making process of the community. The (so-called) “presidential” elections may be called for August 2020. As long as part of Cyprus remains under Turkish occupation and Turkish troops (equipped with heavy weapons) are deployed in the island,

Cyprus faces an existing direct threat against its national security and sovereignty.



GREECE: June 18th, Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias and Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shukri were holding extended talks in Cairo on Thursday over the demarcation of maritime zones, developments in Libya and the broader eastern Mediterranean issues. Earlier, Dendias was received by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. In an op-ed in Egypt's Al-Ahram newspaper on the occasion of his visit to Cairo, Dendias expressed hope that the two countries would push forward with a deal on maritime zones. He also warned that Turkey's "expansionist and revisionist policy" undermines regional security and stability and peace in Libya, and "manipulate the Arab world according to its own hegemonic aspirations." (www.ekathimerini.com)

- June 20th, a crisis over the southeastern Aegean island of Kastellorizo will not be limited there, but will spread across a Greek - Turkish front, according to Hellenic National Defense General Staff Chief General Konstantinos Floros. His remarks came after Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu claimed again that islands that lie far from the Greek mainland, including Kastellorizo, are not entitled to a continental shelf. Floros stressed that the concept of a crisis limited to one specific area does not really exist, as "it is impossible for something to happen in Kastellorizo and not spread everywhere." In addition, he stressed that preparations are being made, as there are ongoing exercises, area reservations and testing of plans. "We know exactly what will happen and how it will happen," he insisted, citing instructions from the Defense Ministry, but also the Government and the Prime

Minister's office. Floros noted that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan may do what he says he will do, but "we do what we say" as well. "The Armed Forces are an organized Army, Navy and Air Force. It is very difficult to confront them and whoever does will face a very high cost, which is something our neighbors know," he said. He also said he has "every good intention to speak with the Turkish military leadership, but this cannot be done under conditions of constant threat." He also said there is a serious risk of an accident in the Aegean, and that "if this happens, it will be caused by the daily pressure they put on us and they will be to blame." However, he added that in the event of an accident, "we will see who lands and how." Meanwhile, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told a European Union summit on Friday that "it is paradoxical to discuss sanctions against Russia over Ukraine and not to discuss [Turkey's] violation of the sovereign rights of member-states of the European Union, Greece and Cyprus." (www.ekathimerini.com)

- June 21st, Greece is ready to discuss with Turkey the possibility of a delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) for the two countries, if the other party is willing, Environment and Energy Minister Kostas Hatzidakis said. "If Turkey wants to make a deal similar to that (Greece did) with Italy, we are here to discuss it," Hatzidakis wrote on social media. "If it does not, the Mitsotakis Government has made its positions clear, both on (the) Evros (land border) and with the EastMed (pipeline). In no way will we leave our country defenseless," he added. Greece and Turkey are going under a tense period, with Turkey asserting its rights to explore for energy sources wherever it wants in the Mediterranean

and accusing Greece and Cyprus, mainly, of conniving with other parties to deprive it of its rights. The tension has been compounded by Turkey's effort to facilitate the exodus of at least some of the millions of migrants and refugees on its soil to Greece, a move that Greece has largely successfully resisted. Tough language from Turkey was answered by Greek Armed Forces Chief, General Konstantinos Floros, Friday, warning that a local incident would quickly escalate. Hatzidakis' Sunday intervention leaves open the possibility of a de-escalation, while stressing Greece's containment capacity. (www.ekathimerini.com)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Chief of Greek Armed Forces warns for a potential crisis with Turkey in Kastellorizo island due to the latter's aggression and provocative action. In the meanwhile, Greek officials declare in public the state's readiness for talks with Turkey regarding mutual delimitation of EEZ. In the external policy field, Greece intensifies its talks with Egypt seeking to reach an agreement on mutual EEZ. Such an agreement is of strategic importance since it cancels the Turkish – Libyan agreement on Economic Exclusive Zones (EEZ) which puts Greek vital interests at stake. However, a potential agreement between Greece and Egypt could escalate tension in East Mediterranean dramatically. Of course there is always the possibility of a “hot” incident if Turkey tries to conduct hydrocarbon drills within Greek Exclusive Economic Zone. Under current situation in Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Sea, Greece is obliged to strengthen and modernize its Armed Forces operational capability. On the illegal migration field, Greece

has achieved to shield its land and sea borders. Finally, on political level the Government enjoys public support. Despite, the Prime Minister's rejection of the possibility of snap elections, this scenario could not be rejected for the coming fall. However, the Prime Minister schedules a short Government's reshuffle in the near future.



KOSOVO: June 17th, Kosovo President Hashim Thaci said on Wednesday that Belgrade and Pristina could realistically reach an agreement to normalize their relations at the meeting in Washington on June 27th, 2020. *“If an agreement is not reached on June 27th Kosovo and Serbia will be losers. If an agreement is reached both sides will win and gain Euro-Atlantic values and the commitment of the US is reflected in the determination to reach an agreement between countries and people hostile for more than a century. I believe that only the US can do it now, President Trump's leadership and the commitment of Ambassador Grenell,”* Thaci told the Voice of America Albanian-language program. He said that Kosovo will benefit in all areas from the agreement. *“I expect benefits in the economy, in internal consolidation, good-neighbor relations in the region, the prospect of drawing closer to NATO and prospects for UN membership,”* he said. According to the Kosovo President, the process is not about a decision but an obligation which has to be achieved in the coming weeks and months. Thaci said there would be no changes of borders but added that he expects two sovereign states to conduct a border demarcation after the agreement is reached. He said that the US and European Union initiatives are not separate. *“I think these two processes will complement each other but the US are a step*

ahead, clearer, more precise, faster and more determined to reach an agreement,” he said. (www.rs.n1info.com)

- June 19th, the US and the EU have divided tasks regarding the continuation of the Serbia - Kosovo dialogue, the US special envoy for the dialogue, Richard Grenell, said, following reports of US - EU divisions on the Kosovo issue. According to Grenell, dialogue will have two phases. The first, facilitated by the US, will start in Washington on June 27th, 2020 and focuses on economic matters. The second phase, facilitated by the EU, will focus on political aspects of the dialogue. *“The European path with Kosovo and Serbia towards integration in Europe is fully led by Europe, but this cannot be done until economic normalization is achieved,”* Grenell told the Kosovo media outlet Gazeta Express on Thursday. According to Grenell, the frozen conflict between Serbia and its former province, which declared independence in 2008, had dragged for more than 20 years because the talks held *“no benefit for the people.”* For negotiations to work, he added, people need to see an economy which is growing, he told Gazeta Express, adding that *“the French and the Germans understand fully that when we pass the economic part, which will take some time, when the workplaces start to come back, when the economy is improved, then you can start to discuss political issues.”* Grenell claimed that only after the economic conditions are met, *“the Europeans will lead”* the negotiations. *“We have made it clear to the French and the Germans,”* Grenell said. An investigation by BIRN revealed that Kosovo used taxpayers’ money to lobby internationally for the idea of a land swap as the best solution to the conflict with Serbia. Former Prime Minister Albin Kurti had also claimed a

“secret agreement” existed between Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic on a land swap. However, Thaci has dismissed the existence of such an agreement, and on Thursday, on Fox news, Grenell also rejected it, while blaming former US National Security Advisor John Bolton for previously pushing the idea. *“When it comes to Kosovo and Serbia, we are having both of those two together at the White House next Saturday to talk about a historic movement and agreement. And yet I am fighting constantly about this rumor about land swaps between the two,”* Grenell said, adding that such an arrangement was not part of US policy. *“I am fighting all of the rumors that persisted because Bolton was pursuing his own policy rather than President Trump’s policy,”* Grenell claimed. President Thaci, who represented Kosovo in the negotiations until Parliament voted for the Government to lead dialogue in mid-March, said in a press conference on Thursday, that for Kosovo, there was *“a political issue as well as an economic one in relation to the neighbor, Serbia.”* On Voice of America, on Thursday, he also announced that France was *“expected to host a summit between Kosovo and Serbia in the third week of July.”* Kosovo’s Prime Minister, Avdullah Hoti, has said his country still seeks mutual recognition, as well as membership of international organizations, such as the UN. However, for the fresh negotiations to start, Kosovo has temporarily paused its applications to international organizations, and Serbia has paused its own campaign to get countries to de-recognize Kosovo. Reuters reported on Thursday that Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic declared that Serbia is willing to give up potential EU integration if that is the only benefit for Serbia

from the negotiations on Kosovo. *“In reply to a possible offer to recognize Kosovo, and that Kosovo enters the UN, and we receive nothing in return, except EU membership, our answer would be ‘no’,”* Vucic said after meeting Russia’s Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, on Thursday. Lavrov also expressed Russia’s support for the EU as the facilitator of the negotiations, because it received a mandate to be the facilitator from the UN General Council. According to Lavrov, the EU *“must not be isolated from its obligations and must fulfill them impartially.”* Lavrov emphasized the continued importance of UN Resolution 1244, from 1999, which upheld Serbia’s territorial integrity and by implication its claim to Kosovo. Russia, Serbia’s close ally, does not recognize Kosovo as a state and has veto power on the UN Security Council. EU special envoy for Serbia - Kosovo dialogue, Miroslav Lajcak, in a meeting with officials in Pristina on Tuesday, said he had not decided whether to participate in the planned meeting in the US. On Thursday, in Pristina, Lajcak said he did not believe an agreement can be reached in Washington without the EU. *“The EU cannot be left aside because it is offering [Serbia and Kosovo] a European future, unless you want to leave the European future aside,”* Lajcak declared. The Kosovo - Serbia dialogue was suspended in November 2018 after then Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj’s Government imposed a steep tariff on imports of Serbian and Bosnian origin. (www.prishtinainsight.com)

- June 20th, the General Council of the Democratic League of Kosovo (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës - LDK), has voted to dismiss Vjosa Osmani as Deputy Leader and as a member of the party chairmanship. Of the 123

members of the Council, 95 members voted on the proposal from party leader Isa Mustafa, with 70 votes in favor, 16 against, and nine abstentions. In his letter proposing to dismiss Osmani, who was elected Deputy Leader by the General Council in August 2019, Mustafa stated that the party gives *“unlimited space for freedom of expression,”* but added that the proposition was made due to the party’s statute. Referring to article 14.2, Mustafa stated that under the statute no LDK member can hold a senior position in the party while publicly opposing its decisions. Mustafa proposed that Osmani be replaced as Deputy Leader by Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti, which was approved with 92 votes in favor. Currently serving as Speaker of the Assembly, Osmani was LDK’s prime ministerial candidate in the 2019 parliamentary elections, in which the party got the second place, marginally behind Vetevendosje (Self-Determination). In recent months, she has been a vocal opponent of the decision to oust the previous coalition Government made up of LDK and Vetevendosje through a motion of no confidence, and the formation of the current coalition Government between LDK, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës - AAK), Social Democratic Initiative (NISMA Social Demokrate – NISMA) and Serbian List (Lista Srpska). Osmani did not participate in the session where Hoti was voted in as Prime Minister, a point Mustafa highlighted in the proposal to remove her. LDK MPs Haxhi Avdyli and Fatmir Rexhepi publicly criticised the proposal. Avdyli, who is a member of the General Council told BIRN on Saturday that he voted against the motion, describing it as *“absurd”* and something that will come back to haunt the party at the next election. Xhafer Tahiri,

the LDK Mayor of Vushtrri also publicly opposed the proposal, describing it as being against the spirit of the first leader of the party and Kosovo's first President, Ibrahim Rugova. *"This is the most difficult moment for LDK in these past 30 years,"* stated Tahiri. Osmani's relationship with the party leadership has a long history of turbulence. Following the grand coalition formed between LDK and the Democratic Party of Kosovo (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës - PDK), in December 2014, which saw Mustafa become Prime Minister, Osmani refused to vote for the coalition criticizing the alliance with LDK's proclaimed biggest rivals. Despite speculation that she may form a new party or perhaps join Vetevendosje, Osmani has remained tight-lipped about her political future. *"At the end of the mandate [as Speaker of Assembly] I will have to decide whether I want to be in politics or not,"* she told BIRN earlier this month. (www.prishtinainsight.com)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Under the US and EU pressure, dialogue restart between Belgrade and Pristina is scheduled for June 27th, 2020 in Washington. Kosovo declares its readiness to join talks but an agreement sounds difficult at the moment. The US cleverly separated dialogue in two phases; economics in the first phase and politics in the second. Economics could be described also as technical issues. The US strategic plan of talks is assessed as smart since both sides are more willing to find solutions and reach agreements in the economic sector. Political issues are more difficult but it is the sector which will determine the future of the two countries relations. It should be noted that a dispute between the US and the EU has emerged

after the latter expressed its annoyance for not joining the first phase's process (economics). This distance between the two mediators could be critical for the outcome of talks. In the internal politics field, the recent decision of LDK to topple the Albin Kurti (Vetevendosje) Government and to form a new one with AAK, NISMA and Serbian List has its political repercussions; The Deputy Leader, Vjosa Osmani was dismissed by its duties since she opposed in her party's decisions. It is assessed that Vetevendosje will get more benefits from the way the new Kosovo Government was formed and especially if the Kosovo – Serbia talks will lead in an agreement which will be against the Pristina interests. Fight against corruption, organized crime, money laundering and trafficking, establishment of rule of law, accountable and transparent state institutions, and functional public administration are the main challenges for Kosovo towards its European path.



MOLDOVA: June 16th, the Central Election Commission (CEC) informs that by July 15th, 2020 each political party will submit to the Commission the report on financial management for the first half of this year. The report will be done electronically via SSI Financial Control and on paper, according to the model documents in the annexes of the Regulation on financing activity of political parties, approved by CEC decision No4401 of December 23rd, 2015 and subsequently they will be made public and set out on heading Financial reports on the official website of the Commission www.cec.md. The CEC warns that the failure of political parties to submit the report on financial management within the deadline and format established by law, including the submission of incomplete data, is a

violation of legal provisions on financial management of political parties, which is considered a contravention and is liable for contravention. (www.moldpres.md)

- June 16th, the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) today approved the legislative initiative No 210 from May 28th, 2020 on the amendment of the Electoral Code No 1381/1997. The CEC members approved the initiative to introduce in the Electoral Code the possibility of holding the voting during two days, both at the parliamentary elections and the presidential ones. The Commission reiterated the viewpoint formulated in the decisions No 1605 from December 24th, 2012 and July 4th, 2017. In particular, CEC stressed that the amendment of the period of time meant for voting implied the adjusting of the new conditions for its carrying out and the procedures concerning the tightening of the voting's security and implicitly, the preservation and ensuring of the integrity of the used and non-used ballot papers during two days are to be amended. At the same time, decision-makers should revise the rules on ensuring the confidentiality of information from the electoral lists on electors' participation in the voting, the norm on the ban to carry out electoral agitation on the election day and the day before it, as well as the terms of submitting the financial reports. The CEC's opinion is to be submitted to the Justice Ministry. The votes of more than 51 MPs are necessary to amend the Electoral Code of Moldova. (www.moldpres.md)

- June 18th, Prime Minister Ion Chicu, at an invitation by President of the European Council Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, participated today in a videoconference of the Eastern

Partnership's (EaP) leaders, the Government's communication and protocol department has reported. The sixth summit of the Eastern Partnership was to be held in Brussels on June 18th, 2020; yet, because of the pandemic, decision-makers ruled to hold the discussions in videoconference regime. The meeting was focused on three subjects: cooperation and solidarity in fighting the COVID-19 crisis; reconfirming the strategic importance of the Eastern Partnership and its defining elements and the EaP's long-term results, goals and the products ready for delivery post 2020. Heads of state and Government from 27 EU member states and six Eastern Partnership states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, participated in the event. *"Even before the pandemic, the Eastern Partnership got closer to a 'moment of truth'. Now, after 10 years of cooperation, EaP either reinvents itself and we get 'a new breath' or it slowly but surely lose its political relevance. The pandemic accelerated this process,"* Chicu said. The Prime Minister noted that the Partnership's direction of evolution, set at present, would influence the course of actions for the next years, would define our relations and would remodel EU's role in the region. The participants in the event pointed out that the pandemic had strongly hit the societies and the health systems. The gradual resumption of the economic activities generates increase in the number of infected people and puts additional pressure on the health system. The Moldovan Prime Minister thanked the EU states for the support provided to Moldova in form of tests, protection equipment, medication and products all the countries will continue to increasingly need this year. *"We are grateful for the programs meant to back the small and medium-sized*

enterprises, as well as the civil society. The announced sums for assistance impress,” Chicu said. (www.moldpres.md)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Moldova enjoys fragile political stability. Presidential elections announced for November 1st, 2020. The President, Igor Dodon is the absolute dominant of state's politics and any further political development should have his approval. Moldova has become a field of the ongoing rivalry between the West (namely the EU and NATO) and Russia for influence. The country is considered by the US and EU of great strategic importance being in the soft underbelly of Russia. On the other hand, Moldova is considered by Russia as an important region for its national security belonging by principle to its sphere of influence. Russia maintains troops in Transnistria which are considered by pro-western forces as violating Moldovan sovereignty. The frozen conflict of Transnistria is always a “running sore” for the country working as a potential factor of destabilization. Corruption, lack of transparency and accountability reign in public administration and state's politics.



MONTENEGRO: June 16th, there are many discussions concerning religious processions that the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro (SPC) organizes, as some say they are political, while some people strongly deny it. Speaking about street processions, a political observer, Srđan Vukadinovic, is adamant – this is not Montenegro we had back in 89s and 90s. “Today, Montenegro is a NATO member state. If Montenegro was not where it is now, we would probably have paramilitary organizations in

Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, the outskirts of Montenegro, Vasojevici, which would limit and dissect it ... However, all this is being observed and monitored. It is not possible to have anything that would allow negative impacts to happen. I believe that the Montenegrin authorities do possess a significant experience and that they will not allow provocations of people taking part in the street processions.” He is sure about one thing – street processions are least religious. They are rather social and political gatherings. “We could see that people from distant places in Montenegro, facing social problems, usually take part in these processions. They are probably paid for sending out four or five members of their families to attend processions across Montenegro and for walking 10 or 15 kilometers in order to join processions in some towns,” Vukadinovic told. According to him, street processions are political as the fact is that they are being organized by only one political group – the opposition. Leader of the Liberal Party of Montenegro (Liberalna Partija Crne Gore - LP) Andrija Popovic, made a point of being clear about this whole thing claiming “The newly organized street processions, which have nothing to do with Christian customs, have been political rallies from the beginning, whose goal is to weaken and destroy the constitutional order. Those are rallies against the state order.” The Zagreb-based political observer, Davor Djenero, says the religious freedom law is not in defiance of the Montenegrin Constitution. It neither restricts nor undermines the fundamental human rights. “The key thing is that the SPC does not want to approve it as it stipulates that all religious communities have to be registered before the state of Montenegro. Having in mind that the SPC does not recognize the statehood of

Montenegro, they do not want to meet this criterion,” Djenero reckons. (www.cdm.me)

- June 19th, judicial power is not protected from illegitimate influences from political and other centers of power, said Vesna Medenica, President of the Supreme Court of Montenegro. Whether or not she will resign is her personal decision, Medenica said. Although Minister of Justice Zoran Pazin has indirectly called on Medenica to resign, she said that she will remain in her third term of office. She said that one of the objectives of judiciary this year was to maintain and secure its status of independent power and to take equal part in the system of the division of powers. *“Unfortunately, we have witnessed that judiciary has been left without support. It seems like judicial power has been left unprotected from illegitimate influences of political and other centers of power. However, results of our work in the area of respect for international law, Constitution and laws, confirm that that is the only way to ensure that judiciary promotes and protects rule of law,”* Medenica said. It is clear, she said, that in the state system of division of powers, adoption of democratic standards cannot be carried out by judiciary only. *“Holding that independent and autonomous judiciary is the crown of democratic state, based on rule of law, I promise I will keep performing my duty of the President of the Supreme Court of Montenegro conscientiously, independently, impartially, fairly, responsibly, in accordance with the Constitution and laws, on behalf of Montenegrin citizens and for them,”* Medenica said. (www.cdm.me)

- June 20th, President of Montenegro, Milo Djukanovic, has called the parliamentary and local elections for August 30th, 2020. Local elections will be held in Andrijevica, Budva,

Gusinje, Kotor and Tivat. *“After having consultations with representatives of the parliamentary parties and coalitions on June 16th, 2020, who responded to the President’s invitation regarding the date for parliamentary elections, today, in line with his competencies and deadlines prescribed by the Constitution of Montenegro, the Law on Election of Councilors and MPs, as well as the Law on Local Self-Government when it comes to elections at the local level, the President passed the Decision on the election of MPs, as well as the Decision on the election of Councilors in the municipal assemblies of Andrijevica, Budva, Gusinje and Kotor,”* Djukanovic’s office said in a statement. The date for the election of Councilors in the Tivat Municipal Assembly has been determined by the decision on the amendments to the decision on the election of councilors in the Tivat Municipal Assembly. (www.cdm.me)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

The Montenegrin President, Milo Djukanovic announced that parliamentary elections will be held on August 30th, 2020 (together with local ones). Taking into consideration that the country suffers from long political tension and instability due to opposition protests, elections could work as a “pressure valve” bringing political life back to normality. Of course there is a big question for coming elections; will be free and fair? For Montenegro which seeks to become the next EU member state these elections could be a democratic stress test. The EU and US is expected to show their sensitivity by sending monitors for the elections. Tension with Serbia remains in high level. Actually it has been transformed into a field of the long rivalry between the US – NATO and

Russia. It should be noted that the country has a significant number of Serbs, while there is notable sympathy among Montenegrin people for Serbs. Corruption, smuggling (especially cigarettes) and money laundering are dominated in the country setting significant obstacles and risks for every investor. Such situation has strongly affected progress of accession negotiations with the EU. Montenegro needs more concrete reforms in the field of justice, rule of law, fight against corruption, money laundering, and organized crime, public administration transparency and accountability in order to become a stable and attractive investment environment. The country focuses on strengthening its Armed Forces by purchasing modern equipment.



NORTH MACEDONIA: June 15th, Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (Внатрешна македонска револуционерна организација – Демократска партија за македонско национално единство - VMRO-DPMNE) and Democratic Union of Macedonia (Socijaldemokratski Sojuz na Makedonija – SDSM) reached agreement to hold the early elections on July 15th, 2020 said SDSM party leader Zoran Zaev. That was the first possible date put forward by the opposition party, on the condition that healthcare protocols are put in place to protect voters and that an OSCE/ODIHR mission is deployed to monitor the electoral procedure. The elections were originally supposed to take place on April 12th, 2020 but were postponed with the onset of the coronavirus epidemic. SDSM pushed for elections as soon as possible, even in late June, despite the major escalation in the epidemic after the month of

Ramadan, while VMRO-DPMNE proposed dates in August and September. “I spoke with Mickoski and he confirmed to me that he will participate in elections on July 15th. The elections will take place on Wednesday,” Zaev said. Additionally, changes to the way voters can approach the polling stations and are identified are being put in place. (www.republika.mk)

- June 18th, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi told the European Parliament on Thursday that the negotiating frameworks for Albania and North Macedonia will be put forward to EU member states this week, MIA’s Brussels correspondent reported. Varhelyi addressed a plenary session of the European Parliament on the Western Balkans report. He noted that the European Commission has returned the region back to the heart of Europe in the first six months of this year and that it translated words in action. “*The European Commission has been tasked with drafting negotiating frameworks for North Macedonia and Albania that will be ready as early as this week, along with summary of reform progress,*” Varhelyi said. Negotiating frameworks are to come in June, while annual package and economic and investment plan are due in autumn. Varhelyi said that it was delivered on promises made to the EU member states in regard to the revised negotiation methodology, that gave green light to Skopje and Tirana to start negotiations in March this year, after several months of blockade by France. The enlargement process is merit-based process, to advance on the path to the EU, Western Balkan countries need to continue to deliver reforms, especially in the areas of rule of law, the fight against corruption and organized crime, fundamental values and human rights,

Varhelyi said, adding the faster a country progresses in reforms, the closer it gets to EU membership. (www.republika.mk)

- June 19th, if there is no Albanian Prime Minister, there will be no Government, Plusinfo reported, after the briefing with some Democratic Union for Integration (Demokratska Unija za Integracija - DUI) officials. The candidate for Prime Minister, as DUI leader Ali Ahmeti said, will be announced on the first day of the election campaign. According to Plusinfo, five intellectuals in the field of economics are in the running for prime ministerial candidate, and Ahmeti will decide who will be the trump card that will have to “throw out” Zoran Zaev or Hristijan Mickoski from the prestigious position. “If Zaev or Mickoski definitely reject the offer, and DUI is the winner of the elections in the Albanian political bloc and the formation of the new Government depends on us, then there will be no Government, there will be a political crisis and new elections,” a DUI official told Plusinfo. According to him, in that case neither Democratic Union of Macedonia (Socijaldemokratski Sojuz na Makedonija – SDSM) nor VMRO-DPMNE will be able to form a Government, as they will not have a sufficient majority, ie DUI as a winning party among Albanians will again insist on a coalition with a winner, but this time with an Albanian Prime Minister. (www.republika.mk)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Major political forces of the country have reached an agreement on the elections date sending an encouraging message for political stability amid significant economic, security and political challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic is expanding its presence in North Macedonia, while

the state's economy is strongly affected by the virus. Elections will be held on July 15th, 2020. Leader of the ethnic Albanian party DUI, Ali Ahmeti keeps on insisting that next Prime Minister will be Albanian. Ahmeti estimates that neither SDSM, nor VMRO-DPMNE will get the parliamentary majority in the coming elections considering himself as the regulator of the potential Government formation. It is assessed that Ahmeti establishes his negotiation framework for the next day of the elections seeking to get as much as he can. Moreover, his message for an Albanian Prime Minister sounds pleasantly in the ears of the ethnic Albanian voters. Although the country has a caretaker Government situation is not stable since the Parliament has been dissolved and there is no elected Government to handle major state's issues. It is estimated that elections could take place on July but parties are still on consultations. The country should focus on reforms regarding justice, rule of law, fight against corruption and money laundering, public administration, and respect of human rights in order to accelerate its European integration process.



ROMANIA: June 18th, Romania's main opposition party, the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat - PSD), will submit a no-confidence motion against the Liberal Government immediately after the state of alert ends, PSD leader Marcel Ciolacu announced on June 17, quoted by G4media.ro. On the same day, the Government prolonged the state of alert for another 30 days without asking a vote in Parliament, as expected. The move, based on an interpretation of the regulations in the sense of notifying the lawmakers rather than asking their

consent for the extension, visibly annoyed the opposition party that was ready to amend significantly if not shorten the state of alert declared by the Executive. PSD accused the Liberal Government of “abuse” and will submit the no-confidence motion exactly based on this decision. Ciolacu also said that his party would challenge the Government's decision at the Constitutional Court. On June 17th, 2020 the number of new COVID-19 infection cases was 345 - the highest ever in Romania, while 14 patients lost their lives (not far from the 17 deaths maximum). (www.romania-insider.com)

June 18th, President Klaus Iohannis believes the Government has acted according to law in the case of extending the state of alert. *“If someone in Parliament opines differently, he or she has the constitutional right to ask for a verification, nonetheless in my opinion, the manner in which the Government has acted is correct, legal and opportune, and the measures still in force are less than in the first phase, there are absolutely important measures (...) and it is a useful, correct and commonsensical approach,”* Iohannis said on Thursday. In his opinion, *“the approach of the so-called Opposition in Parliament is based on an electioneering exaggeration.”* *“They are actually making a scandal for the sake of scandal and are trying to get a few more votes. Practically, the PSD [Social Democratic Party] does nothing but bring insecurity among the population, in a period when people must be sure that things done by the authorities are correct and they should observe the measures imposed,”* Iohannis showed. The President has made some statements at the end of a visit to the ICU Mobile Unit of the Romexpo Complex of Bucharest. (www.nineoclock.ro)

- June 19th, the Headquarters Multinational Division South-East (HQ MND-SE) will strengthen the deterrence and defense position of NATO's Eastern flank, Defense Minister Nicolae-Ionel Ciuca said, according to a press release of the Ministry of National Defense. Clarifications were made after the Parliament adopted on Thursday, in the joint sitting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, the decision for the establishment of the Headquarters Multinational Division South-East (HQ MND-SE) in the Sibiu garrison, with a temporary deployment to the Bucharest garrison. *“Romania's initiative has been appreciated by NATO and accepted by allies, highlighting the strategic importance of the Black Sea region for the security of the Euro-Atlantic area and the need to increase the allied presence in this region. The Headquarters Multinational Division South-East will help strengthen deterrence and defense position of NATO's Eastern flank and it will also give coherence to the chain of command and control at the regional level,”* Ciuca said. Decision to establish the command was adopted following the proposal of the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis at the request of the Ministry of National Defense and with the approval of the Supreme Council of National Defense (CSAT), in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 291/2007 on entry, stationing, conducting or conducting operations foreign territory on the Romanian territory. *“In the context of the radical change of the international security environment and based on the international commitments assumed by Romania, our country presented an offer to establish on the national territory a multinational command and control capability in the terrestrial field – HQ MNC-SE, which will be made available to NATO, as an integrating*

element of the national and allied defense plans,” specified the Ministry of National Defense. HQ MNC-SE will have the status of an international military command, subordinated to an allied command, outside the national command and control structure. “Regarding the organization, operation, staffing and other details necessary for the accomplishment of the HQ MNC-SE mission, these will be established by agreements concluded by the Ministry of National Defense with the military authorities of NATO and the participating allied states, and the deployment of the Command to missions outside the territory. The Romanian state will be executed at the order of the NATO military authorities,” the press release also states. The plenary meeting of the Parliament approved on Thursday, at Iohannis’ proposal, the establishment of the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, as a military unit, at the Sibiu garrison, with a temporary deployment to the Bucharest garrison. A number of 381 Senators and Deputies voted in favor of Parliament Decision for the set up of the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, and 3 abstained. “Because of the radical changes of the international security environment, one of the most important decisions taken at the NATO Summit in Brussels in June 2018 was to adjust NATO Command Structure by highlighting the strategic importance of the Black Sea region for the security of the Euro-Atlantic space and the need to increase the allied forward presence in this region. In this context and based on the international commitments made by Romania, our country offered to host on land a multinational command and control capability – the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE), to be put at NATO’s disposal, as an integrating element of the national and allied

defence plans, a proposal approved by the North-Atlantic Council in June 2019,” the Head of state’s letter sent to Parliament shows. (www.nineoclock.ro)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Extension the state of alert in the country by the Government due to the COVID-19 pandemic has provoked a political dispute between ruling and opposition forces. The Government bypassed the Parliament’s approval for the extension infuriating opposition which claims that Constitution was violated. PSD will submit a motion of no-confidence against the Government and it is very likely to topple the Government. Opposition PSD enjoys majority in Senate and Parliament seeking to control political developments according to its interests. Romania enjoys advanced upgrade in US and NATO strategic plans due to its geographical position located close to Russia. Romania keeps strengthening its Armed Forces seeking to achieve NATO standards. In this context, Romania decided for the establishment of the Headquarters Multinational Division South-East (HQ MND-SE) in the Sibiu garrison (temporarily in Bucharest) strengthening its presence within NATO.



SERBIA: June 17th, Ivica Dacic, Serbia's Foreign Minister, said on Wednesday that Russia would support every solution to the Kosovo issue which Belgrade wanted and if it suited Belgrade’s interests, adding Serbia would not accept to recognize Kosovo’s independence as the end of the dialogue, the Beta news agency reported. Dacic's statement comes ahead of the Thursday's visit to Serbia by his Russian

counterpart Sergey Lavrov, and after the announcement of the Belgrade and Pristina delegations meeting at the White House on June 27th, 2020; six days after Serbia's general elections due on June 21st, 2020. The meeting is seen as the US attempt to solve the issue quickly, but raise some eyebrows in Brussels, which officially has the leading role in facilitating the Belgrade - Pristina dialogue on the normalization of relations that has been on hold since November 2018. Serbia's leaders have said they accept the US role but will not mind Russia's involvement as well. Referring to that accelerated international diplomacy to resume dialogue on the dialogue, Dacic told the Belgrade Prva TV, that *"there is a high tide of initiatives for different meetings."* *"At the same time, there is a low tide of ideas. In other words – will those meetings be just for the sake of them or will they revive dialogue from clinical death? We will see,"* Dacic said, adding he did not believe that *"we are close to a solution at all."* *"We have offered some proposals, but they were mostly rejected,"* he said. Dacic added that those who organized dialogue *"have to be aware that Serbia will not accept the recognition of Kosovo (as an independent state) as a must and – we end the dialogue."* *"It is about accepting talks based on some compromises, but someone should suggest them. We have not heard them so far,"* the Minister said. (www.rs.n1info.com)

- June 18th, Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic told officials from Republika Srpska (RS), a Serb entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that Belgrade has its principles and interests regarding Kosovo which it did not give up no matter what the other side would demand, the news agency reported on Thursday. After meeting with them in Belgrade, Vucic promised to help RS if it had liquidity

problems, *"although they did not ask for it."* He said he faced *"not an easy schedule"* with meetings with the EU Special Envoy Miroslav Lajcak, then trips to Moscow and Washington, adding there were other events he could not talk about right now. Milorad Dodik, the Serb member of the Bosnia's tripartite Presidency, said Serbia did not have to worry about anything else while negotiating with Kosovo. He added that *"all others will be seen and heard,"* but that *"Serbia's and Serbs' vital national interests must be guarded."* Vucic added he informed the top RS leaders about *"everything I know and what I believe we might face, telling them what Serbia's interests are and how much we want to preserve peace and stability."* *"But,"* he said, *"Serbia has its interests to protect regardless of what requests would come from the other side."* Regarding Serbia – RS relations, Vucic said they were at the high level and added he was glad to have *"pragmatic and rational cooperation with (the Federation of) Bosnia and Herzegovina,"* adding it could be even better. Asked if Serbia plans to purchase RS power company, Vucic said Belgrade was interested in some power companies in the region but that he could not give more details about his country's plans. (www.rs.n1info.com)

- June 21st, the results of Ipsos and Cesid, based on 92.8% of the processed sample, show that three lists currently exceed the census: Serbian Progressive Party (Srpska Napredna Stranka - SNS): 62.6%, Socialist Party of Serbia (Socijalistička Partija Srbije - SPS) - United Serbia (Jedinstvena Srbija - JS): 10.9%, Serbian Patriotic Alliance (Srpski Patriotski Savez – SPAS): 4.2%. The closest to crossing the electoral threshold is Movement for the

Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia (Pokret Obnove Kraljevine Srbije - POKS) with 2.7%. According to these results, the SNS would have 189 Deputies in the Parliament, SPS-JS 32, and SPAS 12. According to the results, four minority parties would also pass the census. Of the minority parties, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (Savez Vojvođanskih Mađara - SVM) potentially won 9 seats, the Albanian Democratic Alternative 3, the Justice and Reconciliation Party (Stranka Pravde i Pomirenja – SPP) three, and the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak (Stranka Demokratske Akcije Sandžaka – SDA) 2. (www.b92.net)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Serbian elections were held on June 21st, 2020. According to the latest data (official results to be announced next week) it seems that ruling SNS reached a great victory by getting around 62.6% (188 seats). The party is able to form a majority Government. It is expected the second party in the elections – SPS – to join the Government. The major opposition force – Alliance for Serbia – boycotted the elections aiming to delegitimize SNS win protesting for its authoritarian and undemocratic practices. In other words, although SNS achieved a clean victory, political stability is not given. Six days after the elections Serbian President, Aleksandar Vucic has to travel to Washington for the restart of the Belgrade – Pristina dialogue. The US seeks to boost dialogue between the two parties aiming to reach an agreement on economic issues. Serbia goes to the dialogue with little expectations but the US pressure on both sides for finding a mutual accepting solution is intense. Montenegro – Serbia tension continues affecting bilateral

relations of the two countries. The EU has raised serious concerns over Serbia's effectiveness on independence and accountability of the judiciary, freedom of expression, prevention of corruption and the fight against organized crime. Serbia pays special attention in improving operational capabilities of its Armed Forces declaring towards all sides that they are the power of the state. It implements an ambitious armament program mainly supported by Russia.



SLOVENIA: June 15th, rating agency Standard & Poor's has affirmed Slovenia's AA- rating, arguing that the Slovenian economy, coupled with the Government's policy response, puts Slovenia in a good position to weather the crisis. In its rating update on Friday the agency said “the past decade of private sector deleveraging and a decline of Government debt to GDP since 2015 give Slovenia substantial buffers to weather the temporary shock without a lasting adverse impact on its credit metrics.” (www.sta.si)

- June 18th, Slovenia could achieve the NATO goal of spending 2% of GDP on defense by 2026 after having laid out plans to invest EUR 780 million in defense over the next six years, Defense Minister Matej Tonin said after a two-day meeting of NATO Defense Ministers. The law securing the investment funds was finalized and might be adopted by the Government next week, in what Tonin said was “a big step forward.” (www.sta.si)

- June 18th, President Borut Pahor warned MPs against any delays in securing Constitutional Court-ordered electoral reform, saying a situation could occur where it will not be possible to

execute a legitimate election. *“This would push our country into a constitutional crisis or even political chaos and must not happen,”* he said. This was only the second time a Slovenian President addressed the National Assembly of his own accord. (www.sta.si)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Janez Jansa’s Government enjoys relative stability. Slovenia – Croatia dispute regarding the Piran Bay is still active but without tension or escalation due to COVID-19 pandemic. The Slovenian Armed Forces face problems mainly in the field of modern equipment and manning. The annual report on the Armed Forces operational readiness released by the Armed Forces Chief of Staff is disappointing since it assessed that the Armed Forces have limited operational capabilities in war time namely they cannot accomplish their mission.



TURKEY: June 15th, Turkey and Libya’s internationally recognized Government are discussing possible Turkish use of two military bases in the North African country, a Turkish source said on Monday. No final decisions have been made over possible Turkish military use of the Misrata naval base and the al-Watiya air base, which were recently recaptured by the Turkey-backed Government of National Accord (GNA). The GNA has driven back putschist General Khalifa Haftar’s Libyan National Army (LNA) – backed by Russia, France, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates – in recent weeks and recaptured several positions. Last week, Turkey said it could expand its cooperation in Libya with new energy and construction deals once the conflict ends. *“Turkey*

using al-Watiya ... is on the agenda,” said the source, speaking on condition of anonymity. *“It could also be possible for the Misrata naval base to be used by Turkey,”* the source added. (www.dailysabah.com)

- June 19th, Turkey’s Constitutional Court has ruled that the lengthy jailing of the former head of the pro-PKK Peoples’ Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi - HDP) violated his rights, a decision published in the Official Gazette on Friday showed, but he was not expected to be released due to a separate investigation. Selahattin Demirtas has been in jail since 2016 on terrorism-related charges. He faces a sentence of up to 142 years in jail if found guilty in the main case against him. The Court’s decision said his detention had exceeded a reasonable period and his right to freedom had been violated. It also ordered compensation of 50,000 Turkish Lira (7,300 US dollars) be paid. However, media reports said the ruling would not lead to his release due to a separate investigation and arrest order. Demirtas was detained in November 2016 along with other top figures of the HDP on terror charges after they refused to attend trials related to earlier cases they were accused in. He and his party are often criticized for their open support of the PKK group, which is responsible for the killings of thousands since the early 1980s. He was sentenced to four years and eight months in jail for carrying out terrorist propaganda in a speech in 2013. In 2016, he was also sentenced for insulting *“the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish nation, the Turkish state and state institutions.”* The most serious charges he is facing are related to the notorious Kobani riots on October 6th – 7th, 2014, and the role of HDP-linked officials and municipalities in the PKK

group's unilateral move to end the reconciliation period and launch an unprecedented barricade and trench attacks in cities and towns in Turkey's southeast. A court ruled last September that Demirtas should be released while his main trial continues. The Constitutional Court ruling concerns the detention for this period. Prosecutors then launched a new investigation and requested his arrest again after the lifting of the previous detention order. Demirtas denies the charges against him. (www.dailysabah.com)

- June 20th, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has ordered his Army to be ready to carry out missions inside or outside the country to protect its national security amid tensions over Turkey's intervention in neighboring Libya. He also warned forces loyal to the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli not to cross the current front line between them and renegade commander Khalifa Haftar's eastern-based self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA). The GNA, with Turkish support, has reversed a 14-month assault on the capital by the LNA. The LNA is backed by Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. El-Sisi on Saturday toured an airbase near Egypt's 1,200 km-long (746-mile) western border with Libya, where state television showed him watching fighter jets and helicopters taking off. *"Be prepared to carry out any mission, here inside our borders - or if necessary, outside our borders,"* he told Air Force pilots and Special Forces personnel at the base. He said the Egyptian Army was *"one of the strongest in the region,"* adding *"It is a rational Army; an Army that protects and does not threaten ... this is our strategy, our beliefs and our principles that we will never change."* He also said Egypt did not

want to intervene in Libya and generally favored a political solution, but added that *"situation now is different."* *"If some people think that they can cross the Sirte-Jufra front line, this is a red line for us,"* he said before an audience that included some Libyan tribal leaders. *"If the Libyan people moved through you and asked us to intervene, this would be a signal to the world that Egypt and Libya are one country, one interest,"* he added. Meanwhile, Turkey said on Saturday that Haftar's forces in eastern Libya needed to withdraw from the strategic city of Sirte for a lasting ceasefire. Ibrahim Kalin, the presidential Spokesman, told AFP news agency that Haftar's forces should leave Sirte and Jufra in order to have a *"sustainable ceasefire."* Kalin said a ceasefire in Libya would be possible if all parties returned to their 2015 positions, referring to an agreement reached that year. He warned against a rushed truce, saying *"A rushed, premature ceasefire will not lead to what we want to achieve for all Libyans there."* Earlier this month, Egypt called for a ceasefire in Libya as part of an initiative which also proposed an elected leadership council for the country. The United States, Russia and the UAE welcomed the plan. Germany said United Nations-backed talks were key to the peace process. However, Turkey dismissed the proposal as an attempt to save Haftar following a string of losses on the battlefield. Libya has been mired in chaos since a NATO-backed 2011 uprising toppled longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi, with rival Governments fighting for control of the country's oil wealth. (www.aljazeera.com)

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT :

Turkey has several open fronts abroad, while its worsened economy is a factor which could bring rapid political developments in the country. It

seems that Turkey has stabilized the Syrian front. However, security situation in the region is fragile while Russia is the absolute dominant cooperating closely with the Syrian Government. In Libya, Turkey enjoys the UN-recognized Government of Fayez al-Sarraj success in the military battlefield which gave some victories of strategic importance. Turkey has invested its strategic interests through its alliance with Sarraj and supports him by military assets. Libya has become a field of rivalry between several foreign countries which seek to promote their interests. Turkey, Qatar and Italy on the one hand support Sarraj while on the other Egypt, Russia, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and France support General Khalifa Haftar's forces. A potential victory of Sarraj secures Turkish interests and strong presence of Turkey in Eastern Mediterranean. At the moment it seems that UAE is the main rival of Turkey in the struggle for power in the Middle East and East Mediterranean. This struggle is conducted mainly by proxy wars (war in Libya, UAE support of PKK, Qatar etc). Turkey feels insecurity in East Mediterranean since other regional powers have isolated it. The strategic cooperation of Greece, Cyprus and Israel or Greece, Cyprus, Egypt makes Turkey nervous. Moreover, delimitation of maritime zones between Greece and Italy in Ionian Sea frustrated Turkey. A potential agreement between Greece and Egypt on EEZ could become a source of turbulence in the region since Turkey will not accept "fait accompli" in the east Mediterranean Sea. It is expected to react violently if balance of power is jeopardized. The country continues to face several restrictions in freedom of expression and human rights. Elected MPs, Mayors, journalists and thousands of citizens are in custody or convicted by the state Courts. Local and international


observers claim the country moves towards an authoritarian regime with thousands of citizens being persecuted. Turkey develops an ambitious armament project aiming at becoming self-sufficient in defense sector; if it succeeds it will set the base to become a regional military super power. Without any question, Turkey has the characteristics of a regional superpower and it tries to act like one.


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NOTE

 Stable situation. No security risk.

 Rather stable situation. Security risk is monitored.

 Major concerns over stability and security. significant security risk in specific regions. Low tension incidents.

 Imminent major incidents regarding stability and security. Violent incidents or armed violence in specific regions. Ongoing tension or crisis. High security risk.

 Evolving or ongoing crisis including major armed violence or violent/armed conflict. Civil, inter-state or non –state actors war.