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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ/RESEARCH ARTICLE

## THE PROBLEMS TURKEY MUST SOLVE IN CYPRUS ON WAY TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

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### ABSTRACT

*The EU announced that it accepted the application of the GCA for membership in 1993. Although the Turkish side mostly answered “yes” to the Annan Plan, the EU included the Greek Cypriot Administration in 2004 as the “Republic of Cyprus”. Since then, the EU has made efforts to acquire energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean through the GCA. The GCA, together with Greece, has been hampered by continuous progress in Turkey's EU membership process. The negotiation process led by the UN does not conclude due to the Greek Cypriots' non-acceptance of political equality, equal identity and equal human rights. In the context of the Cyprus issue, Turkey has to solve the problems; opening the ports and airspaces to GCA, property and East Mediterranean energy sources problem to continue the journey to European Union.*

**Keywords:** European Union, Cyprus, TRNC, GCA, East Mediterranean

## AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ YOLUNDA TÜRKİYE’NİN KIBRIS’TA ÇÖZMESİ GEREKEN SORUNLAR

### ÖZET

*AB, 1993 yılında GKRY'nin üyelik başvurusunu kabul ettiğini duyurmuştur. Annan Planı'na Türk tarafının büyük çoğunlukla “evet” cevabı vermesine rağmen, AB 2004 yılında GKRY'yi “Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti” olarak Birliğe dâhil etmiştir. Bu tarihten itibaren AB, GKRY vasıtasıyla Doğu Akdeniz'deki enerji kaynaklarını elde etme çabasına girmiştir. GKRY ise, Yunanistan ile beraber Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği sürecinde ilerlemesine sürekli engel olmuştur. BM öncülüğünde yürütülen müzakere süreci Rumların sürekli olarak siyasal eşitliği, eşit kimliği ve eşit insani hakları kabul etmeyen tutumları sebebiyle sonuca ulaşamamaktadır. Türkiye, AB yolculuğuna devam etmek için Kıbrıs meselesi bağlamında GKRY'e liman ve hava sahalarını açma, mülkiyet ve Doğu Akdeniz enerji kaynakları sorunlarını çözmek durumundadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Avrupa Birliği, Kıbrıs, KKTC, GKRY, Doğu Akdeniz

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## **INTRODUCTION**

After the collapse of the Republic of Cyprus in 1963, the EU remained silent on the increasing incidents of violence on the island. The events are considered as internal affairs of the Republic of Cyprus. However, member states published an opinion condemning the 1974 operation. The EU said in a statement during this period that “A *situation concerning Greece, concerns the whole of Europe*”. Greece, after becoming an EU member, has tried to prevent almost every development between Turkey and the EU. Greece tried to relate every problem to the Cyprus issue. With the accession of the Greek Cypriot Administration to the EU, the Cyprus issue has gained a different dimension. Although Turkey and the TRNC stated that the accession of the GCA to the EU was illegal, the EU ignored this situation and accepted the GCA to membership. As reported at the Helsinki summit, Turkey's EU membership will be achieved through the solution of the Cyprus issue. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that “the entry of the Greek Cypriot side into the Union in 2004, while Turkey was still working towards EU membership, made the process of resolving the Cyprus problem even more difficult”. Turkey is trying to be pressured by the EU to recognize GCA as the legitimate government of Cyprus. In other words, with the EU membership of the Greek Cypriot of Administration, the Cyprus issue has gone away from a solution and has become “Europeanized” (Talu, 2014). In this study, the problems that Turkey needs to resolve in the context of the Cyprus issue to join the European Union were discussed.

### **1. OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN CYPRUS**

It would not be wrong to say that there are two sides to the Cyprus issue today. One side is Turkey and the TRNC, and the other one is the Greek Cypriot Administration of South Cyprus, Greece and the European Union. For half a century, the main goal of Turkey's west-facing policy has been to join the EU. The Cyprus issue is one of the biggest obstacles to Turkey's EU membership. The Negotiation Framework is a basic document for the candidate countries of the European Union, which expresses the meaning of membership. The text of the document may differ from the candidate countries, and the different conditions of each candidate country are considered within the scope of the document. The document includes topics to be negotiated between the candidate country and the EU (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı [DPT], 2005). The EU *acquis* has been increased from 31 articles to 35 articles in the document adopted for Croatia and Turkey. However, there has been no change in the basis of the *acquis*.

The section about the Cyprus issue is included in article 6 of the document. The document was adopted in Brussels on 3 October 2005 (Özarslan: 2006, 118).

The first thing that stands out in the Framework Document is the emphasis on the International Court of Justice. As stated in the decisions taken at the Helsinki summit in 1999, the decisions of the International Court of Justice on the Cyprus issue can be taken as a reference. Moreover, Turkey is asked for a commitment to this. After the Annan Plan's failure, if the UN cannot find another solution, the International Court of Justice is referred to as the solution address. Another important part of the document is the statements of the EU regarding the Greek Cypriot side as "Republic of Cyprus" and the request of Turkey to make efforts for a solution on the Cyprus issue (Özarslan: 2006, 119). Another important issue in the document is the 10 new countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004. Of course, there are no problems with the 9 countries outside the GCA. With these 9 countries, Turkey has no problems with airspaces, seaports, transportation. However, providing these opportunities to the GCA, in the same way, would mean recognizing the GCA as a state, which would put Turkey in a difficult position both domestically and in front of the international community. This means approaching the solution that the EU wants in Cyprus. The EU has stated that meeting this requirement is an obligation for membership (Özarslan: 2006, 120).

### **1.1. Ports and Airspace Issue**

Eight negotiation chapters have been suspended in the context of Turkey - EU relations due to the ports issue. These are; Free Movement of Goods, Right to Establish Business, Financial Services, Agriculture and Rural Development, Fisheries, Transportation, Customs Union, Foreign Relations. Besides, GCA is trying to prevent the opening of these chapters by creating initial conditions for the six negotiation chapters. France, which considers the "privileged partnership" suitable for Turkey, is trying to prevent the opening of five chapters. The reason the negotiations have lost momentum is purely political. The decision not to open the eight chapters taken in 2006 was discussed again in 2009 and the GCA demanded that additional sanctions be imposed on Turkey. However, this request of the GCA was not deemed appropriate by the other member states. GCA later issued a statement, announcing that it would block six more titles. As of 30 June 2016, Turkey is negotiating with the EU on 16 chapters. Chapters blocked by GCA include (İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı [İKV], 2016);

- 1- 2.Chapter, Free Movement Of Workers,

- 2- 15.Chapter, Energy,
- 3- 23.Chapter, Judiciary and Fundamental rights,
- 4- 24.Chapter, Justice, Freedom and Security
- 5- 26.Chapter, Education and culture,
- 6- 31.Chapter, Foreign Security and Defense Policy

The opening of ports and airspaces to the GCA is due to the Additional Protocol extended by the Ankara Agreement and the repeal of the isolations imposed on the TRNC. Turkey's ports and airspaces were open for use by GCA until 1987. However, the ports were closed to the GCA on 14 May 1987 after Turkish ships were prosecuted by the GCA after stopping at the ports of Magosa, Kyrenia, and the Gemi Konağı ports, and besides, the UN decided to recognize the GCA as the legitimate government of Cyprus (Sandıklı and Akçadağ, 2011: 4).

The closest initiative to solve this problem is the Annan Plan, which came up in 2004. This plan envisioned a federal-state united, except for British bases, as an independent. According to the plan, one-third of the ministries in the United Cyprus Republic would belong to Turkish Cypriots. Heads of state and prime ministries would change between parties every ten months (Duman, 2017). Under the expanded Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement, Turkey had to open its ports and airspaces to the ten new countries that joined the Union in 2004. Turkey's refusal to open its airspace and ports to the GCA resulted in the suspension of the title of Free Movement of Goods. In legal terms, Turkey must open its ports and airspace to the GCA. The EU has made an unwritten commitment that the isolation of the TRNC will be lifted before the Additional Protocol is signed. Only in this way Turkey has agreed to open its ports and airspace to GCA. After the signing of the protocol, the commitment has not been fulfilled and the EU Council has stipulated the opening of the ports and airspace of Turkey to the GCA for the opening of the eight chapters. (Sandıklı and Akçadağ, 2011: 5).

#### 1.1.1. Direct Trade Statute Issue

One of the major problems of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus under the embargo is the Direct Trade Agreement. In 1973, the EU imposed a preferential tariff on goods exported by the Turkish Cypriots according to the articles of Association Agreement signed by the Turkish Cypriots. However, in 1994, the EU Court of Justice ended this practice of trade

with the Turkish Cypriots as a result of the application of the GCA. (Eralp, 2010: 3). This is how wide-scale isolation began for the Turkish Cypriots. Today, the products exported by the TRNC to the EU are subject to additional tariffs of 14%, similar to the third world countries. (Eralp, 2010: 3). In 2004, the Council made attempts to lift the isolation of the TRNC, but as a result of the GCA's veto, the initiatives were inconclusive. (Sandıklı and Akçadağ, 2011: 9).

According to the Lisbon Treaty, members of the European Parliament had the right to take unanimous decisions on commercial issues and amendments to the charter. As a result of the adoption of the Direct Trade Agreement by the EP and then the ratification by the EU Council, Turkey's opening of its ports and airspace to the GCA will be considered. As a necessity of this condition, Turkey wanted isolation on the TRNC to be lifted. Therefore, Turkey will continue its journey to the EU by removing the obstacles on the eight chapters. However, the Direct Trade Regulation, which was intended to be launched between the TRNC and the EU, was removed from its agenda by the EP because "there is no legal basis". In the 2010 Progress Report, the Cyprus issue was also discussed and it was found that Turkey has not fulfilled its responsibilities arising from the Additional Protocol and has not fulfilled its obligations under the heading "Free Movement of Goods" by not opening ports and airspaces to the GCA. It has been reiterated that the other eight titles will not be opened for negotiation unless ports and airfields are opened to the GCA. The Prime Minister of the period, Erdogan, made the following statement on the development;

*"There is a commitment given to us when Southern Cyprus was admitted to the EU, which is on two issues. It is an issue involving Free Movement and Financial issues, and since then this step has not been taken. This process has continued to date by repeatedly associating it with the Additional Protocol of the Treaty of Ankara. We always tell them that this is a decision that should be passed by the Parliament of the Republic of Turkey, and this Parliament will not take such an approach from the Parliament within the current structure of the Cyprus issue. There are steps to be taken for him, Finland has made a lot of efforts on this issue in its presidency. There have been steps taken, especially in the opening of ports. Unfortunately, the EU has not taken a positive approach here, so it is locked in."*  
(Sandıklı and Akçadağ, 2011: 12).

## 1.2. Property Issue

Under the realization of bi-partitions on the island of Cyprus, there is the Population Exchange Agreement signed on 2 August 1975 in Vienna under the UN observation. According to this agreement, 120 thousand Greek Cypriots from the northern part of the island and 65 thousand Turks from the southern part to the northern part of the island were passed and two sections were formed. This process was accompanied by a UN peacekeeping force. As a result of this exchange, the remaining property of the emigrants has become one of the most fundamental problems of the Cyprus issue. Contrary to the practice in the TRNC, GASC seized the properties of the Turkish Cypriots remaining on the Greek side to provide governance and control. Besides, from time to time, it is in the way of expropriation of some properties by giving reasons for the public interest. In this way, it seized approximately 20% of Turkish Cypriot property and postponed the compensation of damages until a permanent solution on the island. The internal legal legislation introduced by GCA as a solution to property problems causes rights violations in the Turkish Cypriots. On the other hand, contrary to the domestic law decisions of the GCA, the laws enforced in the TRNC reserve the right of the Turkish citizen to request an equivalent property from the state for the property remaining in Southern Cyprus under Article 127 of the Constitution. The domestic law legislation of the TRNC was adopted by the Turkish Cypriot Federated State in 1977 as “Settlement, Landings and Equivalent Property Law” and the constitution of the TRNC adopted in 1985. Cases were filed against Turkey in the applications for property issues after or before 1987 and in the search for property rights under the TRNC administration. Turkey recognized the right of individuals to make individual applications to the European Court of Human Rights on 28 January 1987. Before this date, all applications for the Cyprus problem were made in the form of a state application. In other words, Turkey has been responsible for the rights violations in Cyprus (Fazlıoğlu, 2006).

### 1.2.1. Loizidou Case

The case is related to a trial in which the ECHR condemned Turkey to pay compensation for the incident in the TRNC. On May July 19, 1989, Titina Loizidou, who was arrested by Turkish troops because she had crossed the ceasefire border, applied to the ECHR on July 22 in 1989, that she had not been able to reach her property in the TRNC (Oxman and Rudolf, 1997: 533). Articles 36 and 159 of the TRNC Constitution do not allow Greek Cypriots to seek rights for their territories within the TRNC. Also, it was not possible for the Greek

Cypriots to file a case in the Turkish Cypriot courts during this period. However, because the TRNC is not recognized by the EU, its laws are considered invalid. Turkey objected to this application. But the ECHR rejected the objections. This has shown that the ECHR can also prosecute Turkey for human rights violations outside its borders (Dereboylular and Arman 2018: 309).

Turkey has said the TRNC is an independent and sovereign state and has tried to redirect the case. Turkey argued that the Cyprus issue has not been resolved and that such cases are discussed and decided on an international platform (Özersay and Gürel, 2008: 295). Loizidou has filed a lawsuit against Turkey for damages, stating that she has not been able to access the properties she owns in Kyrenia. On 18 December 1996, the Court delivered its final decision in the Loizidou case. According to the decision, the administration in Cyprus is the GCA. As the TRNC administration was not recognized by the EU, it was decided that Loizidou's property right continued. It was said that Turkey has been in occupying position in Cyprus since 1974. It was decided that Turkey violated Article 1 of Additional Protocol No 1. July 28 in 1998 after the decision, Turkey was sentenced to pay compensation by the Court (Özarslan, 2006: 123).

The decision was welcomed by the Greek Cypriot side. On the Turkish side, however, it has caused reactions. Because of the decision, Turkey was placed as an occupier in Cyprus. The TRNC is not recognized as a state. The EU has repeatedly described Turkey as an “occupier” in reports. The Council of the EU has taken three decisions in 1999, 2000 and 2001 for Turkey to pay compensation. After a fourth decision was taken, Turkey paid the Loizidou compensation on 2 December 2003, taking into account the Annan Plan process (Özarslan, 2006: 124). However, it was revealed that Loizidou still had not received her compensation for incriminating Turkey, so the case could not be closed. Turkey says it will not hold talks on Cyprus at ECHR until the case is closed (Cumhuriyet, 2018). In 1994, the Greek Cypriot side made another application to the ECHR for alleged property violations at the end of Turkey's operation in 1974. In 2001, the ECHR ruled that there was a violation and sentenced Turkey to compensation. The rationale was that the northern part of Cyprus was under Turkish control. Turkey, on the other hand, said it ignored the decision and condemned it as non-binding. Such a decision was meaningful at a time when negotiations on the EU accession process were gaining momentum (BBC, 2014).

### 1.2.2. Xenides-Arestis Case

The case of Myra Xenides-Arestis is just one of the hundreds of lawsuits filed against Turkey after the Loizidou case in 1999. Xenides was a Greek lady who lived in the Maraş region of Famagusta between 1971 and 1974. She claims to have had an apartment, a shop and three houses on the plot of her house. She stated that on 14 August 1974, following the approach of the Turkish army to the city, she had to leave her property and was subsequently banned from entering and accessing her property. Xenides has argued that the right to housing blocked by Turkey according to Article 8 of the Convention and claimed that accession to her properties was blocked according to the first article of Additional Protocol no 1. Moreover, she claimed that Turkey discriminated against Greeks belonging to the Orthodox Christian religion (Necatigil, 1993: 48).

As a result of the investigation, it was determined that the land mentioned by Xenides was added to the Greeks by the British colonial administration. Since the British administration paid compensation to the Turkish Cypriot community, the Turkish side did not have any request from the British administration. As a result of the operation in 1974, the Greeks abandoned Marash and took refuge in southern Cyprus. Afterwards, the Turkish army took full control of Marash. According to UN resolutions, Turkey should not open up to any settlement by preserving the current situation of this region. This measure was taken because it will be decided when the parties discuss the situation of this settlement in the future. The Greeks, on the other hand, are making new applications demanding their properties here. But the fact that the Turkish properties seized by the British colonial administration were distributed to the Greeks raises the question of who is the real owner of Marash. (Necatigil, 1993: 48).

The verdict of the case concluded that Xenides was paid a rental fee for the duration of the time she was unable to reach her property and because she was still the legal owner of the property in the amount of time her access to the property was blocked. Turkey has been sentenced to pay Xenides 587,399 Cypriot pounds in financial compensation for the time she has been separated from his property. The Turkish government described the calculation of compensation as unlawful and unjustified. Moreover, the Turkish Government argued that the case could not be adjudicated for the region, which has not yet reached a final resolution on the island. The court announced its decision on the merits of the Xenides-Arestis case on 22 December 2005. It found that the rights of Greek Cypriots, such as Xenides, who had been



denied access to their property, had been violated under Article 8 of the Convention. The case in question had a great public impact. The fact that Xenides-Arestis was right, which had no documents in his possession, gave the impression that the Greeks were favoured on the property issue. Besides, the decision of one of the two Greek judges working in the ECJ was made by Xenides-Arestis' husband, George Arestis. This judge is thought to be behind Turkey's conviction for compensation and fraudulently obtaining documents for properties that were actually the property of Abdullah Pasha Foundation (Soydan, 2011: 8).

### 1.2.3. Impact of the Cases on Turkey

Turkey as a country that has signed the European Convention on Human Rights is obliged to comply with the provisions of the contract. The convention has an international nature and is over the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. Property cases filed by Greek Cypriots to Turkey within the ECHR have great importance. Because in the context of the Cyprus issue, Turkey is seen as the interlocutor. Thus, the Cyprus issue causes Turkey to be unable to move forward both in foreign policy and on its journey to the EU. As a result of these cases, Turkey is placed as an occupier. It is not taken into account that Turkey has made a humanitarian, peaceful intervention in Cyprus based on London, Zurich and the Guarantee Agreements. However, Turkey has accepted the Court's compensation decisions in the context of negotiations to find a way out of the problem property. Considering that the Greek Cypriot judges also influence the proceedings, it is not wrong to say that the Greek Cypriots took advantage of the property problem by taking the European Union behind them (Necatigil, 1993: 50). In Cyprus, it is really difficult to end the disputes between the two sides. Only Turkey's recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus weakens its hand against Greece. Similarly, the fact that Turkey is not a member state of the EU poses a separate problem. (Güven, 2003: 21)

### **1.3. Eastern Mediterranean Energy Resources Problem**

The projects of introducing the hydrocarbon resources discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean region to the world markets have caused the global powers to focus on the region. Therefore, the Cyprus issue has become the object of global politics. Meeting as much as 70% of European energy through pipelines from the region has strengthened its potential to become an energy corridor. However, the first discovery in the area was made by Egypt; production is still underway in the Nile Delta. As a result of the studies, the amount of oil

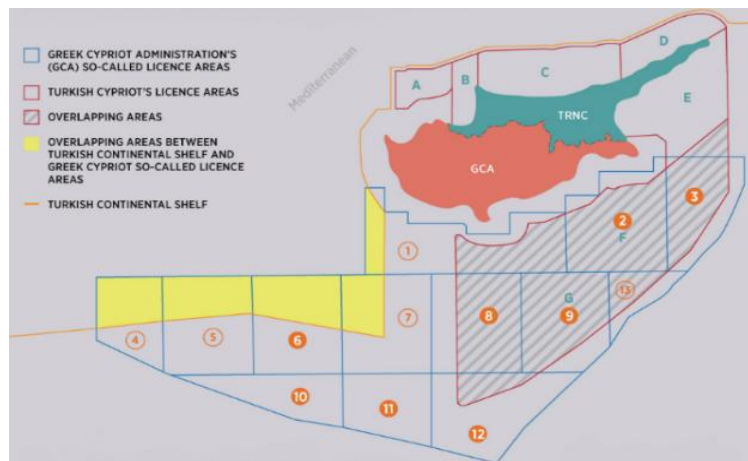
determined in the Nile, Heredot and Levant regions is 3.5 billion barrels, the amount of natural gas is 13.2 trillion cubic meters and LNG is determined as 9 trillion cubic meters (Gözler, 2014). According to the researches carried out by the USGS-US Geological Survey, one of the largest reserves in the world is located in the Eastern Mediterranean. (Robertson, 2018)

According to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, each state can determine the limits of its territorial waters. However, the criterion to be taken as a basis in this limitation is that the land waters limit cannot exceed 12 nautical miles. The continental shelf is a more geopolitical concept. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has a more economic and legal dimension. The legal status of the EEZ concept is stated in the 5th part of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the limitation regarding the breadth of EEZ is stated in the 57th article (Karapınar, 2015: 16). The problem with EEZ is geographical constraints. Since the shapes of the Earth are not straight, the 200 nautical mile boundary of the countries coincides with each other. For example, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria's nautical mile borders are closely intertwined. In such cases, the EEZ agreements signed between the states. The Republic of Turkey is not a party to this agreement. Because Turkey did not sign the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea prepared in 1982 (Ertürk, 2011).

The EEZ agreement between GCA and Israel has critical importance for Turkey. It is clear that the EU's energy policies will concentrate on the Eastern Mediterranean region if many natural gas deposits are removed. It is foreseeable that a move by the EU in this direction would diminish Turkey's strategic importance (Gözler, 2014). The GCA is breaking international law by making EEZ agreements with other countries in line with natural gas exploration, while gradually distancing the solution by adding energy dimension to the Cyprus issue (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA], 2011). Turkey clearly demonstrated the reaction to the crisis experienced in 2007 with GCA. Turkey's Naval Forces have demonstrated their seriousness by conducting exercises after the GCA began to search for oil in 13 regions through an EEZ agreement with Lebanon. GCA continued its oil exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean despite Turkey's reactions. The GCA unilaterally makes agreements with the region and EU countries, ignoring the rights of Turkish Cypriots (Ediger and Devlen, 2012: 86).

The Greek Cypriot Administration continued its activities despite the negotiations that were tried to be continued in the Eastern Mediterranean and the issue was notified to the UN. Thereupon, the TRNC granted TPAO a license for natural gas resource research in the south of

Cyprus. Then Piri Reis research ship started oil and natural gas exploration in 12 blocks. These kind of activities are the reasons for the debate among Turkey, the GCA and TRNC (Bilgesam, 2013). GASC considers itself as the sole owner of Cyprus and states that it will give a share to the TRNC as a result of this researches. However, it is obvious that this will not be fair (Johnson, 2019). The Greek Cypriot Administration also exerts pressure on European, Russian and American companies not to make agreements with the TRNC. (Başeren, 2010: 19).



**Figure 1:** Maritime Jurisdiction Areas Dispute among Turkey, TRNC and the GCA in the Eastern Mediterranean (AA, 2019).

Turkey and Libya signed an EEZ agreement in November 2019 in the context of the “Mavi Vatan Doctrine” of Cihat Yaycı (Yaycı, 2011) and Cem Gürdeniz (Gürdeniz, 2019). With this agreement, Turkey eliminated the Seville Map, which was prepared by the University of Seville and accepted as the borders of the EU. As is known, with Sevilla Plan, Turkey was imprisoned in the Gulf of Antalya. A border was drawn over the island of Meis, 2 km from Turkey and 580 km from Greece. Turkey has repeatedly scrutinized that this situation is illegal and unreasonable. Turkey called this plan the second Sevres Agreement (Demirtaş, 2019).



**Figure 2:** Turkey-Libya Maritime Boundary Delimitation Agreement (Alhas, 2019)

Reactions to the agreement on maritime boundary delimitation signed by Turkey and Libya continue. The United Nations Security Council has said that international law has been violated. (Aljazeera, 2020). In the context of the Mavi Vatan Doctrine, Turkey has an area of 145,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the Mediterranean along with the EEZ. As a result of the Turkey-Libya agreement, the Mavi Vatan reached an area of 189,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The agreement was made within the framework of the Anatolian-African Common Line and the principle of fairness. With this agreement, Libya's maritime jurisdiction expanded into the territorial waters of the island of Crete, resulting in Turkey having extra territories. As a result of the Turkey-Libya EEZ agreement, the thesis that Greece has both the continental shelf of the islands and the EEZ has disappeared (Yaycı, 2011).

Turkey-Libya became riparian states with the agreement. The maritime demarcation line will serve as a shield among Greece, the GCA and Egypt, preventing these countries from signing an EEZ agreement. Turkey has gained a political, strategic and psychological advantage in the region. Turkey has contributed to the national interest in determining maritime borders by directly influencing energy geopolitics. Turkey has obtained a legal and legitimate basis for its rights. With this agreement, the western border of Turkey's EEZ was defined. (Yaycı, 2020: 162-163).

## CONCLUSION

As a result of the research carried out within the framework of the study, no progress has been found indicating that Turkey could become an EU member in the short term. Turkey's Cyprus issue which constitutes one of the biggest obstacles to EU membership is surrounded by a problematic situation that can not be resolved easily. Besides, the ongoing efforts of the GCA to block the process and block the negotiations deepen the problems facing the solution. The steps Turkey can take to remove the GCA obstacle, which it must at least resolve to continue the negotiations, have been examined. These are to open ports and airspace to the GCA, to settle the property issue, to reach an agreement on the Eastern Mediterranean energy resources problem.

The opening of ports and airports to GCA will of course bring some problems. After Turkey signed the negotiating framework document in 2005, it is required to open ports and airspace to the GCA due to the expanded Annex 1 protocol of the Ankara Agreement. Refusal to meet this requirement causes many other titles to remain closed. However, the opening of ports and airspace to the GCA would mean recognition of the GCA as the legitimate government of the island of Cyprus by Turkey. Therefore, due to this recognition, Turkey will have lost the guarantor rights gained in 1959-1960 and registered on the occasion of the Peace Operation in 1974.

In the context of the property issue in Cyprus, the Greek Cypriots have filed hundreds of lawsuits against Turkey through the EU. Turkey has been sentenced to compensation as a result of cases such as *Loizidou*, *Xenides-Arestis*. Although some cases have not been accepted by the EU in favour of Turkey, the fact that the TRNC is not recognized as a legitimate government and that it is declared guilty in a position outside Turkey's territory can be considered as another method of the EU and the GCA in Turkey's membership process.

On the other hand, the European Union is not the only one interested in energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean. Countries such as the United States, Israel, France, Italy and big energy companies such as Exxon Mobil have already taken their place to get a share of the pie. Although Turkey has rights arising from the Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance, these countries, which constantly warn Turkey that it is violating "international law", are making efforts in this region without any legal basis for themselves. With natural gas from Russia and Azerbaijan going to Europe, Turkey's plans to become an energy corridor appear to be

hampered by these efforts. In particular, the recent eastern Mediterranean energy resources problem hinders the solution of the Cyprus issue and indirectly Turkey's EU membership. Efforts by the EU, the GCA and other relevant countries to establish an energy corridor in the Eastern Mediterranean are likely to erode Turkey's strategic importance.

After sending troops to Libya, Turkey took its place both at the diplomatic table and on the field in the Eastern Mediterranean. To manage these processes for its benefits, it would be more appropriate for Turkey to continue diplomacy. Turkey, with smart diplomacy, should take good care of the rights and interests of the TRNC, as well as the balances. Turkey must take its place in the context of energy in the new world order, where we are witnessing energy wars and important developments. With this agreement, Turkey has a great opportunity to ensure a fair order on the path of the Eastern Mediterranean political situation and energy-oriented policies. If Turkey adopts good diplomacy instead of defense spending, it will be able to invest more in hydrocarbon exploration activities with advanced technology.

Turkey must become a strong state in its geopolitical position in the future, whether it is a member of the EU or not. In other words, how Turkey can be an active and problem solver in this geography is through being a strong state. In line with this goal, Turkey should first solve the problems between its neighbors with the password "Peace At Home, Peace in the World". By making agreements with actors who can be effective in the eastern Mediterranean, it must proceed with sure steps towards its goal of becoming an energy corridor. In short, Turkey should become in the position of being a "necessary country" from its current position.

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