

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 2, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write with concern about President Erdoğan and the Republic of Türkiye's continued delays ratifying the accession protocols for Sweden and Finland to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Failure to ratify the protocols or present a timeline for ratification threatens the Alliance's unity at a key moment in history, as Russia continues its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. A productive and mutually beneficial bilateral security relationship with Türkiye is in the interest of the United States, and we are awaiting the government's ratification of the NATO accession protocols for Sweden and Finland. However, a failure by Türkiye to uphold its commitments made under the trilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Türkiye, Finland and Sweden should be taken into consideration, as Congress cannot consider future support for Türkiye, including the sale of F-16 fighter jets, until Türkiye completes ratification of the accession protocols.

Last year, Sweden and Finland submitted their formal requests to join the NATO alliance on May 17 and 18, respectively, which culminated in a formal invitation to join the Alliance on July 5. Since July 5, 28 out of the 30 NATO member countries have ratified the accession protocols for Sweden and Finland, including the United States. Of the two remaining Alliance members, Hungary has committed to ratification of the protocols when its legislators reconvene for a session of Parliament in February 2023.

At the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, Spain, Türkiye signed a trilateral MOU with Sweden and Finland on June 28, outlining agreements on efforts Sweden and Finland would take to address security concerns raised by Türkiye as a precondition for NATO membership for these two countries. Since that time, both Sweden and Finland have worked to implement concerns outlined in that Memorandum, including but not limited to increased efforts to combat international terrorism and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is listed as a terrorist organization in both Sweden and Finland and is a U.S. and European Union-designated terrorist organization, and ongoing efforts to bolster law enforcement capacity to support extraditions and deportations to Türkiye consistent with national procedures and the rule of law. Sweden and Finland have also initiated processes to review their regulatory framework for arms exports. Sweden recently granted one of its first export licenses from the Swedish defense industry to deliver military equipment to Türkiye since 2019. Finland is also considering granting export licenses. It is clear that both Sweden and Finland are making full and good faith efforts to meet the conditions for NATO membership that Türkiye has asked. Despite this evident progress, Türkiye has not ratified the accession protocols for Sweden and Finland and has been unwilling to commit to a timeline for consideration of ratification of the protocols.

Türkiye has proven to be a valuable NATO ally as Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine continues. We appreciate Türkiye’s commitment to implementing the United Nations-brokered grain deal which has allowed Ukraine to export grain and avert a global food crisis. This relationship, however, has been shadowed by continued delays in ratification for NATO enlargement and those delays pose a risk to the security of the Alliance, to Europe and to the international world order that Vladimir Putin continues to threaten. As evidenced by the ratification of Sweden and Finland’s accession protocols by 28 of the 30 NATO member states, Sweden and Finland will bring new and advanced capabilities to the Alliance that will better position NATO to respond to current and emerging threats.

The U.S. and Türkiye cooperate on a number of security priorities. The United States’ continued efforts to support these priorities, such as your administration’s support for the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye, is based on a shared understanding of support for our democratic allies. Once the NATO accession protocols are ratified by Türkiye, Congress can consider the sale of F-16 fighter jets. A failure to do so, however, would call into question this pending sale.

When Putin invaded Ukraine, he was counting on the transatlantic alliance to fracture; instead, the United States and our allies are meeting an unprecedented moment in history with unprecedented unity and strength. We urge you to continue to engage with the U.S. Ambassador to Türkiye, the U.S. Mission to NATO and with our allies, including Sweden and Finland, to encourage Türkiye to act swiftly in support of transatlantic unity and ratify Sweden and Finland’s accession protocols to the NATO Alliance.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

John Boozman
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator

Rick Scott
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez-Masto
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Chris Murphy
United States Senator

John Hickenlooper
United States Senator