

FIVE BULLETS ON THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING WITH THE TURKISH DELEGATION

Stefano Micossi

On Sunday, 29 November 2015, the European Council will meet a Turkish delegation led by prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Martin Schultz of the European Parliament and Frans Timmermans of the Commission will also attend. The meeting is expected (albeit still with some uncertainty) to announce an agreement between the European Union and Turkey, whereby:

- The accession process will take up new life, within the open chapter on EMU and new chapters on Energy, Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, Justice Freedom and Security, Education and Culture, and Foreign, Security and Defense;
- Structured high-level dialogue, including summits, will be scheduled twice a year;
- Visa liberalization will occur, in steps, with full liberalization by October 2016;
- Substantial budgetary assistance will be provided to Turkey for humanitarian assistance in the management of refugees, in the order of €3 bn.;
- The member states will continue to take in refugees under the relocation and resettlement programmes.

On its side, Turkey, in accordance with the Action Plan already agreed to in October, will improve social and economic conditions of Syrian refugees and strengthen measures to stem the flow of illegal migrants, as well as intensify cooperation with Frontex and member states' administrations dealing with immigration.

The agreement has been brought forward with great determination by Angela Merkel and is predicated on the EU's continued commitment to keep its frontiers open to qualifying Syrian immigrants and preserving the integrity of the Schengen free movement agreements. For this very reason, it is raising considerable opposition among some of the member states, including considerable misgivings in France, where Schengen is openly challenged in many quarters.