

EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY AND THE ARAB SPRING*

Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası ve Arap Baharı

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Abstract

The Mediterranean possess strategic, political and economic aspects that are important to the European Union. The European Union implemented the Global Mediterranean Policy in 1972, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995 and the European Neighborhood Policy in 2004. The Union, however, along with the Arab Spring process, struggled to implement a common foreign policy because of the conflicting interests from its members. This article will examine, the emergence of the European Neighborhood Policy, which the EU is applying for a cultural, economic and political convergence towards its neighbors, and the transformation of this policy with the Arab Spring process.

Keywords: *European Neighborhood Policy, European Union, Arab Spring, Barcelona Process, Global Mediterranean Policy.*

Öz

Avrupa Birliği açısından Akdeniz bölgesi; stratejik, siyasal ve ekonomik nedenlerden dolayı son derece önemlidir. Bölge politikası bağlamında Avrupa Birliği, 1972 yılında Küresel Akdeniz Politikası'nı, 1995 yılında Avrupa-Akdeniz Ortaklığı'nı ve 2004 yılından itibaren de Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası'nı uygulamıştır. Bununla birlikte birlik, Arap Baharı sürecinde birlik üyelerinin çatışan çıkarları nedeniyle ortak bir dış politika izlemekte de zorlanmıştır. Bu makalede AB'nin komşularına yönelik kültürel, ekonomik ve siyasal yaklaşma amacıyla uygulamakta olduğu Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası'nın ortaya çıkışı ve Arap Baharı süreciyle birlikte söz konusu politikanın geçirdiği dönüşüm incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası, Avrupa Birliği, Arap Baharı, Barselona Süreci, Küresel Akdeniz Politikası.*

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INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) was founded by the European states following World War II. Its main objective was to economically link the member States in order to prevent a war among the States, especially those that are economically bounded, for this reason, the security of the continent was assured. Although the union was established as an economic organization, it has developed as an effective organization in world politics in recent years. In addition, the Union's transition from an economic organization into a vast political body has been a long journey. The Union was initially composed of 6 founding countries, expanded with the accession of new countries. The expansion of the Union led to problems. The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) stepped in by finding solutions on how to solve the problems.

Since members of the European Union are European states, the European state's perspective on States in the Middle East and North Africa region has also constituted the perception of the Union on countries in this region. Although European countries colonized the countries in this region before the Union was founded. They officially withdrew from this region following the independence of these colonial countries and maintained their influence in this region in various ways. The Policies of the European Union regarding the region mentioned above have had their share on this situation.

Countries in Africa and the Middle East region that is to say in the Mediterranean region have been at the forefront due to their underground and aboveground sources and strategic positions. Particularly petroleum sources of these countries have critical importance for the European countries.

The European Union has long been interested in the Mediterranean region. The Global Mediterranean Policy dated 1972 and Euro-

Mediterranean Partnership (Euromed) also known as the Barcelona Process dated 1995, prove this situation. Recent policies of the Union on the Mediterranean region have been implemented through the 2004 European Neighborhood Policy. However, this policy has been interrupted by the Arab Spring. Countries in this region were severely affected by this process, and therefore policies implemented by the EU on this region changed. Especially due to the fact that displaced people from Syria settled within European countries, the Union has been intervening in this region through implementing the European Neighborhood Policy. Moreover, there have been controversial whether the Union is sincere with the policies implemented and to what extent they have succeeded. In order to have a better understanding of these policies, the international system, should follow up on when these policies were implemented and their current state. Therefore, the policies of the Union in this region will be analyzed in terms of these facts.

The first section of the article will examine, the background and emergence of the European Neighborhood Policy. In order to do so, the European Union and regional countries history will primarily be studied. Following these global developments leading to the establishment of ENP will be explained and the implementation of ENP on the Arab Spring will be investigated. the second section will review the Arab Spring process. The section mentioned above will discuss, how and to what extent the Arab Spring affected ENP and Turkey's position in regards to this policy will be questioned as well. The last section of the article will discuss and address whether ENP was a successful instrument in managing the Arab Spring process and its future.

DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY

HISTORY OF THE RELATION BETWEEN THE EU AND COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

The history relation between the EU and countries within the Mediterranean region dates back to the years when the EU was known as the European Economic Community (EEC). In the 1950s, when the EEC was established, the relation between the EU and countries in this region was built upon bilateral trade agreements. Morocco and Tunisia¹ were among the first countries to make agreements with the EEC. With time, other countries within the region eventually signed trade agreements with the EEC.²

The relation between the EEC and Mediterranean countries was sealed with the petroleum crisis faced in the 1970s. After the discovery of petroleum, the significance between North Africa and the Middle East increased thus, the Western countries grew interests in this region. The interests led the petroleum producing countries decided on how to organize. Venezuela was among the first counties to suggest on organization in the year, 1949. In 1960, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia founded the "Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries" (OPEC). The key objective of the organization was to determine petroleum prices. The Six-Day War between the Arabic countries and Israel in 1967 enhanced the significance of the organization. The Arab countries affected from the war declared they would impose embargo upon countries attacking any Arab country during the war or helping Israel, thus they implemented embargo upon the UK and the US. The

1 By that time, both countries were colonies of France. That is why they were the first countries in the region signing a trade agreement with the EEC.

2 Andreas Marchetti, "The EU's Relations with its Mediterranean Neighbours in a Regional Perspective", *The University of Malta*, 2012, p. 397-398.

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embargo did not last long since the war was shortly over in 9th January 1968 which led to the establishment of the “Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries” (OAPEC). During the 1973 Arab-Israel War, similar to the previous embargo decision, OAPEC declared that it would impose embargo upon countries involved in the war mentioned above. OAPEC members decided to reduce petroleum being exported to Western countries at the rate of 5% each month asserting that, weapons were shipped to Israel. This led to serious consequences faced by the West, which had no alternative other than countries in the region and was heavily dependent upon petroleum. Western countries were largely affected by the energy crisis which led to a drastic increase in fuel prices. In addition, the embargo mentioned above did not last long either. The second petroleum crisis was initiated by the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Khomeini regime in Iran broke off the relation ties with the Western world. As a result, the Fuel prices increased in the West which struggled for a while without Iranian petroleum.³

The EEC adopted the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) during the Paris Summit in 1972, which is also the basis of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership due to the impact of energy crises. Through this policy, the EEC gathered all bilateral trade agreements with the Mediterranean countries under a single roof. In conjunction with the GMP, the EEC has defined the Mediterranean basis as homogenous geography bearing the characteristics of a “region”. Arab countries play a major role in the region, thus the policy and Arab-Israel War⁴ strengthened the relationship ties between the Arabs and the European Union.

Changes in World order by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War led to improving policies of the Union. Relations between

³ Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power*, Simon and Schuster, New York 2011, p. 427-435.

⁴ Christopher Piening, *Global Europe: The European Union in World Affairs*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Colorado 1997, p. 72-74.

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the Union and Mediterranean countries were affected by these changes and the Global Mediterranean Policy was replaced by the Renewed Mediterranean Policy (RMP). Additionally, Greece, Spain, and Portugal became members of the EEC. Thanks to the membership of these countries, the Union was able to acquire Mediterranean products, gain further commercial partners which further strengthened economic ties. Through RMP, the Union emphasized on the significance of social and economic developments for the security of the region. The Union enhanced its financial support which aimed at the Mediterranean region. Besides, many cooperation projects were carried out between the Union and the Mediterranean countries. Its target was to set up a multilateral cooperation network in the fields of transport, energy, telecommunication, etc.⁵ Contrary to the economic developments mentioned above, the Union was unable to secure convergence necessary with members in the Mediterranean region.

In 1995, the Barcelona Process was initiated during a meeting held in Barcelona where 15 EU countries and 12 Mediterranean states participated. The Mediterranean states included Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Cyprus, and Malta. Nonetheless, the Mediterranean countries provided a suitable environment for the sustainability of economic developments. This was achieved through the formation of the Europe-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. Besides, the strategic significance of the Mediterranean in regards to the Union and stability in the region through peace was emphasized. In this context, economic and social regulations for the process were carried out by the Union in terms of providing financial support to the countries in the region.⁶

5 Piening, *op. cit.*, p. 78-79.

6 Harun Gümrükçü, "Küreselleşme, Avrupa'nın Genişlemesi ve Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Bağlamında Gümrük Birliği'nin Değerlendirilmesi", Mehmet Seyfettin Erol-Ertan Efeğil, ed, *Türkiye-AB İlişkileri: Avrupa'nın Genişlemesi, Müzakere Süreci ve Batılılaşma Sorunsalı*, Orion Publishing, Ankara 2007, p. 36

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While carrying out these regulations regarding Mediterranean countries, the EU thought one-sidedly and enforced its liberal economic order upon countries in the region. The EU was not interested in problems of these countries as long as it could do business. This situation reflects a conflict for the EU which adopts concepts such as, “democracy, human rights, and civil society”. As we will observe while examining the Arab Spring process, this resulted in the subversion of the regional system.

Following the September 11th attacks in 2001, the US defined the new enemy as “terrorism” and asserted “You are either with us or against us” policy. The EU took part along with the US at this stage and changed its security policies. In 2003, the EU published its first security strategy document “A Secure Europe in a Better World”. “Cooperation” concept to be highlighted against newly emerging security threats. According to this document, the current threat types are different from previous ones and countries cannot deal with these threats. International organizations such as the United Nations is of crucial importance in terms of tackling these new threat types and therefore such organizations must definitely be supported. According to the document mentioned above, countries must further cooperate against these threats. The Union, in conjunction with this document, has sought to enhance its global efficiency. In this document, the role played by the U.S is evident. Threats included in this document comply with the understanding of security emerged upon the September 11 attacks in the US.

Developments upon the September 11 attacks⁷ severely affected relations between the EU and Mediterranean countries. Particularly the instability and tensions between Arab countries and Israel in the Middle East was regarded as a major drawback for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in achieving the process mentioned above.

7 Udo Diedrichs, “The Development of the European Security and Defense Policy and its Implications for NATO: Cooperation and Competition”, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 3(1), 2005, p. 60-62.

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With the expansion of the Union in 2004, the relationship between the Mediterranean countries and the Union strengthened geographical ties. Furthermore, the Barcelona Process had its share in regards to the convergence.

THE EU'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY ON COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

At the core of the EU lies the wish of non-occurrence of conflicts as a consequence of different clashes of interest in past experiences. Therefore, in order to minimize these different conflicts of interest, the Union has been in the quest for integration among its members. For that reason, political, economic and cultural differences among members of the Union insinuates fewer conflict risks. In addition, states should surpass their national egos and implement their policies on the basis of common interest. In order for the integration to be successful, factors such as the objective, intensity, and commitment cooperation to the EU are of paramount importance.⁸ However, the Union initially composed of 6 countries which gradually expanded by integrating new members. Therefore, the integration concept upon which the Union is built turned out tough. Particularly upon the expansion in 2004, the question to what extent the Union will expand cropped up.

The expansion in 2004 has been stated statistically:

- The number of members of the Union increased from 15 to 25.
- The geographical surface area of the EU increased by 19%.
- The total population of the EU increased by 20%; the population increased from 378 million to 453 million.⁹

8 İbrahim S. Canbolat, "Avrupa Birliği'nin Kuruluş Felsefesi", Mehmet Seyfettin Erol-Ertan Efeğil, ed., *Türkiye-AB İlişkileri: Avrupa'nın Genişlemesi, Müzakere Süreci ve Batılılaşma Sorunsalı*, Orion Publishing, Ankara 2007, p. 11.

9 Simon Sweeney, *Europe, the State and Globalization*, Pearson Longman, Glasgow 2005, p. 214.

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The EU generated new policies for its new neighbors. In this context, the Union prepared a document in March 2003, called “Wider Europe-Neighbourhood A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours”. In this document, new security problems emerged on changing the eastern border of the EU, ensuring the stability of the Middle East region as the new neighbor of the EU and internal and external agenda items will be determined by new members of the EU as well. The key aspect of the document is the expansion of the EU already becoming a threat to the Union. The Union was founded by European members with European awareness. Thus, the Union’s expansion to the Middle East and North Africa is against this awareness. Moreover, countries in this region became neighbors of the Union following the 2004 expansion. Therefore, the Union is against countries further moving away from itself.¹⁰ In this document, the inclusion of ENP countries in the EU’s internal market and the promotion of free movement of individuals, services, goods, and capital are covered. Through the ENP the Union aspired to create a new cooperation model with neighboring countries and offer them a new partnership model less than full membership, and yet more than an ordinary partnership agreement. The reward of this cooperation is to take part in the EU market without being a member.¹¹

The document which gives the ENP its final shape is the “European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper” approved by the Union in May 2004. According to this document, the Union targeted countries in this region not only comply with the values of the EU but also standards and procedures in economic and social fields. Besides, the Union also seeks to prevent the division of these countries among themselves by cooperating with neighboring countries. The Union believes that countries in this region will come closer to the values and standards of the EU through this policy and

¹⁰ We also observe this policy in Turkey-EU relations.

¹¹ Sevilay Kahraman, “The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union’s New Engagement Towards Wider Europe”, *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 10(4), Winter 2005, p. 2-4.

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enhance their welfare and security. Unlike previous policies implemented in the Mediterranean region, the ENP includes bilateralism (agreements with individual countries within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership), multilateralism (meetings regularly held with countries where the ENP is implemented and covering many subjects) and regionalism (like the formation of a Mediterranean Free Trade Area). In this context, improvements of these countries included in the ENP with regards to the achievement of goals of these policies will be monitored by associations or partnerships constituted by current agreements and progress reports on these countries will regularly be published by European Commission.¹²

Nowadays, the ENP is composed of 16 countries. These countries include Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria and Jordan on the southern border of the EU and Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Ukraine on the eastern border.¹³ The reason why the EU included the Eastern European countries (especially Ukraine), except for the Mediterranean region countries, into this policy is due Russia's efforts to enhance its impact on the previous Soviet geography following the Cold War.¹⁴

European Commission made 7 recommendations about strengthening the ENP by publishing a report on 4 December 2006.

These recommendations are as following:

- Enhancing commercial convergence between the Union and these countries by removing the barriers of trade between ENP countries and the EU,

12 Karen E. Smith, "The Outsiders: the European Neighbourhood Policy", *International Affairs*, 81(4), 2005, p. 762-763.

13 "European Neighbourhood Policy", *European Commission*, 06 December 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/overview_en, (Date of Accession: 26.12.2018).

14 Mustafa Nail Alkan, "Almanya-Rusya İlişkileri Bağlamında Ukrayna Krizi", *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, 12(45), Spring 2015, p. 89-90.

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- Facilitating visa obtaining process in terms of duration and cost between ENP countries and the Union in order to enhance mutual investment and communication,
- Promoting people-to-people exchanges, particularly education exchanges, with the aim of ensuring better communication between the aforementioned countries and EU member states and better understanding cultures of each other,
- Addressing common interests and problems such as energy, health, environment, education, transport, social services, border, and immigration without changing the “differentiation” element, which is the basis of the ENP, in a multidimensional context,
- Strengthening political cooperation against problems that may be faced in the region (such as human trafficking, drug trade, attacks to energy lines, displaced people, intercountry disagreements),
- Enhancing regional cooperation and dialogue,
- Strengthening the ENP financially and using funds in an efficient way.¹⁵

Although the Union has strived to be effective in the region. Firstly, through the Barcelona Process and subsequently ENP and bringing countries in this region closer to its values politically, socially and economically, it failed to achieve this goal. Liberal policies implemented in the Mediterranean region by the Union (like opening the Mediterranean region to investors and competition) were not concluded with the economic development of countries within the region. Europe’s attempt to reconcile conflicting groups in the region and ensuring stability were weakened by the collapse of the peace process. Besides, since the Union

¹⁵ “Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, Brussels”, *Commission of the European Communities*, COM (2006) 726 final, 2006, p. 4-13.

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has not sufficiently supported concepts such as democratization, human rights and rule of law and failed to make any aid cut against human rights violations, no development was recorded in this field either. Also, the Union's avoiding establishing a dialogue with Islamic movements,¹⁶ an important power in the region has weakened the Union's policy to be an important political power in the Mediterranean. This process led the way to the social movements known as the Arab Spring.

THE ARAB SPRING

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB SPRING AND THE ROLE OF THE EU IN THIS PROCESS

Protests in the region began following the death of Mohamed Bouazizi who set himself on fire due to economic reasons in Tunisia in December 2010. The death of Bouazizi and the following protest wave deeply affected the region. It spread to other countries in the region and regimes collapsed in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen. Social movements in Syria led to a civil war that lasted until today due to intense suppression of Esad regime. The Arab Spring is observed in countries located in North Africa and the Middle East. Since the population in these countries is heavily Arab population, this process is called the Arab Spring.¹⁷

The main demands of the protesters in the Arab Spring were democracy and freedom. In addition, there were ethnic, religious and sectarian problems lying behind the protests as well as the political and economic demands of the public.¹⁸ Furthermore, the Arab Spring

¹⁶ Its reason is changing security policies of the Union following the September 11 attacks.

¹⁷ Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya", *Foreign Affairs*, 90(3), 2011, p. 2-3.

¹⁸ Oktay Bingöl, "Krizlerin Uluslararasılaşması: Rejime Karşı Protestolardan Bölgesel Çatışmaya Suriye Örneği", Mehmet Seyfettin Erol-Ertan Efeğil, ed., *Krizler ve Kriz Yönetimi: Temel Yaklaşımlar, Aktörler, Örnek Olaylar*, Barış Publishing, İstanbul-Ankara 2012, p. 456-457.

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spread technology through social media, local people saw the lives of people living in developed countries and increased their criticism against democracy in their countries.¹⁹ The Arab Spring organized people who instantly communicated with each other on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.²⁰

Western countries and international organizations also played a role in the Arab Spring. One of these institutions is the European Union. As indicated before, the EU regarded countries in this region only as commercial partners and as long as it could maintain its trade with these countries it did not pay regard to leaders of these countries and human rights violations of these leaders even though it claims it is an advocate of human rights. This situation came forward especially within the time course after September 11. The EU did not involve in anti-democratic movements in the region as long as these leaders, in spite of their radical movements, cooperated with the EU. In terms of economy, countries within this region went through a dramatic change economically by getting closer to the EU with the Barcelona Process, the process was not reflected on people's lives. Only authoritarian regimes won economically and these regimes used financial sources only to strengthen their powers. Therefore, the Union unwillingly strengthened authoritarian regimes in the region through its policies. This situation further increased existing instability in the region and also led to the outbreak of riots.²¹

19 Mehmet Seyfettin Erol-Emre Ozan, "Uluslararası Krizler ve Medya: Dış Politika Kriz Yönetiminde Medyanın Rolü Üzerine Bir Deneme", Mehmet Seyfettin Erol-Ertan Efeğil, ed., *Krizler ve Kriz Yönetimi: "Temel Yaklaşımlar, Aktörler, Örnek Olaylar*, Barış Publishing, Ankara/İstanbul 2012, p. 136-138.

20 Gadi Wolfsfeld, Elad Segev, Tamir Sheafer, "Social Media and the Arab Spring: Politics Comes First", *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(12), 2013, p. 117-118.

21 Juliane Brach, "Ten Years After: Achievements and Challenges of the Euro-Mediterranean Economic and Financial Partnership", *GIGA Working Papers*, No: 36, December 2006, p. 17-25.

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THE EU'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AFTER THE ARAB SPRING

Since its establishment, the ENP drastically transformed due to a number of radical changes and difficulties in the fields of stability, welfare, and security in countries where it has been implemented. One of these initial changes occurred with the impact of the Arab Spring in 2011. In response to developments in the region the Union published its communication on "A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean" on 8 March 2011. Three topics were emphasized in the dialogue. The first topic was democracy and institution building, the second establishment of strong cooperation through the inclusion of civil society, the third was the constitution of sustainable growth and economic development. Through this communication, the ENP adopted a differentiated policy understanding the targeted countries in this region. According to this communication, reform efforts of countries, the ENP implemented will be financially rewarded.²²

The Union published a communication entitled "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood" on the 25th of May 2011. Four objectives were achieved. The first goal was to constitute a real democracy with an independent judiciary, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, performance of duty of law enforcement forces, the existence of competitor political parties, freedom of conscience and religion. The second was to establish an economic development where countries in the region could establish businesses, social and regional injustices would be minimized, working conditions of workers would be improved, and job opportunities would be provided. The third was to strengthen the cooperation between the Union and countries in this region in the fields such as energy, trade, transport and immigration through the ENP.

²² "A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean", *European Commission*, COM 200 final, 2011, p. 2-3.

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The final was to establish appropriate mechanisms and instruments to achieve the goals mentioned above.²³

The ENP was renewed in 2015. it aimed to have a more accurate approach to developments in this region. The Union would provide support for more than 15 billion Euro's for the ENP between the years 2014 and 2020.²⁴ Four concerns cropped up in regards to these changes. Firstly, the perception that the Union set an example for countries in this region and each country in the region tried to resemble the Union was unrealistic and rather optimistic.²⁵ In reality, countries in the region aspired to have mutual relations with the EU, yet those aspiring to actually integrate with the Union were the minority, countries aspiring to implement EU reforms were actually only half of the neighbors of the Union. The reason behind the situation was that countries involved in the ENP intended not to lose economic relations with the Union rather than taking the Union as an example. Therefore, collective policies implemented by the EU upon these countries were false. The Union should have established a relationship with each country on the basis of demands of each particular country (integration or economy-based). Secondly, the reforms expected from the aforementioned countries within the scope of the ENP by the Union were very far-reaching and failed due to this reason. With the renewed ENP, it now covers subjects such as immigration, energy security, fights against terrorism and climate change as well as human rights and judiciary reforms. Besides, in order to achieve all these reforms, reforms of immediate nature must primarily be carried into effect. The economic development is a must for stability in the region, and employment is the solution of radicalization and immigration in the region.²⁶

23 "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood", *European Commision*, COM 303, 2011, p. 1-2.

24 "European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)", *European Union*, 21 December 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/330/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en, (Date of Accession: 27.12.2018).

25 It should be remembered that the ENP was based on this thesis.

26 Johannes Hahn, "The 2015 Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy", Sieglinde Gstöhl-Simon Schunz, ed., *Theorizing the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Routledge, New York 2017, p. 1916.

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Thirdly, the ENP should have been more flexible to respond to unexpected developments. Moreover its determination on the agenda for the coming years was not useful, new working methods were required and annual reports explaining developments in countries where the ENP was implemented should have been planned. Last but not least, the first 10 years of implementation of the ENP, mainly reflected the view of the Union, and yet for the success of the aforementioned policy, demands of the countries where the ENP was implemented should be considered. According to this, the Union should have made use of academic support in order to understand countries in the region.²⁷

It is not a coincidence that the Union stressed to increase financial support to countries affected by the Arab Spring. During the Arab spring a significant number of people, especially those that were displaced from Syria, unlawfully entered the EU countries or lost their lives. On the other hand, those arriving in EU countries adapted problems and certain groups of these people committed crimes because they were vulnerable. Citizens of EU countries, who do not feel comfortable with this situation, vote for extreme right parties promising to send refugees back to their countries. Therefore, the civil war in Syria has suddenly become an internal problem of the EU due to refugees taking shelter in the EU countries. This immigration problem has turned into one of the most important problems of the EU. The most concrete step of the Union on this subject is "Readmission Agreement" signed with Turkey at the end of 2013.

The one-to-one rule is applied in the Readmission Agreement. That being said, Turkey accepted the return of the Syrian refugees. But there are conditions of this situation; only unlawful refugees are accepted. Moreover, a refugee with a lawful application from Turkey is sent to EU countries in exchange for a returned unlawful refugee from the EU countries and the Union will provide financial assistance for refugees in Turkey. The aim was

²⁷ Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 1917.

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to minimize the number of refugees arriving in Europe, effectively combat human trafficking, and ensure that fewer refugees suffer in the Aegean Sea. With this agreement, irregular immigration from Turkey to Greece has decreased. While there were 8,604 people illegally arriving from Turkey to Greece in March 2016, the number decreased to 1,968 people in March 2018. Therefore, this Agreement was a success from the viewpoint of the EU.²⁸

However, although the Union tried to form a common policy on refugees, it couldn't succeed. The reason for this is that immigration policies and admission number of refugees come under the sovereignty field of member states. Since member states primarily take their national interests into consideration on this matter, the Union faced problems with regard to the establishment of a joint policy.²⁹

In addition, in order to better understand these events, the EU's financial assistance system must be examined. When the Union will provide financial assistance to a region, it generally disburses it to regional institutions and organizations rather than directly transferring it to governments in this region. These institutions and organization invest in projects deem appropriate with the approval of the EU. For example, if we examine this situation from Turkey's perspective, hosting most Syrian refugees, the budget allocated by the EU for Syrian refugees is € 6 billion. It is envisaged that this amount will be provided as € 3+3 billion. That is to say, € 3 billion will be paid in advance and subsequently a further € 3 billion will be provided. Although the first part of € 3 billion is approved in 2015, only an amount of €1.78 billion was transferred to relevant international institutions and the Ministry for EU Affairs as of December

28 "AB ile Türkiye Arasındaki Anlaşma İşliyor", *Deutsche Welle*, <http://www.dw.com/tr/ab-ile-t%C3%BCrkiye-aras%C4%B1ndaki-anla%C5%9Fma-i%C5%9Fliyor/a-43224845>, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2018).

29 Pero Maldini-Marta Takahashi, "Refugee Crisis and the European Union: Do the Failed Migration and Asylum Policies Indicate a Political and Structural Crisis of European Integration?", *Communication Management Review*, 2(2), 2017, p. 64-67.

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2017. Therefore, the Union's allocation of a certain amount of fund for a given region does not necessarily mean that the entire fund is rapidly transferred to the region or this fund is transferred to correct institutions and organizations.³⁰

Another point that needs to be stressed is arms trade-oriented at this region. Union members making peace statements about the civil war have sold €1.2 billion to the Middle East region between the years 2012 and 2016. Some EU countries selling arms are as following: the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia. Furthermore, a major part of these arms has fallen into the wrong hands of radical groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. According to reports, a certain part of these arms was sold to Syria, particularly with the aim of maintaining the civil war.³¹ Therefore, it is questionable to what extent the discourses of the EU are realistic.

TURKEY'S POSITION IN THE ENP

The Turkey-EU relation has been going on for over 50 years. Mutual relations started with Turkey's partnership application to the EEC in 1959. By accepting this application, the EEC recommended signing an agreement until membership requirements were met. The agreement was the Ankara Agreement, which was signed in 1963 and entered into effect in 1964. According to Article 28 of the agreement, the ultimate goal of this agreement is full membership of Turkey. In 1970, Additional Protocol was signed between Turkey and the EU. Aim of this protocol, which entered into effect in 1973, to ensure free movement of industrial

30 "AB'nin Mali Yardımları Hakkında Açıklama", *AB Bakanlığı*, 30 December 2017, <https://www.ab.gov.tr/51062.html>, (Date of Accession: 30.12.2018).

31 Sarah Dean, "Revealed: EU Countries are Selling Weapons Worth £1BILLION to the Middle East Only for them to End Up in the Hands of ISIS", *Mail Online*, 28 July 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3712391/EU-countries-selling-weapons-worth-1BILLION-Middle-East-end-hands-ISIS.html>, (Date of Accession: 15.12.2018).

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products, agricultural products and individual among parties, and to complete Customs Union. Following the 1980 Coup d'Etat, relations were officially suspended. When civil administration was re-installed, relations revived and on 14 April 1987 Turkey applied for full membership to the EU. Since the EU has not completed its integral integration and Turkey needs to develop in economic, social and political aspects, it is indicated that Turkey will not be accepted to membership. Besides, the Union recommended that a date should not be determined to start negotiations and relations should be developed within the framework of Partnership Agreement. Turkey also accepted this recommendation. In 1996, Customs Union entered into force between the EU and Turkey. At the 1999 Helsinki Summit, Turkey's candidacy was officially accepted and it was clear and obvious that Turkey would be in an equal position that of other countries. At the 2004 Brussels Summit, it was decided to start negotiations with Turkey and in 2005 negotiations were initiated.³²

Since Turkey is an EU candidate country, it plays a major role in the ENP, even though it is not included in the policy. Primarily, it is maintaining its accession negotiations with the EU, it shares EU values (democracy, civil society, freedom) in the region. In a sense, Turkey is the country that best understands the EU among other countries in the region. Turkey's is a powerful actor in the region, it is being neighbours to some of the countries included in the ENP and it is being active in foreign policy in recent years are other reasons why Turkey is crucial for the ENP. "Zero problems with neighbours" policy implemented by Turkey in recent years that integrates a joint security zone, advanced political dialogue, mutual economic dependence, efforts to constitute mutual relations based on cultural cooperation also represents the basis of the ENP. In this respect, Turkey's foreign policy is compatible with the ENP; in both policies

³² "Türkiye-AB İlişkilerinin Tarihçesi", *AB Bakanlığı*, 06 June 2017, <https://www.ab.gov.tr/p.php?e=111>, (Date of Accession: 30.12.2018).

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common interests such as stability, welfare and security are supported. Another reason why the Union needs Turkey is that Turkey plays a crucial part in the energy transition in the region.³³

Turkey's importance from another perspective is that Turkey is a role model for other countries in the region. Especially for countries in the Middle East region, Turkey is an exemplary country in terms of democracy.³⁴ Besides, compared to other countries, Turkey has good relations with its neighbours, knows regional actors and it has been in dialogue with these actors, and this obliges Turkey's support to implement the ENP.³⁵ Additionally, Turkey has the potential to function as a bridge between Israel and Arab countries although the relations between Turkey and Israel have been tense in recent times.³⁶

Probably, the most important reason why Turkey is required to better implement the ENP is the Syrian Civil War. Since 2011, the Union has approximately provided €10,8 billion-euro humanitarian aid to Syria. 268 million-euro of this amount has been transferred within the framework of the ENP.³⁷ Furthermore, as stated previously, one of the reasons for the Arab Spring is the policies of the EU implemented in the region. Accordingly, the Union had no sufficient knowledge about the region, somehow caused Syria's Civil War. Turkey jointly acting with the EU members during the Syrian Civil War hosted millions of people displaced from Syria and it functioned as a shield for the Union. As the EU is also aware of, without Turkey's help it's impossible to end the war in Syria and stabilize the region.

33 Ştefan Füle, "Turkey and the European Neighborhood Policy", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 10(2), 2011, p. 18-20.

34 Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "11 Eylül Sonrası Türk Dış Politikasında Vizyon Arayışları ve 'Dört Tarz-ı Siyaset'", *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, 1(1), Winter 2007, p. 38-39.

35 Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "'Ukrayna-Kırım Krizi' ya da 'İkinci Yalta Süreci'", *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, 41(41), 10-11.

36 Füle, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

37 "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Syria", *European Commission*, 01 December 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/syria_en, (Date of Accession: 01.01.2019).

FUTURE OF THE PROCESS

FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

Although the Union has achieved a certain level of success with regards to dialogue with neighbouring countries thanks to the ENP, it confronted problems regarding implementation of this policy as the process continues. Probably, the most crucial problem is that countries within the Union cannot take joint decisions about implementation of the policy. This problem regarding joint decision-making caused delays in responding to developments occurring in the region.³⁸ Considering that joint decision-making is a major concern of the Union, other than the ENP, this problem cannot be solved easily.

With the Arab Spring Process, that was initially not taken seriously by the EU, and yet turned out to even affect the EU following the spread of events into other countries, the Union changed its policies on this region. The Union put emphasis on trade and cooperation rather than providing incentives and sanctions in relation to the ENP. Besides, these changes have not been sufficiently effective until today.

Even though the EU has failed to implement the ENP and unable to develop efficient policies against problems in the region, it is unavoidable to rearrange the ENP if it will proceed with implementation. It needs to be rearranged based on the Union's experience obtained through the Arab Spring, current structure and demands of countries in the region. Furthermore, members of the Union must have different threat perceptions and come together for an efficient ENP. Additionally, members of the Union should efficiently work together with Turkey, as the key actor in the

38 Niklas Bremberg, "Making Sense of the EU's Response to the Arab Uprisings: Foreign Policy Practice at Times of Crisis", *European Security*, 25(4), 31.10.2016, p. 430-432.

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region. The future success of the ENP depends on the implementation of these conditions.

CONCLUSION

The EU intended to take countries in the Mediterranean region under its control through primarily the Mediterranean Policy, subsequently the Barcelona Process and finally the European Neighbourhood Policy. The main reason for these policies is security which is also the basis of the Union. Although the Union implemented the ENP with the aim of ensuring security in the neighbouring regions, it, however, thought of itself. Additionally, the Union is not familiar with its neighbouring regions thus the situation has its own consequences.

Although the ENP was developed with the aim of enhancing cooperation with the Union's neighbouring countries, it cannot sufficiently provide rapid and clear responses to events in the region. The best example of this situation is the Arab Spring process. Not only was the Union unable to foresee the Arab Spring, but it also responded late to the process. Besides, the ENP was not effective during the process is evidence that the Union was unable to better analyse the events in the region. Moreover, the policy was developed in a way that reflected the EU's interests and ignored the characteristics of its neighbouring countries.

ENP policy failed based on countries in the Middle East. The Arab Spring process, the Union's policy of getting its neighbours closer to its values and creating a stable environment failed as well. Even with a stable environment available in the region before the ENP was replaced by chaos. Although the Union has made some amendments in the ENP during the Arab Spring process, it is hard to say that these amendments were effective. The main reasons why the policy failure is that, the Union was not sufficiently aware of the countries in the region where the Arab

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Spring occurred, contrary to what was initially perceived, countries in the region failed to acknowledge the Union as a “role model”, the Union has problems regarding joint decision-making and the Union forcibly imposed its economic activities to countries within this region.

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