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TURKEY-EU RELATIONS: THE SECURITY PERSPECTIVE AND THE CDSP

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14 FEBRUARY 2022

This publication was produced as part of the CATS Network Project, titled"Turkey as a partner and challenge for European Security". The Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin is funded by Stiftung Mercator and the Federal Foreign Office. CATS is the curator of CATS Network, an international network of think tanks and research institutions working on Turkey.
The project is being conducted by a consortium of the International Relations Council of Turkey (IRCT), the Center for International and European Studies (CIES) at Kadir Has University, and the Institute of International Relations (IIR) at Panteion University.

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TURKEY-EU RELATIONS: THE SECURITY PERSPECTIVE AND THE CDSP

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Security has always been one of the most significant determinants of Turkey's relations with the European Union. A member of NATO for six decades, a candidate country to the EU, and one of the main actors in the shared neighborhood, i.e., the Black Sea, Southeast Europe and the Mediterranean, Turkey is/should be a 'natural' security partner for Europe. Nevertheless, Turkey's security cooperation with the EU, and to some extent NATO's relations with the EU, have been hamstrung because of the unresolved Cyprus issue, especially since the latter's accession to the Union in 2004. Moreover, Turkey's policies in recent years toward Syria, in Libya, and its security cooperation with Russia, have led to tensions and have become impediments to the progress of Turkey-EU partnership in the security and defense realms.

The EU's actual moves to inject security and defense dimensions into its existing integrative structures with the establishment of the CSDP, began in 1998 with the Franco-British St. Malo summit. [1] Since then, the EU has formulated various concepts, policies and institutions, including the Headline Goals, Rapid Reaction Force, EU Battlegroups, the European Defence Agency (EDA), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF) that aims to boost the European Defence Industry, and the European Security Union that was initiated with the 2016 European Commission Communication, "paving a way towards an effective and genuine Security Union" (European Commission, 2016).

Moreover, in 2017, Jean-Claude Junker, the then President of the European Commission, stated that 2025 should be the end year for the creation of a "fully-fledged European Defence Union", with two countries, the United Kingdom (UK) and Turkey on the flanks of this Union (European Commission, 2017). We do not yet know, however, what will be the Union's relations with third parties such as the UK and Turkey. Nevertheless, what will be decided for the UK could be used as a model framework for future Turkey-EU relations in the security and defense realm. Turkey might provide valuable assets for the CSDP or any other security and defense initiative with its military potential, and/or put the implementation

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[1] CSDP is the acronym for the Common Security and Defence Policy used in the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, which was transformed from the ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy), established in 1999.

of EU security policy in jeopardy through its policies toward NATO hindering NATO's cooperation with the EU, which is of paramount importance to the Union. In other words, the EU security/defense policy acquires benefits as well as costs from Turkey as a candidate country, neighboring partner, and a NATO ally.

In this context, this paper will look at Turkey's relations with the EU in the security/defense realm from a two-sided perspective, with a particular focus on sorting out the potential costs and benefits of including/excluding Turkey in/from the CSDP. Specifically, this paper will analyze the costs and benefits of Turkey's inclusion and/or participation by asking whether Turkey's inclusion is an asset for the CSDP mechanisms. It will question whether Turkey could contribute to European security due to its military capabilities as a reliable NATO partner, and its conflict-management capabilities in its immediate neighborhood, surrounded by conflicts which are also articulated as the main security concerns for the EU in its security strategy documents. Moreover, the paper will discuss the ways in which both sides would mutually benefit from potential cooperation, even without the perspective of membership, which appears to be a distant and somewhat unrealistic objective.

Turkey in the European security framework: The limitations

During the Cold War, Turkey aligned itself with the West and acted in accordance with transatlantic solidarity due to its geo-strategic position, with the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan and finally its accession to NATO in 1952. Despite all the crises in the Turkish-American partnership and Turkish-Greek relations, The North Atlantic Alliance and the Transatlantic link remained as cornerstones of Turkey's security policies the end of the Second World War and throughout the 1990s (Ereker and Açıkmeşe, 2021). As part of its Westernization strategy, Turkey prioritized forging links with the European Communities and signed an Association Agreement (Ankara Agreement) with the EC in 1963, which paved the way for the establishment of the Customs Union in 1995, raising hopes for a potential membership that was initiated with a formal membership application in April 1987.

In other words, Turkey has contributed to Western European security specifically with its NATO membership since the Cold War years. It has one of the largest armies within the Alliance, the second after the United States', and according to the Global Firepower Index, it is ranked 11th out of 139 countries, with a rating of 0.2109 (Global Firepower, 2021). Since the end of the Cold War, Turkey has participated in several NATO operations and missions, including the Multinational Task Force South as part of KFOR in Kosovo, the ISAF-II mission in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2003, the NTM-I Iraq Training Mission and NATO Baltic Air Policing, Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, Operation Ocean Shield in the Indian Ocean, and the Libya Operation. In 2021, Turkey also assumed the charge of the NATO High Readiness Force, earmarking its 66th Mechanized Infantry Brigade for NATO service (NATO, 2021).

As a trustworthy NATO ally with a dedicated volume of military contribution to the Alliance, it was expected that Turkey could also be an asset for the European Union when the EU decided to form its own military structure in 1999, the year when Turkey was declared as a candidate country to the EU. Turkey was thought to be contributing to the evolving Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), even throughout its candidacy and negotiation period, as well as providing added value to the EU's security policy in the shared EU-Turkey neighborhood. Specifically, in the first decade of the 2000s, Turkey, in its regional power aspirations with agenda-setting capabilities and having zero-problems with its neighbors, could have been the interlocutor between the EU and regional countries such as Iran and Syria (Aydın and Açıkmeşe, 2004: 8-9). However, two major developments hindered such a contribution by Turkey to the EU, in the context of both the CFSP/CSDP and the EU's neighborhood policy.

The first limitation came with the transformation of NATO immediately after the end of the Cold War, through which it evolved from simply being a defensive alliance into a security provider in broader terms, including non-traditional understandings of security. In such a context, NATO has looked forward to a European partnership, whereas the EU has also needed defense cooperation with NATO since the early 1990s, and particularly since 1999 when it instigated the CSDP. However, the relations between the EU and NATO remained problematic, mainly due to the unresolved Cyprus issue. In fact, when discussing relations between the two organizations, the Cyprus conflict dominated discussions and prevented arrangements, though nobody wanted to address the "elephant in the room".

Moreover, Turkey aspired to obtain similar rights to those it had acquired in the Western European Union (WEU) in the 1990s. Although Turkey was not a member of the WEU, the country became one of six associate members in 1992 (together with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, and Portugal), with rights of representation and "privileged access to and generous participation rights in WEU activities", but without voting rights (Missiroli, 2002: 12). However, in March 2010, the members decided to cease the WEU's operative functions, and in June 2011 the organization was officially closed down. In fact, the process of incorporating all the defense and security aspects of the WEU into the EU had started long before: the first major change came with the decision at St Malo in 1998 to develop an autonomous security and defense policy at EU level. The reaction of NATO, as well as of individual member states was strong: the USA did not want a competitive scheme incorporating practically the same countries that were its partners in NATO; yet it welcomed any EU effort that would contribute to military burden-sharing without unnecessary duplication (Açıkmeşe, 2004).

Turkey, too, felt cast out of the European security developments. The sentiment became even stronger with the decision to terminate the WEU (of which Turkey was an associate member since 1992) and to pass all the matters related to European security on to the EU where Turkey had no presence, let alone voting rights. Hence, Turkey lost its privileged status in European security structures provided

through its links to the WEU. Under the new arrangements at consequent EU Summit meetings (specifically Feira and Nice in 2000), despite the stipulation that Turkey could be a participant in decision-making in EU-led operations that necessitated recourse to NATO assets and capabilities, it was obvious that the country could easily be excluded from exclusive EU operations, if unanimity was not ensured (Missiroli, 2002: 15).

Still, Turkey continued to enjoy privileged rights due to its NATO membership, as the Alliance's assets and capabilities were only available to the EU on a case-by-case basis, by a unanimous decision of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) according to the decisions at NATO's Washington Summit in 1999. It took until March 2003 for the 'Berlin plus Arrangements' to be concluded that guaranteed the EU's assured access to NATO assets and capabilities, noting also that this would apply when NATO was not involved (Açıkmeşe and Triantaphyllou, 2012: 563). Turkey did not veto this decision, even though it removed Turkey's rights to vote within NATO on a case-by-case allocation of NATO's military assets to the EU. According to the Berlin-plus arrangements, non-EU NATO members could participate in EU operations not using NATO assets, only with a unanimous decision of the Council of the EU. Also, non-EU NATO members would be consulted if operations took place "in areas that were either geographically close to or affected the national interests of such countries" (Aydın-Düzgit and Tocci, 2015: 122). They also stipulated that a CSDP mission could never be directed against a non-EU NATO member. Berlin-plus remains the current framework for NATO-EU strategic cooperation, which has so far resulted in EU action through recourse to NATO's assets and capabilities only in *Operation Althea* (2004-present) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and *Operation Concordia* (2003) in North Macedonia. Additionally, NATO and the EU cooperate on multiple areas from intelligence sharing to joint exercises. For instance, in combating illegal trafficking in the Aegean and the Central Mediterranean, NATO and Frontex have cooperated on intelligence-sharing and medical logistical support (NATO, 2021).

Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004 complicated this fragile balance. A double veto, one from Turkey on the signing of a security agreement that would lead to a Partnership for Peace (PfP) between NATO and the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), and another from the RoC in the EU on intelligence cooperation between Turkey and the EU, led to a freeze in EU-NATO relations. On 6 December 2016, and 5 December 2017 respectively, the EU and NATO endorsed a common set of 74 proposals for the implementation of the "Joint Declaration for the Progress of Relations", signed in Warsaw in July 2016. Still, behind the expressed optimism, the reality remains that cooperation is still limited to staff-to-staff cooperation, and cannot involve comprehensive operational collaboration or a systematic intelligence exchange. The two organizations have not yet managed to create a formal cooperation structure that could be forward-looking and operational; instead, they have only recommended intensive communication between staff (NATO, 2016; NATO, 2018). One should note that, in this general non-permissive framework, something seems to be moving at the level of maritime cooperation in the Mediterranean: fighting migrant smuggling

and trafficking, and working together at the level of preparedness against hybrid threats.

The second limitation hindering Turkey's potential security contribution to the EU is the diminishing power of both Turkey and the EU within some regions of the shared neighborhoods, such as the Middle East, and Turkey's policies conflicting with the EU in these regions. Turkey, with its democracy and Transatlantic/Western links, was immediately considered as a role-model in the Middle East following the Arab uprisings. However, "the crush of Turkey's aspirations did not take long to come, since Turkey attempted to redesign the region without considering the limits of its capabilities and mostly contrary to the interests of its Transatlantic partners, which contributed to the ongoing loss of its traditional middle power attributes" (Ereker and Açıkmeşe, 2021). The policy of 'zero-problems with neighbors' of the early 2010s failed and especially with the onset of the civil war in Syria, it became clear for the EU that Turkey is not the security partner which could become the interlocutor between the Union and the Muslim world. In other words, Turkey could not fulfil the expectations of the EU in being a facilitator of the EU's neighborhood policies, particularly in the EU South for instance with the allegations that Turkey has violated the UN's arms embargo of 2011 by supplying its forces on the ground in Libya through its cargo planes (The Guardian, 2020).

Despite all the aforementioned limitations, EU security policy can acquire both individual benefits and costs from Turkey as a candidate country, neighboring partner, and a NATO ally. In this context, the following sections will analyze the opportunities and challenges of Turkey's various ways to be included in the EU's security structures, in its capacity as a NATO partner, an EU neighbor, and an EU candidate.

Turkey and the CSDP: Opportunities and challenges

As a candidate and a third country, Turkey has participated in CSDP operations including *Operation Althea* and *Operation Concordia*, aligned itself with several CFSP joint actions and common positions, and pledged contributions to the EU's several inactive military frameworks, including the Rapid Reaction Force and EU Battlegroups. For instance, Turkey as a non-member pledged to contribute to the Rapid Reaction Force to be established as part of the Helsinki Headline Goal with 4,000-5,000 troops, as foreseen by the Brussels Capability Commitment Conference on 20 November 2000. Turkey also pledged to commit to the EU Battlegroups within the trilateral Italian-Romanian-Turkish format in the rotating term of the secondhalf of 2010 (European Parliament, 2006).

Turkey has so far contributed to nine EU-led missions and operations as a third country (Aydın-Düzgit et al., 2021), mainly through troops and personnel, becoming "the largest single third country contributor to the CSDP" (European Commission, 2020: 109). It is worth noting here that Turkish participation in the *EU Advisory Mission Ukraine* and *EULEX Kosovo* were suspended after Turkish staff were withdrawn following the coup attempt in 2016, though Turkey has since expressed its interest in contributing again to these missions.

The legal basis for third countries' participation in the EU's operations has been a treaty in the form of a Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) for more structural participation, or a Participation Agreement (PA) for *ad hoc* participation in an individual mission, according to Article 37 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (Bakker et al, 2017; Wessel, 2021). In this context, "the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Turkey Establishing a Framework for the Participation of the Republic of Turkey in the European Union Crisis Management Operations", which came into force in July 2006, notes that "the Republic of Turkey shall have the same rights and obligations in terms of day-to-day management of the operation as EU member states taking part in the operation, in accordance with the legal instruments referred to in Article 2(1) of this Agreement". Nevertheless, third countries do not have the possibility to plan, organize and coordinate an operation, and they are expected to follow the EU's schedule and procedures, as well as accepting EU practices (Tardy, 2014). Any attempt to provide a decision-making role for third countries in the CFSP and CSDP is totally excluded by the Lisbon Treaty. As Wessel (2021) notes, "the Brexit debate has revealed that EU does not seem to be in favor of any form of 'half-member' status, let alone of voting rights for non-members". Of course, this does not exclude participation in CFSP and CSDP policies and actions under the conditions mentioned above.

However, Turkish alignment with CSDP positions has decreased since 2003, as shown by the annual Commission's reports. One of the most critical moments was 2011, when Turkey refused to align with the EU's restrictive measures on Iran, Syria and Libya. In that report, it is noted that "Turkey's foreign policy increasingly collided with the EU priorities under the Common Foreign and Security Policy" (European Commission, 2020). Turkey's interventions in north-east Syria and in Libya, and enhanced cooperation with Russia have been seen in EU circles as evidence of an increased 'autonomization' of Turkish foreign and security policies. For a candidate country with an obligation to approximate its legislation and policies to the EU's, including those in the foreign policy and security realm, this becomes an obvious problem on the road to its potential membership.

Turkey has also been involved in bilateral and multilateral security and defense arrangements with individual EU member countries. For instance, on 8 November 2017, Turkey signed an agreement with France and Italy at NATO headquarters in Brussels, to strengthen their cooperation on defense. In this context, the European corporation EUROSAM GIE would work with the Turkish ASELSAN Elektronik Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş. and ROKETSAN Roket Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş. in developing the Turkish Long-Range Air and Missile Defence System (T-LORAMIDS) (Noi, 2017; Erkuş 2018). The GOKTURK and MELTEM-3 projects are other examples of Turkey-Italy cooperation. In the MELTEM-3 project, "six ATR-72/600 Maritime Patrol Aircraft with Anti-Submarine Warfare and Anti Surface Warfare" are being procured by Turkey from the Italian supplier (Sünnetçi, 2020). The GOKTURK project was also initiated with Italy and France to create an Earth Observation Satellite for a variety of purposes such as homeland surveillance and management of natural

resources (eoPortal Directory, 2021). Another and a very recent example of bilateral cooperation in the defense field is Poland's purchase of Bayraktar TB2 drones from Turkey, through an agreement signed during Polish President Duda's visit to Turkey in 2021 (Defense News, 2021; Zorlu, 2021).

Apart from Turkey's specific contributions to individual EU member states, Turkey has also been in cooperation with the EU in the development and implementation of specific defense projects, particularly through EU funding. For instance, the HYPERION and TALOS (Transportable Autonomous Patrol for Land Border Surveillance System) projects have been in development with the contribution of ASELSAN and Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret A.Ş. (STM). The HYPERION project prioritizes analyses of post-blast scenes through "a rapid and reliable first part of the forensic investigation", "selective data that provides the type and amount of explosive used" and the like (Hyperion). The TALOS project aims at producing a "robotic system used to facilitate monitoring of land borders" by developing "autonomous mobile robots". The project was implemented between 2008 and 2012 with a budget of over 19 million Euros and coordinated by the Industrial Institute for Automation and Measurements (PIAP) in Poland (PIAP, 2021). Several European companies have also been contributing to Turkey's defense systems. For example, in the Air and Missile Defence System project, the Turkish firms, ASELSAN and ROKETSAN, have been working in tandem with EUROSAM GIE (Kaya, 2019). All in all, Turkey has been in close contact with individual EU members for defense cooperation.

Turkey's participation in PESCO and the EDF

Due to pressure from different countries, the European Union had to agree on a set of rules and conditions that would permit third countries to participate in PESCO projects. The conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council (in the defense format) of 17 June 2020 called "for an agreement as soon as possible on the general conditions under which third states could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects" (Council of the European Union, 2020). Finally, in November 2020 (Council Decision, CFSP, 2020/1639), the Council decided on the general conditions for the participation of third states in PESCO. The decision underlines the exceptional nature of the participation of a third party (Article 3), while the general conditions are mentioned in detail.

Accordingly, the third party has to "share the values on which the Union is founded", it has to provide an "added value" contributing to the objectives of the project, it has to strengthen the CSDP, its participation must not lead to dependencies on that third party and, finally, it has to be consistent with more binding commitments. In addition, this country has to have a *Security of Information Agreement* with the Union, and an administrative arrangement with EDA. Evidently the main objective of the decision is to include, in particular, the United States, the UK, and Norway, which are highly likely to fulfil the conditions, and to exclude China, Russia, and, eventually Turkey, if the above conditions are not met, since China, Russia and recently Turkey have been criticized by member countries for authoritarian

practices, and, in some cases, for their disrespect for European values and rule of law (Saatçioğlu, 2016).

In the Council conclusions of 10 May 2021, the June 2020 conclusions were reemphasized and reiterated, stating that the Council is determined to implement the EU's own agenda in terms of strengthening its security. Thus, as was decided on 5 November 2020, third states are eligible to participate in individual PESCO projects upon invitation (Council of the European Union, 2021). However, the prospects for Turkey being involved in PESCO operations remain rather complicated. The latest Annual Report of the European Parliament on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (Danjean, 2019) is highly critical of Turkish actions, referring to its "destabilizing activities" (Article 3) and "destabilizing behavior" (Article 4). Regarding PESCO, the Report notes "that the involvement of third countries and third country entities in PESCO should be subject to stringent conditions" (Article 74), and expresses the hope that "decisions will under no circumstances undermine the conditions agreed in the negotiations of the EDF and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)" (Article 76).

On the other hand, some analysts note that the flexible nature of PESCO projects could unlock the door for a selective inclusion of non-EU NATO members, such as Turkey (Aydın-Düzgit and Marrone, 2018; Bağcı and Gaudino, 2019). This is also the position of certain Atlanticist-oriented European defense actors such as the Netherlands and Poland (Brattberg and Valášek, 2019). But the whole drift of the discussions in the EU does not seem to be leading to this outcome. Member states will be wary of and cautious in prescribing clear conditions regarding third-party participation, in order to control who is in and who is out. It goes without saying that as long as tensions remain high in the Eastern Mediterranean, it is possible that member states - and not only Cyprus or Greece - will be reluctant to accept this type of enhanced cooperation. However, Turkey's assured and continued cooperation with the EU in the context of the Syrian refugees settled in Turkey, and its support for the Afghan refugees in Turkey after the Taliban takeover in that country, might unlock the door for Turkey. Being the gatekeeper of the Union in the context of migration policies and border security might result in a concession from the EU over PESCO projects.

Recently, in May 2021, Turkey applied to join the EU's project on Military Mobility which is led by the Netherlands (Brzozowski, 2021). This project was developed under the framework of PESCO in 2018, and also has the potential to develop EU-NATO relations. In this context, on 6 May 2021, the Council invited Norway, Canada and the United States to participate in the 'Military Mobility' PESCO project (European Council, 2021), and as a result it became the first PESCO initiative with third party participation. As Brzozowski (2020) notes, Greece and Cyprus are likely to react negatively to Turkey's application to any PESCO project, because of their ongoing disputes with Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, Austria has already objected to Turkey's participation, "pointing to the country's deteriorating democratic values and relations with the EU" (Noyan, 2021). All in all, it is obvious

that Turkey's potential participation in any PESCO project could be blocked by any EU member country, depending on either jaundiced bilateral relations as in the case of Cyprus and Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean, or PESCO's own conditions related to the respect for democratic values.

Regarding the EDF, the conditions that apply to the participation of a third country or non-EU controlled third company are security based (Ojeda, 2019). Fundamentally, they are similar conditions as the ones that apply to foreign participation in individual national programs. The aim is to make sure that these companies will behave fully as EU-controlled companies.

The fact is that it would be highly unlikely for the implementation of the principle of variable geometry concerning third countries' participation in both PESCO and the EDF, because for the moment, it is accepted that equal treatment of all the parties in the PESCO projects ought to be the rule (Tonra, 2019). Thus, the complicated nature of third countries' participation in PESCO and the EDF as well as concerns over the success of the PESCO initiative, brings potential challenges to the cooperation between Turkey and the EU for the time being. However, on paper, non-EU countries could contribute to the EU's defense projects, and this could form a fruitful type of transactional cooperation between Turkey and the EU, if the EU could see the benefits of Turkey's inclusion, especially with its defense industry potential.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the EU has stressed the key role Turkey plays in European security on several occasions, the turbulent relations between Turkey and the EU are clearly visible in their defense and security cooperation. Particularly since the Arab uprisings, the two sides have grown apart in their regional security priorities (Müftüler-Baç, 2017). Turkey and the EU now have different threat perceptions in their shared neighborhood, specifically in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, which implies for the EU that Turkey is not the desired security partner that could become the interlocutor between the EU and EU South. Certainly, such differences in threat perceptions and policies have led to divergences between Turkey and the EU on security and defense matters.

For instance, the EU criticizes Turkey for its military support for the internationally recognized government based in Tripoli, including the deployment of foreign fighters, stating that they are jeopardizing the "EU's effective contribution to the UN arms embargo implementation" (European Commission, 2021). In Syria, Turkey's military moves differ from the EU's policy of non-intervention and the aim of "building a peaceful and prosperous Syria" (European Commission, 2021). It is worth noting that the EU's classical hypocritical behavior is in force in this context, as the EU does not have a unified voice in both theatres, whereas it expects Turkey to act in line with its policies. In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, the EU and Turkey have conflicts of interest, and the EU keeps condemning Turkey for its

unilateral actions and escalations (European Commission, 2021). It is thus very illustrative to include this sentence from the EU's 2021 Report on Turkey: "Turkey's increasingly assertive foreign policy continued to collide with EU priorities under the CFSP, notably due to its support for military action in the Caucasus, Syria and Iraq".

On the other hand, as part of NATO since 1952 and in tandem with its generally Western-oriented foreign policy (which at times was diverted to Eurasia), Turkey aims to be involved in European security structures. As such, Turkey sees a window of opportunity in the project-based PESCO. As stated by Aydın-Düzgit (2018), if NATO's non-EU members are granted the right to consultation in deciding on PESCO's policy direction in the Council, and full participatory rights in PESCO's capability and operational modules, then the problem could be solved. The rational is that it is up to the participating members in each individual project to agree on the inclusion or non-inclusion of a third party. Turkey has a presence in many EU-led operations and its visibility is considerably high. Moreover, it is beyond any doubt that Turkey's military might and its willingness to contribute would be an important asset for the EU. The question is how to build trust and recreate a relationship that has been significantly damaged.

One of the scenarios to further Turkey-EU cooperation in security and defense is granting a common status to the UK and Turkey. This makes sense mainly at the level of security and defense, where these two states have important military capabilities and already participate in CSDP missions and operations. In this vein, the former President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, declared in December 2016 and repeated it over the years that "a different orbit" as an alternative to EU membership could be invented for countries bordering the Union, such as the UK and Turkey. This stems from the idea of a 'special, privileged relationship' of both countries with the EU, putting the UK and Turkey on the same footing (Pop, 2020).

In the "Recommendation for a Council Decision Authorizing the Opening of Negotiations for a New Partnership with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland", and more concretely in its Annex (3.2.20), the EU laid down the outline of eventual cooperation at the level of security and defense with structured consultations, intelligence exchanges, exceptional participation in PESCO projects (when invited), and participation in collaborative defense projects supported by the EDF. It is obvious that the range of possible cooperation with the UK can be extremely broad and substantial. The critical question is whether these are applicable to Turkey as well. In fact, at the beginning of 2021, the Boris Johnson government rejected the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with the EU, preferring to decide on a case-to-case basis whether to engage with the EU or not. The British decision will undeniably create a new model for an eventual partnership on defense with Turkey.

Nevertheless, the option remains unclear. On the one hand, the future UK-EU relationship is not finalized yet and, on the other, the EU-Turkey relationship is a multifaceted and complicated one, which is currently not moving toward the

accession of the latter into the EU. That said, it is undeniable that London has already approached Ankara to discuss not only a potential post-Brexit trade deal but also the possibilities for cooperation in various sectors including defense (Perchoc, 2018). Leaving aside this option of bilateral defense cooperation with the UK, Turkey should try to expand its opportunities to be deeply embedded in possible CSDP structures including PESCO. This could be one of the most reasonable ways in which a potential and a fruitful transactional model with the EU could be formed. For the EU, Turkey should be seen as an asset, not as an awkward neighbor, but as a strong partner in the security and defense sector which could contribute to the EU's yet evolving Strategic Compass as well as its Defence Union. Thus, this is a two-way road, and not necessarily a bumpy one all the time!

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TURKEY AND EUROPE

CHALLENGING PARTNERS

TURKEY AS A PARTNER AND CHALLENGE FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY

This publication was produced as part of the CATS Network Project, titled"Turkey as a partner and challenge for European Security". The Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin is funded by Stiftung Mercator and the Federal Foreign Office. CATS is the curator of CATS Network, an international network of think tanks and research institutions working on Turkey.
The project is being conducted by a consortium of the International Relations Council of Turkey (IRCT), the Center for International and European Studies (CIES) at Kadir Has University, and the Institute of International Relations (IIR) at Panteion University.

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