

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TÜRKİYE IN CONTEXT OF SECURITY

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the concept of state security in the context of contemporary imperatives by analyzing the security management strategies and various dimensions of security cooperation between Türkiye and the EU. In an era characterized by rapid globalization and advances in science and technology, the importance of state security has intensified, compelling countries like Türkiye to establish relations with international political formations. In this context, the EU has consistently emphasized Türkiye's fundamental role in European security; however, the turbulent nature of Türkiye-EU relations is evident in defense and security cooperation. Moreover, inconsistencies in threat perception and policy have led to differences between Türkiye and the EU on security and defense issues. Particularly after the Arab Spring uprisings, regional security priorities have diverged between the two parties. While the EU has struggles to maintain a unified internal stance, it expects that Türkiye will align its actions with its own policies. In contrast, Türkiye, a NATO member that has intermittently established relations with Eurasia since 1952, is trying to integrate into European security frameworks in line with its predominantly Western-oriented foreign policy. As a result, Türkiye sees a strategic opportunity in the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) project. It is believed that the problem could be addressed if NATO members outside the EU were given the right to consult within the Council on the policy direction of PESCO and full participation in its capability and operational modules. Türkiye should seek to increase the opportunities for deep integration into potential Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) structures, including PESCO. This approach is considered one of the most pragmatic ways to establish a viable and effective cooperation model with the European Union. For the EU, Türkiye should not be seen as an incompetent neighbor, but as a strong partner in the field of security and defense, capable of contributing to the ongoing development of the EU's Strategic Compass and Defense Union.

Keywords: *Türkiye, EU, NATO, Security, Security Cooperation*

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In this article, Ethical Committee Approval is not needed.

AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ VE TÜRKİYE ARASINDAKİ GÜVENLİK ALANINDA İŞ BİRLİĞİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye ile AB arasındaki güvenlik yönetimi stratejilerini ve güvenlik iş birliğinin çeşitli boyutlarını analiz ederek devlet güvenliği kavramını çağdaş zorunluluklar bağlamında araştırmaktır. Hızlı küreselleşme ve bilim ve teknolojiye ilerlemelerle karakterize edilen bir çağda, devlet güvenliğinin önemi yoğunlaşmış ve Türkiye gibi ülkeleri uluslararası siyasi oluşumlarla ilişki kurmaya zorlamıştır. Bu çerçevede, AB, Türkiye'nin Avrupa güvenliğindeki temel rolünü sürekli olarak vurgulamıştır; ancak, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin çalkantılı doğası, savunma ve güvenlik iş birliğinde belirgindir. Dahası, tehdit algısı ve politikadaki tutarsızlıklar, Türkiye ile AB arasında güvenlik ve savunma konularında farklılıklara yol açmıştır. Özellikle Arap Baharı ayaklanmalarının ardından, iki taraf arasında bölgesel güvenlik öncelikleri farklılaşmıştır. AB, içeride birleşik bir duruş sergilemekte zorlanırken, Türkiye'nin eylemlerini kendi politikalarıyla uyumlu hale getireceğini öngörmektedir. Buna karşılık, 1952'den beri Avrasya ile aralıklı olarak ilişki kuran bir NATO üyesi olan Türkiye, ağırlıklı olarak Batı odaklı dış politikasıyla uyumlu bir şekilde Avrupa güvenlik çerçevelerine entegre olmaya çalışmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye proje tabanlı Kalıcı Yapılandırılmış İşbirliği (PESCO) içinde stratejik bir fırsat görmektedir. AB dışındaki NATO üyelerine, PESCO'nun politika yönüyle ilgili olarak Konsey içinde istişare etme hakkı ve kabiliyet ve operasyonel modüllerine tam katılım hakları verilirse sorunun ele alınabileceği düşünülmektedir. Türkiye, PESCO dahil olmak üzere potansiyel Ortak Güvenlik ve Savunma Politikası (CSDP) yapılarına derin entegrasyon olasılıklarını artırmaya çalışmalıdır. Bu yaklaşım, Avrupa Birliği ile uygulanabilir ve etkili bir işlem modeli kurmanın en pragmatik yöntemlerinden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. AB için Türkiye beceriksiz bir komşu olarak değil, AB'nin Stratejik Pusula ve Savunma Birliği'nin devam eden gelişimine katkıda bulunabilen, güvenlik ve savunma alanında güçlü bir ortak olarak görülmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Türkiye, AB, NATO, Güvenlik, Güvenlik İşbirliği*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of security, as a need, is among the needs that comes after the basic "physiological" needs of an individual to sustain their life, such as eating, drinking, and shelter. According to Maslow (1943), one may not seek out the satisfaction of a need—as described within his metaphor of hierarchy of needs, before fully satisfying those other most pressing needs. The need for security or the need for trust is among the important needs for a person.

Security has always been a valid and necessary need. In human history, since the beginning of settled life, the need for order, peace, security and safety has always been important in healthy relationships within society. In order to ensure the continuation of social rules and the continuation of the existence of society, responsible persons and institutions have been establishing and maintaining to ensure this (Dinçer, 2009: 37).

Individual security has always been considered important historically; especially because people live in groups, the concept of "social security" is accepted as the basis of the concept for individual security. Social security has been one of the basic requirements for individuals or communities no need to live (Aydın, 2008: 307).

The state apparatus can restrict the individual's freedoms in order to prevent disruptions of public order and general security through the laws it enacts. In a democratic society, the demand for living in general security and peace, as well as for receiving accessible and quality public services, is more important than individual priorities.

As security problems have become global, it has become an inevitable necessity for states to cooperate with other states in order to successfully combat new problems that they cannot overcome alone. In addition, a broader perspective and cooperation are needed to address the increasing security risks.

The undeniable validity and importance of the concept of security in international relations have been shaped within the framework of the military capabilities and possibilities of countries. The existence of the state apparatus, which is the main element in ensuring security within the international system, also reveals a dualistic situation in this regard. The duality in question is that that the state's security is both produced and consumed.

The state, which has undergone various evolutions throughout history, has managed to maintain its existence as an indispensable element in the modern world. The Peace of Westphalia, the Enlightenment Period, and the French Revolution, which are considered turning points for the state apparatus, have this duality refers to the fact defined the main lines of the state's transformations. In this process, the concept of sovereignty has descended from the sky to the earth, and the concept of nation has also gained significance. The concept of sovereignty became the basic reference for the security of states after World Wars I and II. On the other hand, after the Cold War, states entering an uncertain period with the globalization process began to make concessions in their attitudes regarding security.

It is considered that all security strategies have emerged as a result of increasing anxiety due to the expanding threat environment and uncertainty with the globalization process. With the increasing demand for security, providing security has become increasingly difficult for nation-states. With the virtual disappearance of borders due to globalization, nation-states have become more susceptible to by international security problems such as terrorism and anarchism, economic crises, individual security, environmental and climate-related problems (Polat, 2020: 500). Moreover, the concept of uncertainty reveals that threats are increasingly difficult to detect and are unpredictable in terms of timing and scale. As a result, it can be considered that may offer diminishing benefits since it is not always possible to prepare effectively and in accordance with the characteristics of all possible threats and to respond to them accordingly. National security has become increasingly important for nation-states. Despite this, states have continued to fulfill their traditional, regionally focused security roles, which may not align well with the resilience approach. Their main strategies include strengthening domestic military power, forming security alliances, and attempting to eliminate threats entirely to achieve total security (Merom, 2003).

In order for the modern state structure to provide a complete security environment, sanctions, rules, and the legal system alone are often insufficient. The state with a modern social structure prioritizes public interests and public security in all surveillance activities it carries out.

Due to globalization, existing threats to city and state security have both increased and diversified; these threats now affect not only individual

cities or states but the entire world. In summary, security threats have also taken on a global character in the globalization process.

This study will present the claim from various aspects that “In the globalizing world where science and technology are rapidly developing, despite many new approaches to security management, the concept of state security has become even more important as a result of international threats and compelling countries like Türkiye and international political unions (such as the EU) to cooperate.”

The aim of this study is to examine the concept of state security within the framework of the new necessities of the age by considering various aspects of security management approaches and security cooperation between Türkiye and the EU. It would be useful to evaluate the concept of state security, which maintains its importance in a rapidly globalizing world where science and technology are advancing, in terms of new security management approaches. This study is expected to contribute to the literature and guide researchers who will work in this field.

CONCEPT OF SECURITY

Security As A Phenomena

The concept of security is one of the most important phenomena in terms of an individual's entire personal and social life. For this reason, the concept of security is considered as a vital need. The fact that the concept of security is addressed under different headings such as state security, family security, child security, building security or business security is an indication of the existence of a search for security in all areas related to society.

When evaluated in terms of historical periods, the practice of building shelters to protect against wild animals and natural events dates back to the beginning of human history. People's efforts to provide materials to protect these shelters and ensure the sustainability of life within them, as well as to continuously develop materials for higher living standards, can be viewed as a comprehensive expression of their search for security. Despite the different dynamics that led to these actions between the first person who used fire to prevent wild animals from coming near their shelters and the person who insures their house, built with the most modern products and equipped with technological products, with an international insurance company; it is striking that there is a common search for security behind

the actions (Dedeoğlu, 2003: 9). The concept of security, when considered individually, encompasses all concerns of the individual. The stages that create anxiety can be explained as the safety of the individual and their relatives, the safety of the individual's property, and the sustainability of this safe environment. Individuals, in various stages of anxiety, try to protect their lives by taking certain precautions.

In order to fully define the concept of security, it is necessary to focus on the concepts of “existence” and “value”. It is impossible to talk about security for something that does not exist or does not have an equivalent value (Dedeoğlu, 2003: 21-22).

Another important concept related to security is “value”. An asset with value needs protection when faced with any kind of threat or danger. While the basis of the need for security is the individual's protection of himself and their family from dangers, the need to protect valuable assets, along with the expansion of the protection scope, constitutes the next stage.

Security is one of the most primitive and primary needs of humans. While it emerged in the prehistoric period as the behavior of seeking shelter in a cave to eliminate a possible danger from nature, today it is evaluated within the scope of security to protect a nation from the threats such as weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, the perception of security acquiring new meanings that align with social, political, technological and economic developments.

For an individual, security refers to the absence of any danger or threat to their person and the possessions they own. The security problem, which is considered to be one of the primary and most important problems for individuals as well as for states, is a concept that remains relevant throughout a person's life and should be evaluated by taking into account the social, political, technological, and economic dimensions of life.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECURITY PHENOMENA

With the security concerns that have persisted throughout history, the security concepts in the international system have carried different meaning in each period; the concepts of threat and risk have been re-evaluated according to each environment and condition. However, avoiding the so-called “other”, protecting the rights of individuals referred to as the 'other', suffering harm due to competition with the 'other' and even becoming

superior to the so-called “other” have been seen as natural attitudes and behaviors of all actors. Accordingly, it is difficult to speak of a universally accepted security system in the international arena. It is only possible to talk about some general rules established. In this sense, foreign policy and security strategies are in a constant state of production and innovation (Dedeoğlu, 2003: 55).

Security is like a battery that provides the necessary energy for the internal functioning of a no need state within the framework of the general policies and global strategies that states follow. In this respect, it is insufficient to evaluate the phenomenon of security solely in the context of military dynamics. In other words, the dimensions of security are sociological dynamics that shape the psychology of each individual in society and influence the functioning of society, as well as political and economic factors.

National security has two components: external security and internal security. External security includes certain risks and dangers that may threaten the state outside its borders. Internal security, on the other hand, covers events that occur within the country's borders. Despite this distinction, national security should be understood as a unified concept; this differentiation is only used to identify the sources of security threats.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

The concept of security, like terms such as peace, identity, and international political theory, is broadly defined and varies because individuals interpret it based on their own ideologies. Since it is so difficult to define the concept of security, it follows that it encompasses many different issues. In order to ensure their security, both individuals and governments have taken various measures to prevent intended and unintended situations. Security has become one of the fundamental foundations of many political projects at both the state and international levels.

Within the framework of international security, Samuel Makinda's characterization of security as "the protection of the norms, rules, institutions, and values of society" is highly pertinent. Additionally, Makinda argues that it is essential to safeguard all societal institutions, principles, and structures, including individuals, from both "military and non-military threats." The notion of "protection," a critical element of this definition, implies intentional, purposeful, and definitive measures.

Consequently, the actions taken by a society's leadership are shaped by their perceptions, which are reflected in the scope and focus of their security agenda and guide their initiatives (Yimer and Abdiyo Ensene, 2022).

National security refers to a state's capability to protect and defend its citizens. Conversely, global security has evolved from the inherent obligations placed upon states, along with various factors, particularly globalization. These issues are beyond the resolution capacity of any national security system acting independently, thus necessitating collaboration among states. The global interdependence and interconnectedness observed since the conclusion of the Cold War compel states to enhance cooperation and engage in collective efforts.

A significant challenge faced by states in the realm of global security is the complex notion of security itself; the security concerns of nations must be grounded in a realistic assessment of each state's security requirements. The competitive dynamics among countries are fueled by the fear or threat inherent in the security phenomenon. Effective resolution of this competition can only be achieved through collaborative efforts among states on security initiatives (Osisanya, 2021).

In summary, international security is a concept addressed within the framework of universal principles established by regional and global organizations shaped by the behaviors of all actors ... according to their perceptions. However, considering that the phenomenon of security began with human history, it becomes clear that this phenomenon is also viewed as a process within the international system. Changes in conditions over time have enriched the concept and driven its transformation.

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

Nato In The Context Of Post-Cold War Security

Following the conclusion of the Cold War and the alleviation of the Soviet Union's threat, Türkiye's perspective towards the Alliance began to evolve. Recent evaluations indicate that Türkiye's hard and soft power capabilities have made notable advancements. Concurrently, Türkiye has assumed a more proactive role in foreign policy, leading to increased engagement with non-Western regions and actors. Furthermore, as the stringent limitations of the Cold War have dissipated, the international system has transitioned towards a more multipolar structure. These dynamics are progressively undermining the previously singular, and NATO-focused

characterization of Turkish foreign and security policy. Additionally, the landscape of threats to Türkiye's national security has transformed over time. Although the conclusion of the Cold War diminished the risk posed by the Soviet Union, thereby positively influencing Turkish-Russian relations, developments in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus have gained prominence within Türkiye's security framework. It is important to recognize that threats emanating from these regions have never held the same significance as those from the Soviet Union; rather, they have manifested as risks and challenges rather than direct threats. This situation has lessened NATO's special and privileged role in shaping Türkiye's foreign and security policies, as reliance on NATO's nuclear umbrella has declined. Furthermore, Türkiye's enhanced maneuverability and increased ability to influence regional developments have made it increasingly essential for the country to employ varied methods and tools in its foreign policy (Karaosmanoğlu, 2014).

Considering NATO's role as a collective defense entity within the framework of European security, one might contend that the dissolution of the Soviet Union, along with the progressive enhancement of security perceptions in Europe, has contributed to the erosion of NATO's dominance as a European security institution. The challenge of NATO functioning effectively as a collective defense organization without the Soviet threat explains NATO's diminished appeal among the Turkish elite.

An additional element that has significantly influenced Türkiye's perspective on NATO in the post-Cold War era is the increasing dependence of Türkiye's relations with its European allies on the progress of its European Union accession process. According to Yiğittepe (2017a), as the importance of Türkiye's role in bolstering Europe's security through NATO has diminished in the absence of a shared Soviet threat, the ties between Türkiye and European nations have increasingly become linked to developments in Türkiye's EU membership journey.

However, given that NATO was instrumental in resolving ethnic conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s, it can be asserted that the Alliance sustained its role in European security for an extended period. Nevertheless, the events of the 1990s should be regarded as an anomaly. Although the ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo were resolved and a significant portion of the Balkans expressed a desire to integrate into Western institutions, these areas no longer posed a threat to European security. During this

decade, NATO enhanced European security by first expanding into Central and Eastern Europe and subsequently into the Balkans. However, as developments on the European continent ceased to represent a potential danger to European security, NATO's identity as a European defense entity became increasingly irrelevant. In a climate where voices advocating for NATO's continued relevance diminished, and as Türkiye's security became more influenced by developments beyond Europe, the challenge of ensuring Türkiye's security intensified. The foreign and security policies of Türkiye remain predominantly focused on the West, with NATO serving as the most crucial element.

The emergence of a new approach to foreign and security policy in Türkiye became increasingly apparent with the rise of the AKP to power in the early 2000s. Over the past decade, successive AKP administrations have made substantial strides in enhancing relations with neighboring nations and fostering peace and stability in the region. Türkiye considers the cultivation of ties with its neighbors essential and has intensified efforts to mitigate potential security threats originating from these countries. Had Türkiye maintained a foreign and security policy primarily centered on NATO, it is unlikely that it would have achieved its objectives. In this regard, it is particularly noteworthy that Türkiye's relationships with both Russia and Iran have markedly improved as the nation has gradually moved away from a NATO-centric mindset in its foreign and security policies.

Ideas centered on identity, which played a significant role in shaping Türkiye's perspective toward NATO throughout the Cold War era, began to evolve with the onset of the 1990s. While identity-related motivations became increasingly prominent during the tenure of the AKP governments, remnants of these concerns were clearly observable in the first decade following the Cold War. Over the past 20 years, a unified position has been maintained by all governments, asserting that Türkiye's national identity cannot solely be defined in relation to the Western world. There is a persistent emphasis on highlighting Türkiye's diverse identities. Notably, many perceive Türkiye as a nation capable of bridging and connecting various civilizations and identities. This trend is considered to have gained significant momentum in the last decade.

AKP government has proposed that Türkiye should adopt a worldview centered on its own interests when formulating national policies. Furthermore, Türkiye ought to position itself as an integral part of each

region. It is believed that the primary objective of Türkiye's foreign policy is to influence regional developments in a manner that fosters stability while cultivating pragmatic relationships with key global players based on mutual interests. To ensure that both regional and global developments do not adversely impact the domestic processes of liberal democratic transformation and economic growth, Turkish foreign policy must be articulated and executed in a multilateral and multidimensional manner. "Embracing the role of a nation that engages in regional and global initiatives, mediates conflicts both between and within states, and fully adopts a global perspective is not only beneficial for Türkiye but also constitutes a historical obligation inherited from the Ottoman Empire.

It is essential to recognize that Türkiye has sought to adopt a more proactive stance in NATO's transformation process following the Cold War. While there is ongoing debate regarding Türkiye's effectiveness in shaping this transformation to align with its own interests, it is clear that the country has begun to take the initiative. As noted by officials from the Turkish Foreign Ministry in recent years, Türkiye aims to be a principal actor and stakeholder within the Alliance rather than merely an object of NATO policies. In the context of NATO's transformation, Türkiye has expressed a desire to engage more actively to ensure that the policies adopted by its allies do not adversely impact its multilateral national identity and foreign policy interests. The underlying concern is that the strong relationships Türkiye has cultivated with its neighbors and its efforts to foster peace and stability in its region should not be compromised by the policies pursued by NATO allies during this transformation. A significant challenge for Türkiye in this endeavor has been navigating its position between its traditional NATO partners and its neighboring countries to the east, south, and north.

As previously mentioned, Türkiye has contributed military support to NATO's peacekeeping initiatives in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Kosovo, consistent with its own position. Furthermore, Türkiye has endorsed NATO's expansion into Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. Additionally, Türkiye has promoted the Alliance's efforts to disseminate NATO values to nations that are not slated to become members of NATO, within the context of NATO's Partnership for Peace Program.

Türkiye has exerted considerable effort to navigate the delicate balance between its alliance with NATO and its relationship with Russia. In this

regard, it is essential for NATO to acknowledge Russia's sensitivities concerning Türkiye. Türkiye perceives NATO's expansion toward Russia and its initiatives to enhance military presence in the Black Sea as potential threats, which may evoke a feeling of encirclement within Russia. Consequently, Russia is likely to adopt more nationalist and expansionist policies. This shift could lead to a redefinition of Turkish-Russian relations characterized by competition and hostility, reminiscent of the dynamics observed during the Cold War.

Certainly, following the conclusion of the Cold War, the relationship between Türkiye and Russia has evolved based on principles of cooperation and camaraderie. Within this framework, Türkiye's stance regarding NATO-Russia relations, as well as the Alliance's assessment of the possible repercussions stemming from the membership of Georgia and Ukraine, aligns closely with that of its European allies in NATO. Türkiye shares the perspective held by other European nations, particularly Germany and France that Russia's apprehensions must be taken into account in the formulation of NATO's missile defense shield systems.

Secondly, during the transformation process of NATO, Türkiye has exhibited a more critical and inquisitive stance. Türkiye's primary goal was to ensure that this transformation did not negatively impact its relationships with neighboring countries or its favorable image within the Islamic community. For instance, Türkiye assessed NATO's missile defense shield system while considering its relations with Iran. Security circles in Türkiye believed that the deployment of certain elements of this system on Turkish territory would be perceived by Iran as a threat, potentially leading to a more antagonistic posture from Tehran towards Ankara. This concern explains Türkiye's intensified efforts to exclude Iran from being labeled a threat in NATO's new security document, which was to be ratified in Lisbon in November 2010, and to emphasize that the radar component stationed in Türkiye was purely defensive (Yiğittepe, 2017a). The third aspect of Türkiye's evolving stance toward NATO is its tendency to maintain a critical and questioning perspective on certain issues within the Alliance's agenda, while simultaneously being cautious not to veto any decision accepted by all other allies. Türkiye aimed to avoid the perception of acting independently as a member of the Alliance. A prime illustration of this approach is NATO's military operation in Libya. Initially, Türkiye opposed NATO's intervention in Libya, which was first initiated by the

United Kingdom and France outside of the NATO framework before being adopted by the Alliance. Concerns regarding the potential for significant human casualties in Libya and the adverse impact on Türkiye's reputation in the Islamic world caused considerable discomfort. Nevertheless, once the alliance members resolved their differences and agreed that NATO should take charge of the operation, Türkiye chose to align itself with this consensus. Throughout this process, Türkiye significantly influenced the delineation of boundaries and the operational authority for the undertaking in Libya. Türkiye was particularly sensitive about the non-deployment of ground troops, with its primary responsibility being the enforcement of the embargo on Gaddafi's forces from both maritime and aerial perspectives (SETAV, 2022).

A notable aspect of Türkiye's revised approach to the alliance is its foundation on interest-based calculations rather than identity considerations. This is evident in Türkiye's role within the institutional interactions between NATO and the EU. Türkiye has sought to leverage its NATO membership to facilitate the EU's access to NATO's operational resources and military assets. It is clear that Türkiye's position on this matter is influenced by the dynamics of its relationship with the EU, particularly the sluggish progress of its accession process. Given that EU member states maintain a hesitant attitude toward Türkiye's EU membership and question its European identity, Türkiye is not actively facilitating the EU's access to NATO's capabilities and resources.

Ultimately, Türkiye's evolving perspective towards the Alliance appears to be influenced more by the risk of becoming ensnared in NATO policies than by the fear of being forsaken by the Alliance. While Türkiye's reliance on NATO for security and identity has diminished, a more critical stance toward the Alliance has emerged. Nevertheless, this shift does not imply that Türkiye undervalues NATO's essential role in safeguarding its security interests amid emerging regional and global security challenges. Although such an analysis may lead observers to conclude that Türkiye's reliance on NATO has waned and that the Alliance has lost its former esteemed status in Türkiye's foreign and security policy framework, Türkiye continues to regard NATO and the security assurances it offers as significant. Recent developments associated with the Arab Spring have adversely impacted Türkiye's security interests, contributing to increased chaos and instability in the Middle East, which in turn has underscored Türkiye's

reliance on NATO. Concerns about security have escalated in light of Iran's advancing nuclear ambitions and its growing influence in Iraq. Additionally, the civil war in Syria, the sectarian policies implemented by Maliki in Iraq, the heightened likelihood of Israel targeting Iran's nuclear facilities, and the evolving dynamics of the Kurdish movement in the region have all contributed to Türkiye's apprehensions (Ozan, 2017).

In the wake of the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iraq, regional rivalries and divisions have markedly intensified. These changes seem to have prompted Turkish officials to reevaluate the significance of NATO within Türkiye's security framework. It is now believed that Türkiye recognizes the relevance of the Alliance, particularly in light of the ongoing civil conflict in Syria, which poses a threat to Türkiye's territorial integrity. In this context, Türkiye's request for the Alliance to deploy surface-to-air Patriot missiles along its border with Syria is especially significant.

In conclusion, NATO continues to hold significance for Türkiye; however, Türkiye's evolving identity and interests are anticipated to prompt its decision-makers to adopt a more critical and questioning stance towards the Alliance in the years ahead. Within this framework, it is expected that NATO will struggle to retain the esteemed role it once held in Türkiye's security landscape.

THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURITY AFTER THE COLD WAR

In the post-Cold War era, the global landscape is characterized by open borders, with a close interrelation between internal and external security dimensions. Security is regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for development. Conflict not only devastates infrastructure but also fosters criminal activity and obstructs the normal functioning of economic processes. Furthermore, acts such as genocide, inhumane and degrading treatment, the existence of missing persons, slavery, and crimes against humanity, alongside significant breaches of wartime laws as outlined by the Statute of the International Criminal Court, represent threats to public security. This category also encompasses serious infringements related to access to adequate food, health care, and shelter.

The European Union lists five main security threats to itself: (i) terrorism, (ii) proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, (iii) regional conflicts, (iv) states in crisis and (v) organized crime. It seeks to confront threats and

promote its values; to ensure proximity security; and to achieve strategic objectives of establishing an international order based on an efficient multilateral character.

The significance and scope attributed to the future of security in Europe are unparalleled in the annals of European history. There has been a fundamental reorganization of the nature of security, which has now emerged as a persistent concern for the European Union. In the 21st century, the most effective role for the EU is to advocate for global security. Since 1989, the conceptualization of security has experienced a profound transformation, enriched and expanded in accordance with the shifts observed in the study of international relations. The primary domains that offer the theoretical frameworks necessary for understanding the concept of security include international relations, comparative politics, and political analysis.

Security studies experts assert that the contemporary understanding of security encompasses five interrelated factors: (i) the political aspect, (ii) the military aspect, (iii) the economic aspect, (iv) the social aspect, and (v) the ecological aspect. The security challenge does not pertain to deficiencies in the regular operations of the state across these dimensions; rather, it concerns situations that threaten the very existence of the state through these dimensions. Political security pertains to the stability of organizational systems, governance frameworks, and the ideologies that provide them legitimacy. The military aspect considers the relationship between a state's offensive capabilities and defensive resources, along with the state's interpretation of the intentions of other actors of international relations. Economic security relates to access to essential resources, funding, and markets necessary to uphold acceptable levels of development and state authority. Social security refers to preservation of a nation's shared identity, traditional linguistic patterns, culture, religion, and customs under conditions conducive to an evolutionary process. Environmental security seeks to be sustained at the local level within a global context, serving as a critical foundation for the system upon which other human endeavors rely.

Security is not a fixed concept. It is also a term that denotes an object or situation and a process or series of processes. Security refers to the study of the security problems faced by some nations, the formulation of policies and programs to solve these problems, as well as the governmental processes involved in implementing these policies and programs.

Concerning the European Union, the management of shared policies aimed at creating a common market facilitating the unrestricted movement of goods, individuals, services, and capital across the European Community was entrusted to the European Community during its initial period. Over the years, member states have recognized the European strategy as beneficial in emerging areas, including environmental protection, technological research and development, consumer protection, public health, transportation, the enhancement of economic cohesion, and collaboration with developing nations.

American literature emphasizes that no universally accepted definition of security. Security is the study of the security problems of some nations, the formulation of policies and programs to solve these problems, as well as the government process through these processes and programs.

In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty facilitated the European Union's emphasis on the establishment of a unified security policy, which encompassed the "Common Security and Defense Policy" (CSDP). As stipulated by the Treaty, CSDP consolidated all matters pertaining to EU security, including the development of a collective defense policy that has the potential to evolve into a common defense in the future. This initiative led to the creation of a collaborative framework among member states concerning foreign and security policy within the EU's second pillar.

The provisions were established through the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, which facilitated the creation of the institutional framework necessary for a unified foreign policy. As outlined in the Treaty, the primary aims of the Common Security and Defense Policy include: safeguarding the shared values, fundamental interests, independence, and integrity of the EU Member States in alignment with the principles set forth in the UN Charter, as well as enhancing the security of the EU; ensuring peace and security in accordance with the UN Charter's principles, including the stipulations regarding external borders in Paris, the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and the goals defined in the 1991 Charter; fostering international cooperation; and advancing the development and consolidation of democracy, while upholding the rule of law and fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In December 1998, at the Anglo-French Summit in Saint-Malo, the leaders of the United Kingdom and France decided that, against the backdrop

of the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, Europe needed a military force that would be capable of autonomous action sustained by credible forces (Turan, 2020).

The European Security Strategy also seeks to consolidate the alliance between the EU, the US, and Canada within NATO, based on the principles of the UN Charter. The national army is under the control of a supreme national commander appointed only during an EU mission. The first historical military operation outside the continent was in Congo (12 June-1 September 2003), called "Operation Artemis", which aimed to improve the humanitarian situation in the Bunia region under French command at the request of the UN.

In 2004, the European Council stated its intention to "participate in such operations, but only under the political control and operational command of the UN" in relation to its assistance to the UN. It was decided to exclude the participation of forces and reserve vehicles, preferring operations based on tactical groups established by the EU as a continuation of the operations, while continuing to allow national contributions to the UN reserve forces.

The Lisbon Treaty, signed by member states on 13 December 2007 and coming into effect in November 2009, introduced modifications to the institutional framework of the European Union. In this context, the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty resulted in the renaming of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) to the Common Security and Defense Policy. Prior to the Lisbon Treaty, the treaties did not include provisions related to the ESDP. With the Lisbon Treaty, the inclusion of provisions concerning the ESDP and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the Union Treaties marked their first legally binding status. Conversely, Article 3A of the Lisbon Treaty explicitly delineated the limitations of the ESDP by asserting that "national security is the exclusive responsibility of each member state."

Although the Lisbon Treaty foresees the general rule of the qualified majority voting and the removal of the right of veto on many issues, the unanimous voting and the right of veto have been preserved on issues related to the CFSP and CSDP. Thus, the Lisbon Treaty has not made any changes to the nature and decision-making mechanism of the CFSP and CSDP.

Consequently, the Lisbon Treaty, which for the first time incorporated provisions related to the ESDP within the text of the “EU Treaty,” did not alter the fundamental character of the ESDP. While the Lisbon Treaty introduced the general principle of the qualified majority voting and eliminated veto powers on numerous matters, the decision-making processes concerning the CFSP and ESDP—both retaining a distinctly intergovernmental nature—along with the oversight functions of the European Parliament and the Court of Justice in the realm the CFSP, remained largely unchanged, aside from minor enhancements. The operational framework of the ESDP allows each member state to safeguard its own interests to the fullest extent. Nevertheless, the introduction of the “Mutual Solidarity” provision in the Lisbon Treaty does not transform the EU into a defense entity. Essentially, the ESDP has emerged as a constrained instrument of EU foreign policy that serves the interests of the Union. Within this framework, military capabilities represent merely one aspect of the strategies employed for crisis management operations under the ESDP.

THE SECURITY DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN UNION-TÜRKİYE RELATIONS

Türkiye And The European Union, Common Security And Defense Policy

The relationship between Türkiye and the European Union (EU) in the area of security and defense has long been complex and occasionally contentious. Despite being a NATO ally and an EU candidate country since 1999, Türkiye’s involvement in the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) has been constrained by political, legal, and institutional challenges. The CSDP, which emerged as a central pillar of the EU’s external action framework through the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), aims to strengthen the EU’s capacity for crisis management and conflict prevention in both civilian and military dimensions (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2022).

Türkiye, as a candidate for EU membership and a third country, has participated in CSDP operations, including Operation Althea and Operation Concordia, aligned itself with various CFSP joint actions and common positions, and pledged to contribute to several non-active EU military frameworks, including the EU Rapid Reaction Force. For example, Türkiye has pledged to contribute 4,000-5,000 troops as a non-member to the EU Rapid Reaction Force to be established under the Helsinki Headline

Objective, as foreseen at the Brussels Capability Pledge Conference on 20 November 2000.

“Türkiye has so far contributed to nine EU-led missions and operations as a third country” (Düzgit, Bond, & Scazzieri, 2021), mainly through troops and personnel, making it “the third largest country contributor to the CFSP” (European Commission, 2020). Here, its participation in the EU Advisory Missions Ukraine and EULEX Kosovo was suspended following the withdrawal of Turkish personnel after the 2016 coup attempt in Türkiye, but Türkiye has since continued to express its interest in contributing to these missions again.

Türkiye's exclusion from full participation in the CSDP is often attributed to the unresolved Cyprus issue and the EU's institutional setup that restricts third-country involvement. Although Türkiye contributed significantly to some CSDP missions (e.g., in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Democratic Republic of Congo), it remains outside decision-making processes (Tocci, 2011). This has led to mutual frustration: the EU remains cautious about fully integrating a non-member state into its defense policy, while Türkiye perceives the EU as undermining NATO-EU cooperation by creating parallel security structures that exclude key NATO allies like itself (Aydın-Düzgit & Keyman, 2012).

The 2002 Berlin Plus Agreement — which allows EU access to NATO assets — provides a partial solution to this dilemma, but Türkiye has used its veto power within NATO to block full implementation of the agreement for missions involving Cyprus, thereby contributing to institutional gridlock (Howorth, 2014). This reciprocal blockage has undermined both NATO-EU strategic cooperation and Türkiye-EU defense dialogue. Nevertheless, Ankara continues to view European security as strategically important and has repeatedly expressed willingness to cooperate under more inclusive and reciprocal conditions (Ülgen, 2010).

A Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) for more structured participation or an Accession Agreement (PA) for temporary participation in an individual mission, as well as Article 37 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, have established the legal basis for the participation of third countries in EU activities (Bakker, Drent, & Zandee, 2017). In this context, Türkiye has participated in EU activities with the statement that “in accordance with

the legal instruments referred to in Article 2(1) of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Türkiye establishing a Framework for the Participation of the Republic of Türkiye in European Union Crisis Management Operations, which entered into force in July 2006, it will have the same rights and obligations as the EU Member States involved in the operation in terms of day-to-day management of the operation.” “However, third countries do not have the possibility to plan, organize and coordinate an operation and are expected to follow the EU’s programs and procedures as well as adopt EU practices.” Any attempt to grant a decision-making role for third countries in the CFSP and CSDP is completely excluded by the Lisbon Treaty. As Wessel (2008) notes, “the Brexit debate has shown that the EU does not seem to favor any ‘quasi-member’ status, let alone voting rights for non-members”.

Of course, this does not constitute an obstacle to Türkiye’s participation in the policies and actions of the CFSP under the conditions mentioned above. However, as the annual Commission reports show, Türkiye’s compliance with the CFSP positions has decreased since 2003. The year 2011 was one of the most critical moments due to Türkiye’s refusal to comply with the EU’s restrictive measures against Iran, Syria, and Libya. The report stated that “Türkiye’s foreign policy increasingly clashed with EU priorities within the scope of the Common Foreign and Security Policy” (European Commission, 2020). In EU circles, the increasing “autonomy” of Turkish foreign and security policies was seen as a result of Türkiye’s interventions in northeastern Syria and Libya and its growing cooperation with Russia. This situation poses an obstacle for Türkiye, which, as a candidate country for full membership, has an obligation to align its legislation and policies... more closely with those of the EU.

Moreover, the post-2016 regional security environment — marked by instability in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Syrian civil war, and tensions with Greece and France — has further strained Türkiye-EU relations in security matters. These developments have highlighted not only the EU’s limited strategic autonomy but also Türkiye’s increasing emphasis on national defense capabilities and autonomous security partnerships (Kirişçi & Toygür, 2020). Thus, while both actors share overlapping interests in regional stability, counter-terrorism, and migration management, the absence of institutional trust and political will has prevented deeper alignment in the framework of the CSDP.

Individually, Türkiye has signed bilateral and multilateral security and defense agreements with EU member states. For example, on November 8, 2017, Türkiye signed an agreement with France and Italy at the NATO headquarters in Brussels to strengthen cooperation in the field of defense. This agreement aimed to develop the Turkish Long-Range Regional Air, and Missile Defense System (T-LORAMIDS) by the European company EUROSAM GIE, Turkish ASELSAN Electronics Industry and Trade Inc. and ROKETSAN Rocket Industry and Trade Inc. (Erkuş, 2018). “MELTEM-3 and GÖKTÜRK projects are other examples of Turkish-Italian cooperation. In the MELTEM-3 project, “six ATR-72/600 Maritime Patrol Aircraft with Anti-Submarine Warfare and Anti-Surface Warfare features” are being supplied by Türkiye from the Italian supplier” (Sünnetçi, 2020). The GÖKTÜRK project was also initiated with Italy and France to create an Earth Observation Satellite for various purposes such as homeland surveillance and natural resource management. The most recent example of bilateral cooperation in the field of defense occurred when Polish President Duda purchased a Bayraktar TB2 UAV from Türkiye during his visit to Türkiye in 2021 (Zorlu, 2021).

In addition to its individual contributions to EU member states, Türkiye has cooperated with the EU in the development and implementation of certain defense projects, especially through EU financing. For example, the HYPERION and TALOS (Portable Autonomous Patrol for Land Border Surveillance System) projects are being developed with contributions from ASELSAN. “Several European companies also contribute to Türkiye’s defense systems. For example, Turkish companies ASELSAN and ROKETSAN are working with EUROSAM GIE on the Air and Missile Defense System project” (Kaya, 2019). As a result, Türkiye has maintained close contact with EU members for defense cooperation.

Going forward, the EU’s *Strategic Compass* initiative (2022), which seeks to enhance the Union’s strategic culture and defense readiness, may offer renewed opportunities for third-country partnerships. However, without progress on the Cyprus question and a broader reset in Türkiye-EU political relations, any substantive cooperation on security and defense is likely to remain limited and transactional rather than institutionalized.

TÜRKİYE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN UNION SECURITY

During the Cold War, Türkiye allied with the West due to its geostrategic location, through the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and finally joining NATO in 1952, acting in line with transatlantic solidarity. “The American partnership and Turkish-Greek relations, the North Atlantic Alliance, and the Transatlantic connection remained the cornerstones of Türkiye’s security policies at the end of World War II and throughout the 1990s” (Ereker & Açıkmüşe, 2021). As part of its Westernization strategy, Türkiye prioritized strengthening its ties with the European Communities and signed an Association Agreement (Ankara Agreement) with the EEC in 1963, which paved the way for the establishment of the Customs Union in 1995, thus increasing its potential membership prospects.

In other words, Türkiye has contributed to Western European security, especially through its NATO membership, since the Cold War. Türkiye ranks second after the United States as having one of the largest armies in the alliance and is ranked 11th out of 139 countries with a rating of 0.2109 according to the 2021 Military Strength Rankings. Since the end of the Cold War, Türkiye has participated in many NATO operations and missions, including the Multinational Task Force South as part of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), the ISAF-II mission in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2003, the NTM-I Iraq Training Mission, Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, Operation Ocean Shield in the Indian Ocean, and Operation Libya. In 2021, Türkiye also assumed responsibility for the NATO High Readiness Force by allocating the 66th Mechanized Infantry Brigade to NATO service (NATO, 2021).

As a reliable NATO ally with a special significant military contributions to the alliance, Türkiye, one of the EU candidate countries, was expected to be an asset within the European Union when the EU decided to establish its own military structure in 1999 when Türkiye was declared a member of the alliance. It was anticipated that Türkiye would contribute to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that developed even during the candidacy and negotiation period and provide added value to the EU's security policy in the common EU-Türkiye neighborhood. Specifically, in the first decade of the 2000s, Türkiye, which had the ability to set the agenda and had no problems with its neighbors, could have had engaged with countries such as the EU, Iran and Syria. However, in the context of

the CFSP and the EU neighborhood policy, Türkiye's potential contribution was hindered by two important developments.

The first limitation came with the transformation of NATO immediately after the end of the Cold War, and thus NATO evolved from a simple defense alliance into a security provider in a broader sense, including non-traditional security approaches. In such a context, while NATO was looking forward to a European partnership, the EU's need for defense cooperation with NATO increased since the early 1990s and especially since 1999, when it launched the CSDP (Açıkmeşe & Koppa, 2022).

The major changes that occurred with the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union significantly changed the security strategy of the West. In addition, the developments that occurred worldwide after September 11 have further complicated the security perceptions of key players in the international arena. Thus, the changes in the sources and nature of threats have led to the emergence of a new European security architecture and NATO's search for a new role, strategy and organizational structure compatible with the realities of this new era. EU members have managed to create a "security community" in Europe, but extending this peace and cooperation to conflict-ridden neighboring regions such as the Balkans and the Middle East remains an extremely difficult challenge. Since Europe is not immune to the negative effects of conflicts and deep socio-economic and political problems in neighboring regions, the promotion of Euro-Mediterranean security becomes extremely important for both hard and soft security problems (Kınacıoğlu, 2015).

In addition, Türkiye was keen to gain rights similar to those granted by the (WEU) in the 1990s. Although Türkiye was not a member of the WEU, it became one of the six non-voting associate members of the (WEU) in 1992, along with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, and Poland. However, in March 2010, the members decided to cease the operational functions of the WEU, and the organization was officially dissolved in June 2011. In fact, the process of integrating all aspects of defense and security into the EU had begun much earlier: the first major change came in 1998 with the decision to develop an autonomous Security and Defense Policy at EU level in Saint-Malo. This decision received a strong reaction from individual member states as well as from NATO. The US, which did not want to be involved in a competitive plan with its NATO partners in

practice, nevertheless welcomed any EU effort that would contribute to military burden-sharing without unnecessary duplication.

Türkiye, which feels excluded from European security developments, was further disadvantaged by the decision to dissolve the WEU, of which it had been an associate member since 1992, and to transfer all issues related to European security, including the right to vote, to the EU, an organization in which Türkiye has no presence. Thus, Türkiye lost its privileged status in European security structures, which was provided through its connections with the WEU. According to the new arrangements made at subsequent EU Summits (especially in Feira and Nice in 2000), despite the condition that Türkiye would participate in decision-making processes in EU-led operations that required the use of NATO assets and capabilities, it remained in a position where it could easily be excluded from exclusive EU operations if the countries did not reach unanimity.

The second limitation hindering Türkiye's potential security contribution to the EU is the declining power of both Türkiye and the EU in some of their common neighborhoods, such as the Middle East, along with Türkiye's policies in these regions that often contradict those of the EU. Türkiye was quickly accepted as a role model in the Middle East after the Arab uprisings with its democracy and transatlantic/Western connections. However, "it did not take long for Türkiye to find what it was hoping for" because Türkiye tried to redesign the region without considering the limits of its capabilities and influence, and often against the interests of its transatlantic partners (Ereker & Açıkmeşe, 2021).

Despite all the limitations mentioned above, in EU security policy, both benefits and costs may arise from Türkiye as a candidate country, neighboring partner and NATO ally. In this context, there are various opportunities and challenges for Türkiye to be included in the EU's security structures as a NATO partner, EU neighbor and EU candidate.

TÜRKİYE'S APPROACH TO EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

After gaining considerable economic and political power through integration within the European Union structure, European countries that are members of NATO have sought to minimize their dependence on the United States in security and defense matters. This goal is reflected in the European Union's attempts to create a European Security and Defense Policy

(ESDP), which aims to create an EU military capacity that complements NATO but is also capable of autonomous action from NATO. European Union countries seek more political authority and operational control, which would lead to a more equitable sharing of power and responsibility (Yiğittepe, 2017b: 120).

France has taken the lead in efforts to end American hegemony over European security affairs and has strongly expressed the need to balance US primacy in a unipolar world. France's position was supported first by Germany and then by the UK. The US, which has remained reluctant to reduce its influence in transatlantic security arrangements and decision-making processes, has been quite skeptical of this development. The US's biggest concern was the development of an independent European Security system that France envisioned and that could undermine NATO. Furthermore, given the constraints on European countries' defense budgets, the US has doubts about whether European defense capabilities can achieve NATO and EU military objectives such as deployability, sustainability, interoperability, flexibility and survivability. It was thought that the new European security architecture would require larger national defense budgets as well as more cooperative European investment in defense. Another important issue affecting the future of Euro-Mediterranean security has been Türkiye's approach to the ESDP. During the finalization process of the ESDP, Türkiye was very reluctant to relinquish the rights it had gained within the framework of the WEU.

The goal of providing a security and defense mechanism for Europe resulted in the establishment of the Western European Union (WEU) in 1948. However, with the increasing influence of NATO during the Cold War, the WEU was shelved, and the US became the dominant actor shaping transatlantic security relations. In the post-Cold War era, the revived WEU accelerated efforts to establish a "European Identity" for security and defense. Since the mid-1990s, the WEU has experienced significant institutional growth and the number of members increased to ten with the accession of Greece in 1995. In addition to these full members, the WEU had six associate members: Türkiye, Norway, Iceland, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, all of whom were also NATO members. These countries were NATO members but were not part of the EU. The WEU also had five "observer" countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Sweden), which were members of the EU and preferred limited

participation for political reasons. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, ten more Eastern European and Baltic countries became members of the WEU as “partners” in 1994 (Korkmaz, 2011).

The WEU’s goal of ensuring collective defense and security through cooperation with NATO was realized through the so-called Petersberg Missions. According to the 1992 EU decision, these important missions included humanitarian aid and rescue operations, crisis management, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement in areas that endangered European security. The WEU’s greatest weakness was that, due to its very limited political power and operational capabilities, it was heavily dependent on US decisions and military assets to conduct large-scale operations. The US had an advantage over its allies, especially in terms of secure communications, data transfer technologies, all-weather precision capabilities, logistics, and intelligence expertise. The war in Kosovo, where the US had to conduct two-thirds of the high-precision operations alone, was a clear indicator of Europe’s weaknesses at the strategic and operational levels (Karabulut, 2014: 82-83).

In 1999, when the EU decided to incorporate the WEU, it set an ambitious goal of establishing a rapid reaction force with 60,000 troops by 2003. These forces would be ready to deploy within sixty days and would remain in crisis areas for at least one year to carry out the Petersberg Missions. After the force requirements were assessed through close interaction with NATO at the EU meeting in November 2000, initial plans for the EU force were determined. As a result, the EU decided to establish a pool of 100,000 troops, 400 aircraft and 100 ships for rapid reaction. In this process, one of the most controversial and important issues for Türkiye was the redefinition of the future role of non-EU NATO members within the framework of the new ESDP (Şöhret, 2013: 61).

During the Cold War, Türkiye, positioned on the Southeastern flank of NATO, served as a reliable ally. Türkiye maintains a strong interest in European Security arrangements and in ensuring itself a continuing preeminent role in NATO as a Southern Region country. Unlike other EU member states in this region, such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, Türkiye, which was particularly excluded from the decision-making mechanisms of the ESDP, had a high stake in preserving the institutional status quo (Erdoğan, 2004: 73).

As an associate member of the WEU, Türkiye participated in important activities such as having five officers in the defense planning cell, attending biweekly meetings of twenty-eight ambassadors, and representation by Turkish parliamentarians for two terms. Although an agreement was reached regarding the activities of the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs), Türkiye was excluded from decision-making in the WEU Council and the collective defense provisions of the WEU agreement. If the CJTFs use NATO assets, Türkiye will have the right to fully participate in the WEU decision-making process. In addition, the decision that the collective defense clause will not apply in conflicts between NATO members will also apply to the status of the WEU in the event of a possible military conflict between Türkiye and Greece (Caşın, Özgöker and Çolak, 2007: 214-215).

During the NATO Summit in Washington in April 1999, the Strategic Concept defining NATO's objectives and strategies was updated with the aim of "equipping the Alliance for the security challenges and opportunities of the 21st century and guiding its future political and military development". In this context, Türkiye reiterated the necessity of reaching an agreement on any decision of the NATO Council regarding the use of alliance assets for European purposes. As a result, while creating NATO's New Strategic Concept, Türkiye made it mandatory that this right be indirectly taken into account for alliance decisions on a case-by-case basis. Accordingly, "arrangements for the release, monitoring, return, and/or recall of NATO assets and capabilities" would be provided "on a case-by-case basis in support of WEU-led operations". In addition, NATO-EU relations would be organized around the mechanisms existing between NATO and the WEU (Çakmak, 2003: 205-206).

During the Nice Summit of the EU in December 2000, the changes in the EU decisions compared to the Washington Summit of 1999 caused great disappointment in Ankara. At the Nice Summit, there were no references to shaping the new security and defense strategies according to the previous mechanisms of the WEU, and non-EU NATO members were completely excluded from the decision-making structures. In 1995, the WEU Council of Ministers decided that in the case of full integration of the WEU into the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), "the participation of the common members in the further development of the ESDP should continue and that they should further improve their

current situation by means of appropriate arrangements to ensure their participation and partnership with the CFSP” (Vershbow, 1999). However, it was unclear how such a goal could be achieved for non-members of the Union. As a result, Ankara argued that non-EU NATO members should not be expected to automatically comply with political decisions taken without their participation.

Türkiye, one of the WEU associate members, has been the country most affected by this restructuring process. Due to its geographical location, Türkiye is situated in a very volatile region. According to reports by the French Defense Institute and the International Strategy Institute in Switzerland, Türkiye is surrounded by thirteen of the sixteen “hot spots” (i.e. Kosovo, Syria, Cyprus, and Chechnya) and these are prone to the outbreak of possible conflicts that could affect European security. Norway, which is quite far from the hot spots, has only agreed to participate in decision-making mechanisms. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have also complied with EU decisions since they would soon be granted full membership status in the EU. Türkiye has been frustrated by the fact that these former Warsaw Pact members will become EU members before Türkiye and will have more power than Türkiye, which has long been a NATO security ally. As a result, Ankara’s determined insistence led to the collapse of the NATO consensus on command-sharing and planning arrangements with the EU in December 2000 (BBC Monitoring European, 1999).

It is a generally accepted approach that Europe needs Türkiye to strengthen its security and defense. Its proximity to the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Mediterranean region provides Türkiye with a critical position in a strategic area of great importance. In this context, it is seen that all possible scenarios of crisis management operations led by the EU somehow include Türkiye. On the other hand, it is thought that Türkiye, which is at the center of crisis regions, will protect its vital interests by continuing to take part in the European security system (Ağca, 2010, 237-238).

Türkiye’s concerns were expressed as risks that the EU’s initiative would undermine the influence of NATO and the transatlantic link that it would erode NATO’s deterrent power, and that operations and other activities initiated by the EU could negatively affect Türkiye’s security. In this

context, Türkiye was particularly concerned about the possibility of intense pressure from Greece in the event of escalating tensions in the Aegean or Cyprus. The long-standing deadlock between Türkiye and Greece had been an obstacle to the ESDP. This deadlock was finally resolved through a compromise at the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002. The Council, which was defined as a 'Partnership for Peace' member and therefore signed bilateral security agreements with NATO, decided that the Berlin-Plus Agreements and their implementation would only apply to EU member states that were NATO members or parties to the EU. Thus, Cyprus and Malta were excluded from EU military operations conducted using NATO assets, and a breakthrough was achieved in ensuring the EU's access to NATO capacities and assets. The Union was now allowed to use NATO logistics and access the NATO planning base SHAPE, thus becoming a turning point in the history of relations between NATO and the EU (Demir, 2009: 29).

For the ESDP, this development will also make the Union with a stronger capacity for crisis management and will also make a significant contribution to the development of cooperation on Euro-Mediterranean security. In this context, since 2003, Türkiye has played an active role in all EU-led peacekeeping operations, except in Congo. Türkiye has been especially important in multinational peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans, Somalia and most recently in Afghanistan. For example, Türkiye participated in UNPROFOR with 1,450 soldiers in 1995. It also participated in NATO's IFOR and SFOR with 1,200 soldiers and took part in police operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. In addition, Türkiye assumed command of the NATO-provided International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) forces in Afghanistan in June 2002. It assumed command again in 2005. (SETAV, 2022).

As a central regional power with significant military capabilities, Türkiye has a critical role to play in strengthening peace and stability in its volatile region by (i) consolidating its democracy; (ii) maintaining good neighborly relations; (iii) achieving a balance in the complex EU-Türkiye-US triangle; and (iv) operating within the European framework. Türkiye's role in Euro-Mediterranean security is clearly defined by its long-standing relations in the transatlantic context and its goal of EU membership.

POSSIBLE EU-TÜRKİYE RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURITY IN THE FUTURE

“Despite the EU repeatedly emphasizing the key role Türkiye plays in European security, the turbulent relations between Türkiye and the EU are clearly evident in their defense and security cooperation. Especially since the Arab uprisings, the two sides have diverged in their regional security priorities” (Müftüler-Baç, 2017). It is clear that Türkiye and the EU now have different threat perceptions in their common areas, especially in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, suggesting that from the EU perspective, Türkiye is no longer the desired security partner between the EU and the EU South. This difference in threat perception and policy has undoubtedly led to disagreements between Türkiye and the EU on security and defense issues. For example, the EU criticizes Türkiye for its military support, including the deployment of foreign fighters, to the internationally recognized Tripoli-based government, which it states jeopardizes “the EU’s effective contribution to the implementation of the UN arms embargo” (European Commission, 2021). Türkiye’s military actions in Syria are different from the EU’s policy of non-intervention and its goal of “building a peaceful and prosperous Syria” (European Commission, 2021). In this context, it is considered useful to state that the EU continues its traditional inconsistent stance and lacks a unified voice in both areas. In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, the EU and Türkiye have conflicting interests, and the EU continues to condemn Türkiye for its unilateral actions and escalations (European Commission, 2021). Therefore, it would be explanatory to present the sentence expressed in the EU’s 2021 Türkiye Report: “Türkiye’s increasingly assertive foreign policy has continued to conflict with EU priorities within the scope of the CFSP, especially due to its support for military operations in the Caucasus, Syria and Iraq”.

On the other hand, Türkiye, which has been a part of NATO in particular since 1952 and follows its Western-oriented foreign policy in general, aims to be included in European security structures. In this context, Türkiye sees its own window of opportunity in the project-based PESCO. As Aydın-Düzgit (2018) stated, it is accepted that the problem would be solved if NATO non-EU member states have the right to decide on the policy direction of PESCO in the Council and fully participate in PESCO's capabilities and operational modules. Members involved in a project can agree on whether to include a third party or not. This contribution is clearly

seen in Türkiye's participation in many EU-led operations. Moreover, there is no doubt that Türkiye's military power and willingness to contribute will be an important asset for the EU.

One scenario for advancing Türkiye-EU cooperation in the field of security and defense is to grant a common status to the United Kingdom and Türkiye. This is mainly meaningful at the level of security and defense, where both states have significant military capabilities and participate in CFSP missions and operations. In this context, former European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has repeatedly stated in his statement in December 2016 that a “different trajectory” could be invented for countries neighboring the EU, such as the United Kingdom and Türkiye, as an alternative to EU membership. This situation stems from the idea of a “special, privileged relationship” between both countries and the EU, and places the United Kingdom and Türkiye on the same footing (Pop, 2016).

Türkiye's potential accession to the European Union is both important for the EU's security and Türkiye's role in this regard. It is considered that the potential benefits of Türkiye's inclusion in these formations, as opposed to the possible geopolitical and security risks that Türkiye's exclusion from defense formations would pose for the EU, triggered the EU's decision to grant Türkiye candidate status. Türkiye's contribution to the EU's CFSP stems from its role in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Caspian region, as well as its military capabilities, and also includes its ability to influence EU operations through voting in the NATO Council (which has the final say). Türkiye is an important player in the changing European security arena, and it is believed that EU-led operations without its participation have little chance of success. Türkiye's stance on this issue is closely linked to its relationship with the EU. Türkiye wants to participate in EU-led operations, and the EU needs Türkiye in order to have a reliable European force. Türkiye's role is certainly different from that played during the Cold War in terms of its geographical location and military capabilities, but it is no less vital. Therefore, Türkiye's integration into the EU has an additional advantage that Central and Eastern European countries do not possess. Therefore, just as the decisions taken at the 1997 Luxembourg Summit were seen as a strategic mistake against Türkiye, granting Türkiye candidate status at the Helsinki Summit can be considered as an appropriate step taken by the EU.

A possible scenario for Türkiye-EU relations in the near future is that Türkiye will be closely integrated into the CFSP, the “second pillar” of the EU, thus securing its role in the future development of EU security policies. This scenario fits into the complex structure of European integration, where Türkiye can act primarily as a full member on certain issues, especially security, but will not have the same influence as a full member on other issues. However, any scenario short of full membership will not be welcomed in Türkiye. While the Helsinki decisions are undoubtedly a turning point in Türkiye’s relations with the EU, they can also be seen as a compromise to secure Türkiye’s partner status in the EU’s evolving security role. Another aspect of this compromise is that Türkiye still has a long way to go in terms of political and economic development. The EU needs to adopt reasonable attitudes in order to anchor Türkiye in the West. This situation will be better understood when we look at Türkiye’s size, what it can prevent and what it can open doors to.

In short, Türkiye’s entry is considered too would provide numerous benefits to the Union’s foreign and security policies through Türkiye’s capabilities and existing ties in the surrounding regions. At the same time, Türkiye’s exclusion by the EU—despite its ability to influence EU military operations and decisions through its vote in the NATO Council—is viewed as problematic and even risky for the Union. Although the EU takes this into account in its policy towards Türkiye, Türkiye’s motivation is the desire to belong to Europe. Since the foundation of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923, Türkiye’s foreign policy has been directed towards the ultimate goal of being accepted as a European nation. The Turkish view is that joining the EU supports one’s European identity. For this reason, many Turkish citizens believe that if Türkiye becomes a member of the European Union, the century-old dream of being part of Europe will finally come true.

The future trajectory of EU–Türkiye relations in the domain of security will likely be shaped by a convergence of strategic necessities, shifting geopolitical dynamics, and institutional recalibrations within both the European Union and NATO. Despite persistent political disagreements and longstanding mutual skepticism, the changing security environment in Europe and its periphery is generating new imperatives for pragmatic engagement between the two actors. Shared challenges such as regional instability, terrorism, irregular migration, and energy security increasingly necessitate functional cooperation irrespective of political divergence.

Türkiye's geostrategic location, acting as a pivotal nexus between Europe, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea, renders it an indispensable actor for European security. Although the EU has often framed Türkiye as a difficult partner, it remains aware of Ankara's importance in managing security risks emanating from Europe's southern and eastern flanks. The EU's Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2022), a recent initiative aimed at enhancing European strategic autonomy, highlights the need for closer collaboration with third countries in security and defense matters. While Türkiye is not prioritized in this document, the policy framework does create space for flexible, project-based cooperation.

Migration management will continue to represent a foundational pillar of EU–Türkiye security engagement. The 2016 EU–Türkiye Statement functioned as a crisis management tool, effectively reducing irregular migration flows from Türkiye to the EU through coordinated border control, financial assistance, and refugee support mechanisms (European Council, 2016). In light of potential new waves of displacement from Syria, Afghanistan, or Sub-Saharan Africa, the EU and Türkiye may find it mutually beneficial to update this agreement to include broader components such as joint intelligence sharing, anti-trafficking operations, and protection of vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, Türkiye's evolving military-industrial capacity, particularly its indigenous production of drones and its operational experience in asymmetric conflicts, opens the possibility of selective technological and defense cooperation. Türkiye's defense exports, as demonstrated in Ukraine, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, have elevated its role as a regional security actor. While political conditions currently constrain Türkiye's participation in EU defense initiatives like PESCO or the European Defence Fund, the EU could consider more flexible engagement formats that allow for technical and industrial collaboration in dual-use technologies, provided that normative and regulatory standards are met (Biscop, 2021).

Nevertheless, significant institutional and political obstacles remain. Türkiye is not formally part of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) structures and continues to be excluded from decision-making mechanisms. This exclusion stems largely from the unresolved Cyprus issue and broader deterioration of EU–Türkiye political relations over the last decade. The absence of mutual trust, ongoing tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and disagreements over democratic backsliding

in Türkiye complicate the prospects for deeper institutional integration (Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci, 2021). These structural issues limit long-term planning and make most security cooperation transactional and reactive rather than strategic and sustained.

Looking ahead, a pragmatic path forward would involve focusing on concrete areas of shared interest rather than aiming for comprehensive alignment. Counterterrorism, cyber security, border surveillance, and maritime security in the Mediterranean are potential areas for limited but constructive cooperation. NATO could also serve as a platform to mediate some of the EU–Türkiye security disagreements and foster dialogue between Ankara and EU member states. As Tocci (2023) argues, a green, digital, and geopolitical reset in EU–Türkiye relations is still possible if both sides embrace a more realistic, interest-based approach grounded in functional cooperation rather than grand political convergence.

CONCLUSION

While the EU has repeatedly emphasized the key role Türkiye plays in European security, the turbulent relations between Türkiye and the EU are clearly evident in their defense and security cooperation. Particularly since the Arab Spring uprisings, the two sides have diverged in their regional security priorities. Türkiye and the EU now have different threat perceptions in their common neighborhood, especially in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, suggesting that Türkiye is no longer seen as a desirable security partner for the EU to bridge the gap between the EU and its southern neighbors. Of course, these differing threat perceptions and policies have led to divergences between Türkiye and the EU over time on security and defense issues.

For example, the EU criticized Türkiye's military support for the internationally recognized Tripoli-based government, including the deployment of foreign fighters, and said that this jeopardized "the EU's effective contribution to the implementation of the UN arms embargo." Türkiye's military actions in Syria are different from the EU's policy of non-intervention and its goal of "building a peaceful and prosperous Syria." In this context, it is worth noting that the EU's traditional inconsistent behavior continues. While the EU does not have a direct role in either area, it expects Türkiye to comply with its policies. As in the Eastern Mediterranean, there are a number of conflicts of interest between the EU

and Türkiye, and the EU continues to condemn Türkiye's unilateral actions and its attitude that fuels tensions. Therefore, it would be revealing to note the following sentence in the EU's 2021 Türkiye Report: "Türkiye's increasingly assertive foreign policy in contradiction with EU priorities has continued within the scope of the CFSP, particularly with its support for military operations in the Caucasus, Syria and Iraq."

On the other hand, as a part of NATO that has occasionally turned towards Eurasia since 1952, Türkiye aims to be included in EU security structures in line with its generally Western-oriented foreign policy and sees a window of opportunity in PESCO, which is project-based. It is considered that the current problem can be resolved if the non-EU members of NATO are given the right to consult in the Council in deciding on the policy direction of PESCO and full participation rights in PESCO's capability and operational modules. The logic here is that it is up to the members participating in each project to reach an agreement on whether a third party will be included or not. Türkiye has high level of visibility and influence in many EU-led operations. Furthermore, it is an undeniable fact that Türkiye's military power and willingness to contribute will be an important asset for the EU. The biggest challenge in these relations is how to build trust and how to seriously rebuild the damaged relationship.

The Strategic Compass, adopted by the EU Foreign Affairs Council on March 21, 2022, is a framework that aims to strengthen the EU's ability to anticipate and respond to security threats. The Strategic Compass, which is a comprehensive document, has introduced a new dimension to its adversarial approaches by seemingly attempting to keep Türkiye on the sidelines, influenced by the deep crisis centered on Ukraine.

Apart from these approaches, it is evaluated that the Strategic Compass has positive and negative aspects, especially for Türkiye, which is eager to take part in the security formations of the EU. It is possible to collect the positive aspects under certain headings:

The potential for enhanced cooperation could provide the basis for increased cooperation between Türkiye and the EU, particularly in combating a number of common security challenges such as terrorism, cyber threats and organized crime.

Enhanced dialogue could also facilitate dialogue on security issues between

Türkiye and the EU, which could help improve frayed understanding and build trust between the two sides.

In general, it is seen that the Strategic Compass brings both opportunities and challenges for Türkiye. The success of the Compass will depend on the willingness and effort of both parties to cooperate in a constructive dialogue.

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