



[A Rapidly Deteriorating Relationship Between Turkey and the EU](#)

Turkey's decision to launch an offensive into northeastern Syria last week has drawn sharp criticisms from many of its international allies, especially countries in Europe. Not only are they upset about Turkey's decision to engage with Kurds in Syria, but they are also appalled that the Turkish government has attempted to blackmail for support in their fight against the Kurds by threatening to send millions of refugees to the continent. The European Union (EU) has condemned Turkey's threat to release millions of refugees from their current migration centers into Europe and says that it will not respond to the weaponization of refugees.

Many of the EU's member nations, including France and Italy, have called on the EU to respond to these threats with Turkish sanctions and the freezing of any possible accession by the country to the organization. So far, the EU has not taken any action to economically curb Turkey from their current offensive, however, they did concede that accession talks would be further suspended on account of the Turkish government's human rights record and the recent actions taken against the Kurds in Syria. It is important to note that not all countries in the EU have been willing to condemn and sanction Turkey. Hungary, for example, is vehemently against sanctions and blocked a statement from the EU that criticized Turkey's actions. The government of Hungary, who refuses to accept refugees from the Syrian Civil War, wants to maintain peace with Turkey so they do not make good on their threat and allow refugees into Europe – where refugees must seek asylum in the first country that they arrive in.

On Monday, October 14, the EU did take steps to mitigate arms sales to Turkey. Frustrated over inaction economically, Sweden proposed that European countries postpone the sales of weapons to protest the recent actions taken by Turkey. Turkey, who is part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), depends on its allies for many weapons and thus the ban of weapons sales from Europe could further exacerbate the existing tensions in NATO. Recently, Turkey has been in hot water with its NATO allies for security concerns following their purchase of S-400 anti-aircraft missiles from Russia.

The EU bloc is planning on meeting for further discussions about sanctions against Turkey this week on the 17th and 18th of October. This discussion will center around Turkey's offshore drilling in the Mediterranean Sea. The EU nations are set to focus on this issue after concerns were raised by Cyprus, the EU member state who Turkey is drilling almost directly offshore from. The EU members have said that they stand in full solidarity with Cyprus, calling on EU Foreign Policy Chief Federica Mogherini to come up with swift actions of recourse against Turkey.

Since 2016, accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey have stalled and these recent actions from both sides have further weakened the partnership between an institution and one of the non-member European nations that once aspired to join it.