The Council noted the EU’s strategic interest in a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and that it remained committed to addressing common challenges with Turkey and to cooperating in essential areas of joint interest such as migration, public health, climate, counter-terrorism and regional issues.

Under the EU-Turkey Statement, Turkey is committed to blocking irregular migration to the EU and to readmit irregular migrants caught on Greek Islands. The Commission, in all its engagement with Turkey, stresses that Turkey needs to respect its commitments. In addition, the EU supports Turkey in improving border management and security and ensuring better migration management.

The Commission is providing operational and financial support to Member States, including Greece, to disrupt organised migrant-smuggling crime groups within the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) crime priority ‘Migrant Smuggling’. The Commission is also supporting two Common Operational Partnership projects with Turkey and relevant third countries along the Silk Road and in the Western Balkans, strengthening law enforcement cooperation to detect and apprehend migrant smugglers. As part of the renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025), the Commission aims to develop operational cooperation with Turkey in the fight against migrant smuggling focusing on law enforcement and judiciary cooperation and border management.