

# Relations between Turkey and the Balkan Countries as in a Function of Improving the Regional Peace and Stability

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## ABSTRACT

In today's complex security situation in the international community, Turkey is more important to the NATO than ever before in the 65 year old history of the Alliance. The development of the last two decades in Turkey, represented a fundamental change in its social and economic development Just as Turkey was seen as a bridge between Europe and Asia as well as Christian and Muslim World for the West. Western Balkans is seen today as a bridge between Turkey and European Union. In the New Turkey's foreign policy, based on Turkey's Strategic Vision 2023, a key navigation and targeting Turkey's membership of the European Union has remained on force, but this time in collaboration with the newly established geopolitical space of the Western Balkans. Turkey and Montenegro have a common foreign policy orientation related to the neighboring developing best relations and cooperation, which is very important for regional stability. Stability in the Balkans, particularly the Western Balkans, is necessary connected to the region's EU and NATO integrations. Bearing in mind the historical, cultural and geographical links of the rest of the regions with Turkey is very important that relations between Turkey and the Balkan states occur through already established mechanisms of cooperation within the European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Without stability of the Turkey, there is no stability in Europe nor in the Balkans region.

**Keywords:** Turkey, NATO, European Union, Balkans, Regional stability, Montenegro

## Bölgesel Barış ve İstikrarın Geliştirilmesinde Bir Fonksiyon olarak Türkiye ve Balkan Ülkeleri Arasındaki İlişkiler

### ÖZ

Bugünkü uluslararası toplumun karmaşık güvenlik ortamında NATO için Türkiye, ittifakın 65 yıllık eski tarihinden bu gün daha önemlidir. Son yirmi yılda sosyal ve ekonomik alanda ortaya çıkan gelişmeler, Batı Avrupa ve Asya gibi Hıristiyan ve Müslüman dünyası arasında bir köprü olan Türkiye'nin önemini daha da arttırmıştır. Günümüzde Batı balkanlar Türkiye ile Avrupa Birliği arasında bir köprü olarak görülmektedir. Batı Balkanların jeopolitik alanıyla sağlanan işbirliğinin de etkisiyle Türkiye'nin 2023 Statejik vizyonuna dayanan yeni Türk dış politikası Avrupa Birliği'ne tam üyeliği ön görmektedir. Türkiye ve Karadağ, bölgesel istikrar için çok önemli olan komşularla iyi ilişkilerin ve işbirliğinin geliştirilmesine yönelik ortak bir dış politikaya sahiptirler. Balkanlar'daki istikrar, özellikle Batı Balkanlar, bölgenin AB ve NATO entegrasyonları için gereklidir. Türkiye ile tarihi, kültürel ve coğrafi bağlantıları dikkate alınır, Türkiye ve Balkan ülkeleri arasındaki ilişkilerin geliştirilmesi, Avrupa ve Avro-Atlantik entegrasyonu için de önemlidir. Türkiye'de istikrar olmadan, ne Avrupada ne de Balkanlar bölgesinde istikrar olmaz.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye, NATO, Avrupa Birliği, Balkanlar, Bölgesel İstikrar, Karadağ

In the period of Middle Ages, the Ottoman Empire, whose successor is Turkey, had a significant role in the world political stage with respect to the territory under its control. At the time of its greatest power, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Ottoman Empire occupied the area in Europe all the way to Vienna, as well as the territory around the Black Sea, in the east to the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, east and west areas of the Arabian Peninsula, the northeastern part of Africa to Somalia's horns, a large part of the territory of today's Egypt and the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, almost to Strait of Gibraltar.

In late October 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War as an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary. However, the Ottoman army proved to be too weak and poorly equipped to fight on several fronts. This resulted with the defeat and Ottoman Empire had lost a large part of the territory and was occupied by Greece, Russia, Italy and France.

First World War was followed by Turkish war for independence. Turkish nationalists, led by Mustafa Kemal, who later on got the nickname Ataturk (father of the Turkish nation), had won a war for freedom of foreign occupation, expelled Greek, Russian, French and Italian forces from the great valley of Anadolia and proclaimed the Republic of Turkey on 29th October 1923. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, the modern Turkish state has implemented social, legal and political reforms. In a series of cultural and revolutionary acts of violence, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk tried to create a modern state based on the Western model.

The concept of "Kemalism" has its six principles that have entered in to the program of state Republican People's Party, founded in 1934 by Ataturk: nationalism (the foundation of national state of Turkey), secularism (atheism, ie. state and religion separation, thus leaving Islamic ideas of empire), republicanism (republican system of government and ultimately rejection of reintroducing the rule of the sultan or caliph) and populism (equality of citizens regardless of their ethnicity, language or religion), statism (the leading role of the state in the economy) and reformism (the postulate of permanent and dynamic reform of the state and society).

During the Second World War, Turkey has maintained its neutrality of foreign policy. Turkey symbolically enters the war on the Allied side, on 23 February 1945. That same year, Turkey has signed the UN Charter, and immediately after 1946, Turkey has established multi-party system. On the elections in 1950, the Democratic Party (DP), led by Adnan Menderes, has won a majority in the parliament. This ended the rule of the Republican People's Party (CHP), which lasted from the Republic foundation.

By outbreaking the east and west conflicts and by attempts of influence of the Soviet Union to Turkey, it was completed the period of the political neutrality of the Turkey. In 1950, as a part of the UN contingent, Turkey participated in the Korean War, and in 1952 enters into the NATO Alliance, which clearly profiled pro-Western political orientation.<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand the security culture in Turkey, it is very important to understand the Ottoman legacy that has the influence on the creation of a political culture in Turkey. The army of the Ottoman state was the military of orders and special privileges that gave her the status of the main pillars of society. Sultan, the army and the bureaucracy formed the center of the state, while the society was on the margins. The Centre was privileged when it comes to financial and intellectual investments as well, while the periphery was ignored.

In 1960, Prime Minister Menderes has adopted a law that enables him to eliminate the opposition. After that, the army organized a coup and arrested the prime minister and other politicians and after a trial, those persons were hanged on Imrali Island, in September 1961. In the same year, the army introduced a new constitution and by that act, the Army has returned the power to the people. İnönü became a Prime Minister and he ruled from 1961 to 1965. At that time being, Turkey becomes an associate member of the EEZ. This period is characterized by the inefficiency of the government and the strengthening of leftist and rightist terrorist activities, which led to economic decline. In 1971, Army takes over the power and introduced repressive measures for the population.

After many years of inter-ethnic violence in Cyprus, in July 1974, Greeks have organized a military coup and president Makarios III was ousted and the Greek nationalist Nikos Sampson was set as dictator. After that, Turkey made a decision to get a military intervention on Cyprus and by that act; Turkey has occupied the northern part of the island. Nine years later, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was established on that same area, which has so far recognized only by Turkey.

For the third time since the creation of the Turkish state, the Army seized the power from civilian elected government on 12 September 1980. The cause of this was the political and economic instability of the country as well as the terrorist attacks of extreme left and right. The army, led by General Kenan Evren, has introduced the law of war in the country and banned all political parties. In the early days, the military junta strongly opposed to Kurdish separatists and the left opposition. The new constitution, which was presented by the Army, was accepted in a referendum on 7th December, in 1982.

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1 Vukadinović, Radovan (1983), *Cold war and Europe*, Zagreb.

Although, thanks to the Atatürk's reforms, Turkey was modernized and has adopted western values and institutions, but until the mid-eighties of the last century, political culture remained hierarchical and authoritarian when politics of liberal economics began to change the social structure. Liberal political ideas of Turgut Ozal, who became prime minister in 1983, led to the expansion of civil society and brought new political values, which did not fit into such a political culture.<sup>2</sup>

The last two decades in Turkey, represented a fundamental change in its social and economic development. The first signs of change were recorded in 1999, when Turkey and neighboring Greece, were affected by earthquakes. This event opened the door of long-time hostility among them. Beside this, in that year was also significant that Turkey became EU membership candidate, which had a significant impact on the development of its foreign policy.

The success of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) on the 2002 elections revived the Turkish economy and set the foundation for the redefinition of Turkish foreign policy, which in a short time recorded great success in the Middle East, the Balkans, Caucasus and North Africa. In recent years and unlike the early nineties of the twentieth century, Turkish diplomacy has proved far more pragmatic approach to solving problems in their communities.<sup>3</sup>

## TURKEY – NATO AND BALKAN PACT

Faced with the strong pressure from the USSR, in the years after the Second World War, Turkey has redefined its foreign policy, sent troops to Korea, and in 1952 Turkey became a member of NATO. Gradually, through CENTO and the Baghdad Pact,<sup>4</sup> Turkey has returned to the Middle East. However, only the collapse of the Soviet Union in the nineties of the last century and the “reaviling” of the fraternal peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, will allow greater diplomatic activity and “mobility” of Turkey in the Middle East and the remnants of the former Soviet empire.

Emotions and passion in the early nineties, special relationship with the United States, tough policy of confrontation to the Russia in the Caucasus and economic progress in the Central Asia, weren't enough to achieve the desired results. The wars in

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2 Bžežinski, Zbignjev (2001), *Big chessboard*, Washington.

3 Davutoglu, Ahmet (2013), *Turkic Republics since Independence: towards a Common Future*, Center for Strategic Research, Ankara.

4 Baghdad Pact, the military-political alliance between Turkey, Great Britain, Iran and Pakistan, under the leadership of the United States, which entered into force in 1955, have changed its name to the CENTO pact after Iraq withdrew from the alliance. Markovic, B. Milos (2009), *Foreign policy at the beginning of the 21st century*, International Policy, Belgrade, page 12.

Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, have “locked” the Caucasus, and therefore the Turkish foreign policy in the Caucasus as well, while the Turkish financial help to the Central Asian countries, as time has shown, however, was not sufficient to displace Russia from the region.

Turkey has joined NATO at the beginning of the Cold war in order to ensure its protection by the USA in a case of Soviet attack. By such decision Turkey, as a NATO member, was clearly at the first front line towards Soviet Union.

At the same time, the fate of Turkey was also related to the the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ), regarding that changes of the Soviet socialist model caused immediate military danger and the military intervention of Soviet troops in Yugoslavia. After the Resolution of the Information Bureau of socialist countries in 1948, Yugoslavia was found in diplomatic, military and economical blockade from the East. So, as in Turkey case, cooperation with USA, as the only real solution in that time, has started in 1949.<sup>5</sup>

In early 1950, Yugoslavia expected by the beginning of the invasion of the Soviet Union, because the Korean War had shown that it is possible to have an isolated conflict without the risk of causing a world war. Intense military cooperation was focused on finding a concept of regional approach and the involvement of the Yugoslav military potential in the NATO operational planning as a response to the Soviet threat. As a supreme commander of the Yugoslav Army, Tito was more close to the decision that Yugoslavia should make her military cooperation with Greece and Turkey more intensive, because these two countries were threatened danger of Soviet military intervention as well, rather than to achieve the full membership in NATO.

In order to achieve stronger military cooperation, at the end of the 1952, there were more intensified meetings of military commanders of three Balkan countries, on trilateral basis with the participation of representative of the United States.

The first threepartite talks between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey were conducted in Ankara from 17th to 20th February 1953. The aim of the conference was to establish the military cooperation between the three countries. During the conference, it was signed a memorandum stated that aggression against one of the three countries threatens the defense of others and that the vital and vulnerable point of defense are straits and that they should be defended at all costs. Mutual help of the three countries through military cooperation will result in not only defending their own territory but also, looking at the strategic importance of their geographical position, will contribute significantly to ensuring peace in Europe and in the world.

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5 Bogetić, (2005), *Yugoslavia and the West 1952-1955 and Yugoslavia Approaching to the NATO*, Belgrade.

Just eight days later, on 28th February 1953, it was signed the Ankara agreement known as the Balkan Pact,<sup>6</sup> which in form and substance represented a broad basis for the development and strengthening of full cooperation in political, military, cultural and economic area. On 20th April 1953, the relations between Yugoslavia and Turkey are fastened in a number of transnational issues including the issue of dual citizenship.

What is of crucial importance for the United States and Western European countries was the linking model for the Balkan Pact with the NATO. At a meeting of North Atlantic Council of NATO in early May 1953, most members felt that Yugoslavia will join the Atlantic Alliance and that the Tripartite Agreement represented only an indirect way to do so.

Intensive collaboration between the three countries in the military field was also continued in 1954 with the intention of converting military pact in full rounded military-defense alliance. Both, Turkey and the Greek senior military officials have advocated the idea that Yugoslavia should become a member of NATO, as soon as possible, justifying that with that act it would disappear all obstacles for making complete plans for the defense of the Balkans, while European front on the northern borders of Yugoslavia and Italy would no longer represent a weak point and every suspicion of the Western world against Yugoslavia would disappear.

In a search for most efficient solutions and overcoming the obstacles for closer military cooperation within the Balkan Pact, given that there were restrictions in Turkey and Greece regarding their commitments based on the Washington agreement on membership in NATO, on 06th August 1954, it was organized a new round of negotiations in Bled, Slovenia. Negotiations were completed three days after signing the Bled agreement, which contained 14 points unlike to the Ankara agreement (10 points) and were the Treaty of Alliance, Political Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance.

In the following year, 1955, representatives of the Turkish delegation to the threepartite talks advocated the view that it was in compliance with the American public opinion, that Italy should join the Balkan alliance and to establish clear rules for relations with NATO in order to get the Yugoslavia membership in NATO, as soon as possible, which was not acceptable for the Yugoslavia at that moment.

After Stalin's death (only twenty-four hours after the signing of the Ankara agreement on February 29th, 1953), Yugoslavia has normalized its relations with the USSR, and in 1955 has organized a meeting between the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev and President of Yugoslavia, Tito.<sup>7</sup> Further Yugoslav involvement in strengthening the Balkan Alliance has gradually

6 Basara, Mihajlo (2005), *Balkan pact, Proceedings of Documents*, Military-Historical Institute, Belgrade, page 39.

7 Ibid, page 113.

got weak and within a time such model of cooperation in the Balkans was completely abandoned.

Because of the dishonest approach of Yugoslavia, or rather, the Yugoslav communist leadership, cooperations with the West, of which the crisis with the Soviet Union gained substantial economic and military aid, all resulted with failure attempt of its inclusion in NATO and building stronger linkages between the Balkan states. In addition, the strained relations between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus crisis in 1955 significantly contributed to the weakening and cessation of functioning of the Balkan Pact.<sup>8</sup>

As the consequence of events from the fifties of the last century, in Yugoslavia during the nineties came the bloody disintegration,<sup>9</sup> while Greece and Turkey as a NATO member resolved their disagreements over Cyprus in a peaceful manner.

Under modern conditions, Turkey's position within NATO has significantly evolved and today Turkey is an indispensable factor of North Atlantic Alliance. By military power, Turkey is following the United States as the most powerful force within NATO.

In the past, military partnership presented a pillar of Turkey's relationship with the West. However, it was asymmetrical relationship where Turkey, as a beneficiary of security, was largely dependent on the West. Turkey's foreign policy decisions were limited by the necessity to remain in alliance with those who provide her security.<sup>10</sup>

Today, however, a small number of threats has fundamentally changed this perspective and reduce the need for Turkey to act in full accordance with the West. Moreover, Turkey's less preoccupation with her territorial integrity resulted with significantly reduced Western influence. Loosening of the security relations gave Turkey a greater freedom towards West.

Although, it would be wrong to say that Turkey is moving away from NATO. She is still active and influential member with hopes to get the greatest possible benefit from membership. Turkey is dedicated to the NATO and its military budget meets the criteria of NATO military spending of two percent of GDP. Turkey also actively participates in operations led by NATO. In addition, Turkey has more active role in the Alliance than most other member states.

Turkey is an important promoter of the Alliance regarding the adoption of new security challenges, although she remains firmly committed to cooperation with NATO in the field of nuclear technology. Turkey is one of the six NATO member on whose

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8 Milošević, Nemanja (2008), *Balkan pact, Proceedings of articles*, Institute for Strategic Studies, Belgrade.

9 Sancaktar, Caner (2010), *The Serbo – Croat Relations in Yugoslavia „Constructiv Cooperation and Destructive Conflict“*, TASAM, Istanbul, page 231.

10 Ulgen, Sinan (2011), *NATO and new Turkey*, Center for Economic and foreign policy studies (EDAM), Istanbul.

territory there is American tactical nuclear weapons for more than 40 years. Readiness of nuclear weapons on its territory is not of great strategic importance, but Turkey has always claimed that NATO credible nuclear deterrence is of vital importance for collective defense of the Alliance.

This attitude of Turkey, when it comes to nuclear weapons is opposite to the policy of the three western states - Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands - which calls for the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from their territory. Turkey argues that such decisions can not be made unilaterally and that the consensus at the level of NATO is necessary to change this essential element of nuclear deterrence of the Alliance.

When the civil war in Syria, during 2012, moved to the border area with Turkey, the government in Ankara has asked NATO partners to make her available anti-missile system "Patriot" because the Syrian Army in its arsenal has a 700 miles missile, against which the Turkish army does not have its own effective defense. "Patriot" system has powerful radar systems as well as fixed and mobile missile systems. Regarding that in the Western alliance only Germany, the United States and the Netherlands have the latest versions of the system, in 2013, those three countries took control of the Turkish-Syrian border area.

Since the end of the Syrian conflict is not near, there is still a need for engagement of NATO troops on the Syrian-Turkish border, where there are also 300 members of the German armed forces beside Turkish soldiers.

"Active fence" is the name that is given to the NATO mission that should be open warning to the warring parties in Syria. Observation point of German military units is located above the Turkish city of Kahramanmaras, about 100 kilometers from the Syrian border. On the other side there is the Syrian city of Aleppo. During one year of engaging, the German soldiers did not have to fire a single rocket. However, NATO troops can not do anything against the shells fired at the Turkish border village. The situation at the border area is critical because it has so far killed 70 Turkish civilians and 770,000 Syrian refugees have asked for asylum in Turkey.

Today, Turkey considers its NATO membership only as one aspect of its wider security policy. In the period after 2002, there is a clear Turkey intention for playing an active foreign policy role and for having direct participation in addressing security issues in her region. In today's complex security situation in the international community, Turkey is more important to the NATO than ever before in the 65 year old history of the Alliance. This does not mean that the aim of the Turkey is making Union weak, but strengthening its position in the NATO in order to achieve its own strategic foreign policy and security interests.<sup>11</sup>

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11 Werkhäuser, Nina (2014), *Syria on NATO Radars*, [WWW.dw.de/](http://WWW.dw.de/). Visited: 22.01.2014.



## FOREIGN POLICY OF TURKEY, BALKAN AND EU

According to the analysis of relevant statistical indicators, Turkey has an important role in the world. By population of 76 million, Turkey takes 16th position, by the territory size, takes 32nd position and by the economic power, Turkey takes 16th position in the world.

Geographically, Turkey expands on two continents: Anatolia, the Asian part of the country, is occupying about 97% of the total area of the Turkey and the European part is located in Eastern Thrace and occupies about 3% of the country (23,623 km<sup>2</sup>). The total length of the Turkey's borders is 9,850 km, of which 7,200 km take the maritime border. The Turkish borders on the west are Aegean Sea, on the south it is the Mediterranean Sea and at the north it is the Black Sea. On the mainland Turkey is bordered by eight countries, with the overall length of the land boundary of 2,648 km. On northwest, Turkey borders with Greece (206 km of border) and Bulgaria (240 km), to the northeast with Georgia (252 km), Armenia (268 km), Azerbaijan (with the autonomous republic of Nakhchivan, 9 km), to the east by Iran (499 km) and on the south by Iraq (352 km) and Syria (822 km) and Cyprus is located near the Turkish coast.

Geo-political and geo-strategic position of the Turkey is very important, mainly because of its direct environment where are situated very important regions on European and Asian map:

- Middle East and the area of Caspian Sea, where the largest oil reserves in the world are situated;
- Area of Mediterranean Sea, which is situated at crossroad of major communication shipping lines;
- Area of the Black sea and the Turkish straits, which has always maintained the significance of Turkish, during the past time;
- Balkan which has gone through structural changes after the collapse of Warsaw Pact, the USSR and Yugoslavia;
- Caucasus (which is rich with natural resources and with ethnic conflicts as well) and Central Asia

Turkey, which connects three continents, is both a European (3% of the territory) and Asian country (97% of the territory).

The success of the Justice and Development Party – AKP (founded by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) on the 2002 elections, has revived the Turkish economy and set the foundation for the redefinition of Turkish foreign policy, which has recorded great success in the Middle East, the Balkans, Caucasus and in North Africa, for a short period of time.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bulut, Mehmet and Terence Hones (2013), *Turkish – African Relations: Towards Economic, Political And Social Understanding*, ACTOR-ADAM, Ankara.

New Turkish foreign policy is a part of the state project “Turkey’s Strategic Vision 2023”.<sup>13</sup> According to this project, Turkey will become the 10th most powerful economic force in the world and EU member as well.

The basis for new foreign policy of the Turkey is represented by the book named “Strategic deepness”, by Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (popularly called Turkish Henry Kissinger), published in 2001.<sup>14</sup> This book introduces a whole new way of thinking when it comes to the international position of Turkey.

Accordingly, the basic thesis of Davutoglu’s book is that the impact of a country’s international relations is determined by its geo-strategic position and historical depth. On a practical level, the “strategic depth” is defined as a balance in relation to Turkey’s dependence on the West by creating multiple parallel alliances in the region.

Based on Davutoglu’s vision of the Turkish foreign policy, the new policy towards Balkans, had been identified.

Since the end of the Second World War, classical Turkish foreign policy is almost completely oriented towards Europe. Balkans and especially Western Balkans were only presented as a Turkish corridor to Europe.

Although only a small part of Turkey in Europe, in the Balkans (about 3%), Turkey in the classical conception of foreign policy sees itself as a European country in almost all areas. Turkey has very little presence in continental structures of Asia but everywhere in the structures of the European continent.

The vision of Turkey’s foreign policy is based on five principles:

- Freedom (respect for human rights);
- Politics of “0” (“zero”) problems with neighbors;
- Versatility of Turkish foreign policy;
- A new style of diplomacy (the position of the “Centre” for the neighboring regions);
- Dynamic diplomacy (see more countries and be visited).

Great ambitions that Turkey undeniably has, in the Western Balkans can be interpreted through the historical, economic, cultural, but in the first place through political interests. In this case, Turkey emphasizes the application of the principles of relationship between the United States and Western Europe, when it comes to culturological similarity between Turkish population and the rest of the Balkans.

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13 The aim of “*Turkey’s Strategic Vision 2023*” project is to develop some suggestions about how the strategy of Turkey should be in foreign policy and in political, economic, technologic, socio-cultural and safety related areas, to create a far-reaching discussion environment about the targets and the policies in order to achieve this vision, and to contribute to the efforts that will make Turkey a powerful and prestigious country in the world scene at the 100th anniversary of Turkish Republic. Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TASAM), *Turkey’s Strategic Vision 2023*, 2nd Draft Document of TSV2023, Internet: <http://www.tsv2023.org>, Istanbul, 2010.

14 Davutoglu, Ahmet (2001), *Strategic Depth (Stratejik Derinlik)*, Ankara.

Just as Turkey was seen as a bridge between Europe and Asia as well as Christian and Muslim World for the West, Western Balkans is seen today as a bridge between Turkey and European Union by Turkey.<sup>15</sup>

In the Balkans, today there are about 1 million Turks, while in Turkey there are about 10 million people who are by its origin from Balkans.<sup>16</sup>

Restructuring and implementing reforms of the Balkan countries, provides great opportunity for Turkey to develop economic cooperation and investments.

During the last 15 year, Turkey has signed several Bilateral Agreements with great number of Balkan countries

When it comes to the multilateral diplomacy on the Balkans, Turkey actively takes a part in regional initiatives of security cooperation, launched by EU and NATO. We are stressing the following ones:<sup>17</sup>

1. *SEECF (South-East Europe Cooperation Process);*
2. *SEEI (South-East Europe Initiative) SEEGROUP within which (South-East Europe Security Cooperation Steering Group) operates;*
3. *SEDM (Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial) – particularly in establishing SEEBRIG (Southeastern Europe Peacekeeping Brigade);*
4. *RACVIAC (Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre), today - Center for Security Cooperation;*
5. *SECI Center (Regional Center for the Combating of Transbordering Crime) – today SELEC Center (Southeast European Law Enforcement Center).*

When it comes to regional security, Turkey has a special role in fight against terrorism and drug trafficking. In order to train its forces for the fight against terrorism, the Center of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism has been established in Ankara in 2003, which capacities have been used also by other Balkan countries.

Turkey has the most effective Service for combating drug trafficking in the World and therefore makes the biggest regional contribution. During the previous 2 years, Turkey has seized twice more narcotics than 28 EU member states. In 2010, Turkey has seized 12.960 kg of heroin, while Greece seized 520kg and Bulgaria 362kg.

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15 Insight Turkey, *Decoding Turkey's Foreign Policy*, Mehmet Ugur Ekinci, Article: *A Golden Age of Relations: Turkey and the Western Balkans During the AK Party Period*, Ankara, Winter 2014. Vol 16/1, pages 103 – 125.

16 Bedrudin Brljavac, *Turkish accession to the European Union through the Balkan Doors: in the style of great power? Journal of economic and political transition*, YEAR XIII - Tuzla-Travnik-Zagreb-Belgrade-Bucharest, 2011, page 27.

17 Lopandić, Duško and Jasminka Kronja (2011), *Regional initiatives and multilateral cooperation in the Balkans*, European Movement in Serbia, Belgrade.

Furthermore, in order to provide support to the member states of Partnership for peace in implementing defense system reforms, Turkey made a decision to establish "Turkish Partnership for Peace Training Center (PTC-TUR)" in 1994, located in Ankara.

Turkey made significant contribution in ending the war which occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in normalizing relations between Serbia and Kosovo.

Regarding historical and cultural relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey tends to intermediate with Serbia and Croatia in redefining Dayton Agreement on Bosnia so as to find the best solution.<sup>18</sup>

During the past few years, Turkish officials have organized a series of meetings between representatives of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, which culminated in the signing of the Istanbul Declaration in April 2010. The main objective of the Declaration was fostering regional cooperation and EU membership.

Turkish diplomacy on Balkans is particularly focused on equal relations towards all Balkan ethnical and religious communities, in order to overcome historical frustrations stemming from the Ottoman Empire.

Active Turkish policy in the Balkans, in addition to political interest is a reflection of its growing economic success in the last ten years.

Especially role on the Balkans has TIKA - the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency which was established on January 24, 1992 in order to provide development assistance for regional countries.

TIKA improve cooperation through projects and programs in economic, commercial, technical, social, cultural and educational arenas. TIKA currently maintains coordination offices in 37 countries across Africa, Asia, and Europe (Balkans).

Besides economic cooperation and assistance it provides, Turkey has been very active in the area of education and scientific cooperation through awarding scholarships for students and through financing joint research projects.

Turkey also pays great attention to the establishment of international education programs in all Balkan countries in more languages.

When it comes to Turkey's EU process, it is a particular issue that is discussed within the context of Turkey's foreign policy in the Balkans. Turkey's accession process to the EU proceeded through the next phase:

- The Association Agreement with the EU, Turkey signed in 1963;

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<sup>18</sup> Gozen, Ramazan, Mehmet Bulut, and Elif Nuroglu (2009), *East - West Relations: Turkish and Bosnian Perspectives*, International University of Sarajevo.

- In 1987, Turkey submitted nomination - request for full EU membership;
- In 1996, Turkey entered into a Customs union with the EU;
- In December 1999, Turkey got the candidate status for EU membership;
- In October 2005, opened negotiations between Turkey and the EU.

Regardless the long and difficult process of Turkish accession to the EU, it is still one of the most important strategic foreign policy objectives of Turkey.

In the New Turkey's foreign policy, based on Turkey's Strategic Vision 2023, a key navigation and targeting Turkey's membership of the European Union has remained on force, but this time in collaboration with the newly established geopolitical space of the Western Balkans. The importance of the Balkans for Turkey is based on the political and economic context and Turkey-Europe relation. For Turkey, Balkan is "passage to Europe" (the gate to Europe), because through the Balkans there are all routes in European countries. Therefore, peace and stability among Balkan countries is very important for the security of Turkey as Balkan country and for sustainable economic and political development of relations with Europe.<sup>19</sup>

In a referendum on the constitution of the Republic of Turkey, in September 2010, the majority of the citizens voted to change the constitution from 1982 as amended in 26 points, so the Turkey could fulfill the requirements of the EU. This is one of the most important events in modern Turkey, regarding that the referendum on changing the constitution took place on the anniversary of the military coup from 1980. Indisputable constitutional amendments are related to the greater protection of the rights of women and children, the greater influence of parliament in the direction of a more democratic society, greater equality of ethnic and other groups, the reduction of military powers and election of the President of the Republic for five year period (instead of the previous seven) through the process of direct election by citizens.

In the context of these constitutional changes, in Turkey were held a presidential election (August 2014), when former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was elected. Inauguration of the new President was made on the 28th August 2014. At the same time, for the position of new president of the Justice and Development Party -AKP and candidate for the prime minister to form a new government, was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoglu. Bearing in mind the fact that Erdoğan became president according to the criteria that are required by the EU and great influence that Davutoglu has the foreign policy of Turkey, it can be concluded that this

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<sup>19</sup> Nevenka Jeftić-Šarčević, Article: *Western Balkans in the projection of "Turkey's Strategic Vision 2023"*, Project named: "Serbia and the modern world: perspectives and ways of strengthening the foreign policy, security and economical position of Serbia in the contemporary processes in the international community," the Ministry of Science and Technology development of Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2010, pages 691-714

is the beginning of a new phase of relations between Turkey and the EU, which should mean more efficient overcoming obstacles for Turkey's membership in the EU.<sup>20</sup>

## THE ROLE OF THE TURKEY AND MONTENEGRO IN A FUNCTION OF IMPROVING COOPERATION AND STABILITY IN THE BALKANS

History of relations between Montenegro and Turkey (Ottoman Empire) begins in the fourteenth century during the regency of Balšić dynasty, when the territory of Montenegro extended from Kotor to Lezha (alb. Lezha), including Drivast (alb. Drishti), Shkodra (alb. Shkodra), Prizren (alb. Prizreni) and Peć (alb. Peja). The period of great conquests beginning with the rule of Sultan Mehmed II in 1451. One of the directions of his campaign was spreading towards Kruja and Shkodra. By conquest Medun (near Podgorica) 1457, it began the creation of the Turkish power around the Montenegrin territory, and thus the gradual disappearance of its state independence.

Given that most of today's Montenegro territory was under centuries of occupation of the Ottoman Empire, their relationships are usually based on a continuous struggle of Montenegro for the liberation and the Ottoman Empire in an attempt to maintain the present status. Only after getting an internationally recognized Montenegro's independence in 1878, at the Congress of Berlin, they begin to build political relations with the Ottoman Empire in peace time conditions.<sup>21</sup>

Diplomatic relations between Montenegro and Turkey were established in October 1879, when the first Turkish deputy Halid Bey came to Cetinje. In the period from 1879 to 1912, in a time of the Balkan Wars, Turkey accredited nine diplomatic representatives in Montenegro.<sup>22</sup>

In 1988, the Turkish consul in Montenegro named Dževat pasha, to whom it was given the power of attorney have asked Prince Nikola to approve the purchase of a private house in Cetinje (owned by Vasa Vrbica). Prince has approved this request and it was the first time that a foreign country became the owner of real property in Montenegro.<sup>23</sup>

The first representative of Montenegro, with power of attorney, who was sent to the foreign country, was the Duke Stanko Radonjic, who was sent to Istanbul in 1879. He remained on this duty very short, only three months, and instead of him Gavro Vukovic was appointed representative (by whom it is called "Diplomatic Academy Gavro Vukovic" in Montenegro), who remained in that position until 1884.

20 Independent Journal News, *The birth of the new Turkey*, Podgorica, 28.08.2014.

21 Historical lexicon of Montenegro, Book 1, Podgorica 2006. page 297.

22 Raspopović, Radoslav M. (1996), *Diplomacy of Montenegro from 1711 until 1918*, Podgorica.

23 Suver, Akkan (2013), *Montenegro/Karadag*, Almanah, Podgorica, page 128.

At the time of the disputes settlement on boundaries between Montenegro and Turkey in 1883 to 1887, there was a very first visit of the Montenegrin Prince Nikola to the Sultan Abdul Hamid in Istanbul. Prince was accepted with highest state honors. He also received expensive gifts from the Sultan: jewelry, medals, Arabian horse of good origin, castle Emirgijan the Bosphorus and the yacht, which was later on named "Rumija". Another time the Prince has visited Istanbul in 1899.<sup>24</sup>

After a period of demarcation, there was a period of intensive development of relations between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire. A large number of Montenegrins went to the Turkish regions in search for work. In the period from 1895 to 1898, there were concluded three loan agreements between the Montenegrin government and the Imperial Ottoman Bank. In all three cases, the Turkish government was the guarantor to the Imperial- Ottoman Bank for a loan given to the Montenegro.

Events from the period of Young Turk Revolution in 1908, the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 and the First World War have caused the definite end of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Unfortunately, at the time of forming a modern state of Turkey, in the same process Montenegro has disappeared as an independent state in 1918, so the relations between the two countries continues after 88 years, after the return of Montenegrin statehood in 2006.

Turkey recognized the independence of Montenegro on 12 June 2006 and diplomatic relations were established on 3 July 2006.<sup>25</sup> Turkey supports the efforts of Montenegro whose primary foreign policy target is integration with European and Euro-Atlantic structures. In the same time, Turkey and Montenegro acts in solidarity in regional and international organizations and initiatives.<sup>26</sup>

Although Turkey is the largest and Montenegro is one of the smallest countries in the region, between Turkey and Montenegro there are traditionally strong cultural relations. Turkey is one of the most important diaspora countries of Montenegro, and the existence of these communities that migrated to Turkey at different times, is another potential and motivation for the improvement bilateral relations. In Turkey, there are over 250,000 residents who are by origin from Montenegro.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the population in Montenegro, 650,000 residents, this is the biggest Montenegrin diaspora.

24 Špadijer, Marko and Stanko Roganović, (2004), *Diplomatic Embassy in the Kingdom of Montenegro*, Zagreb.

25 For the first Ambassador of Turkey to Montenegro after the restoration of independence, it was appointed Mrata Oguz on 15 April 2008. Montenegro appointed its first consul of honor in Turkey, Istanbul, Akkana Suvero and after that ambassador in Ankara on 24 February 2010, Ramo Braljić. Source: Akkan Suver, Montenegro / Karadag, Almanah, Podgorica 2013, page 169.

26 Source : <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-montenegro.en.mfa>, visited: 25.08.2014.

27 Source: <http://www.mvpei.gov.me/rubrike/bilateralni-odnosi/turska>, visited: 25.08.2014.

Turkey and Montenegro have a common foreign policy orientation related to the neighboring developing best relations and cooperation, which is very important for regional stability. In crisis situations, both countries have demonstrated a high level of solidarity with their neighbors during the war. Montenegro has received over 100,000 refugees during the war in former Yugoslavia and Turkey over 750,000 refugees from Syria during the period from 2012 to 2014.

In a very short time, it have been established cooperation in all fields and signed a number of bilateral agreements. At the same time, it was formed several associations in Turkey and Montenegro in order to improve cultural and economic cooperation between two countries. Between Turkey and Montenegro there are no unresolved issues and at the end of 2012, it was launched an initiative for establishing dual citizenship between the two countries. In early June 2014, it have been signed an agreement between the two countries on military cooperation which will further strengthen the Turkey and Montenegro relations.

Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency – TIKA, Office in Montenegro, established in 2007 has invested more than 6 million Euros in different projects by the end of 2013.<sup>28</sup>

It have been established a scientific cooperation in various fields and a significant number of students from Montenegro are studying in Turkey at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral studies. At the same time, in the current period it was also stressed mutual readiness to develop common international education programs in Montenegro and Turkey.

By proactive foreign policy action, taken by Montenegro and Turkey, in the framework of regional cooperation initiatives and by positive example of developing good bilateral relations, these two countries give a major contribution to lasting stability and development of the Balkan region.

## CONCLUSION

Turkey is the largest country in the region with an extremely important geographical position that, as a NATO member and a candidate for EU membership, is unavoidable factor of stability and development of the Balkan region.

Turkey's new foreign policy towards the Balkans, is oriented to the development of good relations and economic cooperation with all Balkan countries, which represent a good basis for enhancing multilateral cooperation within NATO and the EU regional policy.

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<sup>28</sup> Source: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-montenegro.en.mfa>, visited: 25.08.2014.



Developing cooperation with the Balkan countries for the Turkey is crucial for overcoming current obstacles in the process of European integration and the creation of favorable conditions for investment.

Regardless of the historical circumstances and frustrations, the interest of all countries in the region is the development of good relations with Turkey, a country which has a very important strategic position, not only in the Balkans and Europe, but also at global level.

At the same time, geostrategic position makes Turkey a key strategic ally for the European Union. Turkey's close historical relations and experience in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and southern Mediterranean, are an extremely useful experience, so that Turkey could make a positive contribution to the creation of the Union's policies which are of critical importance in these sensitive regions.

Enlargement of the European Union is primarily a political goal, due to the consolidation of peace and stability and for the good of the entire continent. It is also a "manner" to expand the boundaries of European values. Through its expansion, the European Union is spreading not only geographically, but also political, economic, cultural and social identity. All this, however could not be realized without the active role of Turkey in this process.

Taking all these aspects into account, and if prejudices are step aside, it will be shown that the interest of Turkey's accession to the EU is nothing less important than a European interest in receiving Turkey's membership.

From an economic point of view, the advantages of this approach are multiply, and can be summed up in a few concepts: approximation of laws; new markets; new economic opportunities and much greater investment and human resources.

Bearing in mind the results of the presidential elections in Turkey in August 2014, when former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in the first round took a landslide victory and the messages that are sent to the local and international public, it can be assumed that Turkey would be more determinate to continue to meet the criteria for EU membership, and as NATO member, will actively continue to contribute to world peace and stability.

Stability in the Balkans, particularly the Western Balkans, is necessary connected to the region's EU and NATO integrations. Bearing in mind the historical, cultural and geographical links of the rest of the regions with Turkey, it is very important that relations between Turkey and the Balkan states occur through already established mechanisms of cooperation within the European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Only these integrative processes ensure equal, synchronized and full participation of all Balkan countries in order to achieve full stability and prosperity in the region. Without stability of the Turkey, there is no stability in Europe nor in the Balkans region.

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