

Professor Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
Chairman of the Advisory Council
on International Affairs
P.O. Box 20061
2500 EB The Hague

Date .. May 2021

Re Request for advice on the geopolitical role of Turkey

Dear Professor De Hoop Scheffer,

I am writing in conjunction with the Minister of Defence to submit the following request for advice.

The balance of geopolitical forces is undergoing significant changes. Stability in the countries surrounding Europe regularly comes under pressure. Current geopolitical dynamics heighten the need for European countries, both individually and in concert, to stay alert in order to safeguard their interests. Mutual cooperation within NATO and the EU is crucial in this connection.

Turkey is a NATO Ally and a significant partner for the EU. The country has a strategic location, is a trading partner and forms an important link in the chain of cooperation where migration and counterterrorism are concerned. Changes are taking place in Turkey's domestic political and foreign policy spheres, as set out in the AIV's 2020-2022 Work Programme. Those changes are frequently raised during regular consultations with the Dutch House of Representatives.

For the above reasons, it is important to have a detailed picture of Turkey's current and future geopolitical role. There is also a need for an analysis of the possible consequences of that role for NATO and the EU. To this end, a number of questions need to be addressed:

- 1) What domestic, foreign-policy-related and economic factors and developments should be considered when identifying Turkey's geopolitical interests and role (and changes to them), and its resulting foreign and security policy?
- 2) What is Turkey's foreign and security policy expected to be in the next five to ten years?

What are the potential consequences of Turkey's geopolitical role for Dutch interests, the NATO Alliance and the EU?

- 3) What scope does the Netherlands have for taking action, both at bilateral level and through the EU and NATO? What policy choices may present themselves in the short and longer term?

We look forward with interest to reading your advisory report on these questions.

Yours sincerely,

Stef Blok
Minister of Foreign Affairs