

Why the EU now dislikes Turkey

The EU is not happy with the results of the Turkish referendum. Some EU politicians argue the campaign was not properly conducted, with irregularities in voting, undue pressures on some voters and one sided media coverage heavily influenced by the government line. Many in the EU believe the changes will be bad for Turkish democracy, giving the President substantial new powers to govern without proper checks from Parliament and the courts.

This response is likely to harden those attitudes in Turkey which think the EU has been playing them along for too many years without allowing them to join the EU as full members. The first EEC/Turkey Association Agreement was signed in 1963. In 1970 the Customs Union was developed with Turkey, and more progress was made with a fuller document in 1992. The original aim was for Turkey to be a full member of the Customs Union, to be part of many common policies, and to reach freedom of movement with the EU. In 2013 a worried EU signed a Readmission Agreement with Turkey to get Turkey to take back more people, and on March 18 2016 a wider ranging policy was signed to enlist Turkey's help in controlling migration across the Med.

The supporters of President Erdogan claim the referendum was fairly fought and conducted with plenty of outside vigilance and interest. They remind the many critics that the 18 changes to the Turkish constitution passed through Parliament with substantial majorities, typically around 340 votes in favour and 140 votes against on an Article by Article basis in a 550 seat Parliament. The changes include an extra 50 MPs, 5 yearly Parliamentary and Presidential elections, and a requirement for impartiality by judges. Parliament can pass a law to overrule a Presidential decree and can institute a Parliamentary review of the government. Judicial review is also introduced for government actions. The military courts are abolished.

His critics think he will have too much power through appointing and influencing judges, using the powers to rule by decree, and acting as the Leader of his political party. They seem to think he will be able to win a couple of elections easily to stay in government for the next decade. They do not rate the Parliament as an effective check on the new government.

The EU is making a mess of handling its relations with its neighbours to the East. Ukraine is badly split and damaged by civil war. Now Turkey is moving away from the EU's model of Association. What should the EU now do to make the situation better? What type of relationship is now realistic and desirable?

China's anti-graft inspection bring changes

The confession of fallen senior leader Su Rong is part of a textbook for Party members in the province he once served as Party chief.

Su, former vice chairman of the China's top political advisory body, is now spending the rest of his life behind bars for graft.

He was also held accountable for serious corruption in Jiangxi Province, where he was Party chief between 2007 and 2013, according to the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

After an inspection team sent to Jiangxi pointed out the delay in handling follow-up issues of Su's case in last October, the provincial CPC committee launched a series of campaigns to educate Party members.

A total of 43 prefecture-level officials involved in Su's case have been investigated so far.

The moves are examples from the changes brought by the 10th round of inspection initiated by the central authority in last July.

Inspections covered 32 central agencies and provincial regions. Inspection teams were also deployed to four provincial regions that have been inspected in previous rounds, including Jiangxi.

Following the inspections, a number of changes have been made.

The Party group of the National Audit Office set up a tracing system to supervise the progress of corrections in response to inspectors' instruction.

The Party group of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee has started dissolving affiliated companies.

The Party committee of the Ministry of Public Security pushed forward regulations and mechanisms to strengthen reforms in selecting officials.

China's Space Day celebrations centered in Xi'an

Major celebrations of China's Space Day will start on April 24 in Xi'an, capital city of northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

This year's celebrations will focus on the applications of space technology in economic and social development, said Tian Yulong, chief engineer of the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence.

Chinese astronauts and scientists will give talks during the celebrations, and exhibitions will be held in Northwestern Polytechnical University, said Tian.

The exhibitions will showcase the achievements of China's lunar probe and the BeiDou satellite navigation system.

China designated April 24 as Space Day last year to mark the anniversary of the country's first satellite launch Dongfanghong-1 in 1970.

Xi'an is home to more than 200 aerospace research centers and enterprises.

Also, there will be over 200 events in other cities in China to celebrate the Space Day.

[China launches reform of Chinese 'green cards'](#)



China has begun a series of changes to the rules regarding permanent residence for foreigners. [File Photo]

China has begun a series of changes to the rules regarding permanent residence for foreigners, according to a plan issued by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

The “foreigner’s permanent residence card” will be renamed as the “foreigner’s permanent residence identity card.”

Similar to the identity cards used by Chinese citizens, foreigners’ identity information will be embedded in the chips on the machine-readable cards, to be shared by railways, airlines, insurance agencies, hotels and banks.

The old version cannot be recognized by machines, and foreigners often face difficulties in identity authentication, said an official at the MPS.

“The card makes everything easier,” said Jonathan, an American who has been in China for over 20 years and received his Chinese green card three years ago.

“What’s inconvenient is that so few foreigners have them, and people don’t know how to deal with it,” he admitted. “I hope that staff at both government departments and service sectors will be more familiar with its functions.”

Foreigners can apply for the new version of permanent residence identity card at the original registration authority, while people can still use the old version until the expiration date.

Approved by the Central Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform, the reform plan serves the nation’s talent development strategy, which is to attract more innovative and entrepreneurial talent, and responds to social concerns, said the MPS official.

The reform will also provide foreigners with easier access to public services.

The related technical work is expected to be finished by June, and then foreigners can apply for new cards.

In 2016, 1,576 foreigners became permanent residents in China, an increase of 163 percent over the previous year, according to the MPS.

China has made huge progress in easing its residence and entry policies for foreigners since September 2015, which has helped attract more talent from overseas and boosted international exchanges.

School safety to be improved

Students who commit violent acts on campus will be severely punished, according to the central government, which introduced a number of measures to

ensure safety in schools at the most recent executive meeting of the State Council, China's Cabinet.

Ensuring safety in primary and middle schools and kindergartens should be a public security priority, according to a statement released after the meeting, presided over by Premier Li Keqiang.

"Campus safety concerns the healthy development of millions of students and the happiness of their families. Schools must be solidly built, like those in areas of post-earthquake reconstruction, and they should also be the most secure places when it comes to safety," Li told the meeting.

The statement said principals are responsible for campus safety, while students should be taught to value life and the rights of their classmates. It added that schools must employ the "necessary personnel" and use closed-circuit TV to keep a close watch on potential dangers and safeguard students' safety.

School buildings must comply with national safety and quality standards, while builders, designers and supervisors will hold lifelong liability for any failures, it added.

In addition to classes related to safety, schools will be required to conduct drills to alleviate the dangers posed by earthquakes, fire and stampedes, and more police officers should be deployed near schools.

Security risks on campus must be closely scrutinized, and the education and health authorities have been ordered to monitor and check sanitation, disease prevention and food safety in educational establishments for younger students.

A number of incidents of campus violence and bullying have put school safety firmly in the spotlight. The latest occurred on April 1 in Luzhou, Sichuan province, when a student surnamed Zhao killed himself by jumping from the top of a building at Taifu Middle School. Despite an official announcement to that effect, the incident aroused suspicions among members of the public that the boy had been beaten to death by five other students, who were believed to have bullied him.

The incident led to heated online debate about an investigation into the cause of death conducted by the local police and the untimely disclosure of information by the authorities.

At the State Council meeting, Li called for an effective mechanism to be established to curb bullying, especially acts of violence, by disclosure, intervention and prevention. He added that the relevant departments should respond to public concerns by disclosing the results of investigations in a timely manner.

In the Government Work Report he delivered in March last year, Li added "safety" to the chapter about education, and stressed "families, schools, the government and society should help to cultivate a secure and healthy environment in which children can grow up and make a contribution to the

country”.

The meeting sent a warning to “naughty children”, who either bully their peers or take advantage of children who are less developed physically or come from deprived families, said Zheng Zonggen, a teacher at Wenfeng High School in Huoshan county, Anhui province.

Surveillance equipment is necessary because teachers cannot watch students 24 hours a day, he said, adding that a punishment mechanism should be established to discipline bullies and allow students to understand the consequences of beating or mistreating their peers, he added.

Xiong Bingqi, vice-president of the 21st Century Education Research Institute, said that in addition to the equipment outlined at the meeting, more money should be spent to help schools eliminate risks, such as bullying and unsafe food.

Bullying and campus safety require more effective implementation of the law, and violators should be subject to police action, rather than punishments handed out by their principals or teachers, he said.

Teachers and schools often conduct investigations into bullying but many perpetrators escape punishment, setting a bad example and giving the impression that violators can escape severe penalties, which further encourages bullying, he added.

Zheng said: “Lessons will be learned to reduce the likelihood of these incidents occurring. Anyone who bullies their peers will be punished in accordance with the law.”