

Press release following the meeting between President Charles Michel and President Erdoğan of Turkey

On January 11, Charles Michel, President of the European Council met with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey in Istanbul.

The presidents had a discussion on how the EU and Turkey can work together to de-escalate the situation in the Middle East and in Libya. They also addressed the EU-Turkey relationship.

Both share an interest in preventing a new cycle of violence in the Middle East through de-escalation and dialogue.

Concerning Libya, President Michel welcomed the constructive language of President Erdoğan's Joint Statement with President Putin on a ceasefire and support for the Berlin process. There is a need for negotiated, political solutions.

The EU understands that Turkey has security concerns with regard to North-East Syria but insists on the compliance with international law. The EU supports the UN-led political process in Syria.

President Michel and President Erdoğan had an open and useful dialogue on the relations between the EU and Turkey. It is important for both to cooperate on issues where they have shared interests but also to openly address those that divide them.

The migratory pressure Turkey continues to face is vast. The EU acknowledges the strain that hosting up to four million refugees has on the country. In the context of the EU-Turkey Statement, the EU continues to support projects for refugees and host communities. Schools and hospitals are being built; refugees are getting cash assistance and we are helping with migration management.

President Michel recalled the EU position on Turkey's illegal drilling, where the EU stands in full solidarity with Cyprus. The Cyprus settlement talks are essential for addressing some of the divisive issues.

The European Council President also expressed his concern on the recent memorandum of understanding between Libya and Turkey.

Both presidents agreed to establish direct contact on a regular basis and whenever events dictate, in order to improve the relationship, in the interest of both parties.