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FORTRESS EUROPE CLOSES RANKS

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The European Union press sources have reported that some member states have put joint ideas on paper and delivered it on 15 January to EU foreign policy chief, highlighting the areas of expansion of EU, or to be more precise, delineating its borders north of the Balkans. The concept is not new. It has been ushered in as eastern partnership and neighborhood policy, to cover Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus as well as the Caucasus states of Georgia, Armenia and deftly Azerbaijan, probably not to appear discriminatory from the outset and due to vital interests not to be compromised. It appears that preparations are already underway to give a promise of a perspective of future accession to the six countries at an eastern partnership summit planned to take place in Vilnius, Lithuania in November this year. It also appears that unlike the past practice of a holistic approach that was the case in the Balkans once having secured to effectively cast Turkey out, the new perspective for membership for the new six is to be differentiated, on a country by country basis. This would well serve for the differentiated treatment of, say Armenia, an early Christian state, which in the words of the president of the EU commission is a European country and belongs to the European family of nations. Of course the project led by Russia to establish a Eurasian economic partnership union is also there, in the offing. An argument on part of Armenia against joining the Eurasian Union is known to be that it does not share common borders with Russia nor does it have direct access to it. This argument inevitably brings to the fore the means of its direct access to EU territory. Therein comes Turkey and her membership to the EU again into the picture as yet another concrete evidence of Turkey at the nexus of Europe and Asia and the vast contribution it could provide regionally and in opening up to the east. However, this is a vision of a coming era. Today we have to live with the existence of an ugly Schengen barbed fence erected at the shores of the river Maritsa.

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