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CONSTRUCTIVE EURASIANISM AND COOPERATIVE SECURITY: AVİM'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE BLACK SEA REGION

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The Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), as a leading Turkish think tank specializing in Eurasian geopolitics, views the Black Sea region as an arena of strategic significance shaped by complex historical, security, and economic dynamics. Our analysis of the region begins with the premise that the Black Sea serves as a buffer and bridge between Europe and Asia, rendering it a focal point for both regional stability and global competition. The interplay among littoral states □□□□□□□□□ Türkiye, Russia, and Ukraine □□□□□□□□□ with external actors such as the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), defines the multi-layered power relations and security arrangements in the region.

AVİM, which carries out studies on these issues, has been advancing the concept of Constructive Eurasianism (CE) for a long time. In this context, it argues that significant changes are occurring along the broad West-East axis, which we refer to as wide Eurasia, and that these changes are leading to remarkable shifts in global alignments. Very briefly, our CE concept advocates for Türkiye to carefully balance its deep-rooted Western ties with Eastern opportunities, positioning it as a unique nexus between Europe and Asia. This geopolitical approach promotes regional cooperation across Eurasia, emphasizes strategic autonomy for Türkiye, and values stability and security. It seeks to explore new syntheses by rediscovering the East and acknowledges the role of international institutions. It aims to analyze and manage the manipulations that create regional destabilization correctly and to develop Türkiyes role as a stabilizing force that respects neighboring sovereignties and supports their development and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Guided by the principle of Constructive Eurasianism, AVİM emphasizes pragmatic cooperation, multilateral dialogue, and the strengthening of regional ownership in the Black Sea, aiming to balance external influences and prevent zero-sum rivalry among both littoral and global actors. This approach, rooted in Türkiyes diplomatic tradition, seeks sustainable solutions to Black Sea challenges through consensus-building and functional collaboration, as exemplified by initiatives like The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and inclusive maritime security frameworks.

From a theoretical standpoint, AVİM applies the concept of regional security complexes,

which posits that the security interests of Black Sea states are intricately interwoven, rendering developments in one country influential upon others. Türkiyes unique position as both a maritime and continental power underpins its active diplomatic engagement and balanced defense posture.

The Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits safeguarding Turkish control over the Turkish Straits remains pivotal for maintaining the status quo and preventing destabilizing militarization since 1936 in the Black Sea. The full implementation of the Montreux Convention, of which Türkiye is the legal custodian, protecting the rights of the Black Sea littoral countries and keeping the Black Sea away from global competition is of great importance not only for Türkiye but for the entire Black Sea region and Europe. In AVİM's judgement, a joint effort must be made to ensure that attempts to directly or indirectly circumvent the provisions of this historic convention do not lead to unexpected problems.

Our policy recommendations prioritize cooperative security and economic connectivity. As mentioned above, AVİM advocates for inclusive regional platforms □□□□ as BSEC □□□□ bolster trade, energy transit, and transport linkages. This cooperative approach is designed to counterbalance external polarization and encourage confidence-building among littoral states. We also urge robust engagement with EU mechanisms and NATO yet emphasize the imperative of avoiding zero-sum-games that could erode regional autonomy and stability.

AVİM stresses the necessity of environmental sustainability and resilience against hybrid threats, including disinformation and cyber-attacks. By combining rigorous academic research with actionable policy advice, AVİM seeks to inform decision-makers and promote a pragmatic, multi-partner vision for the Black Sea rooted in both Turkish interests and broader regional welfare.

Finally, as a broad perspective, AVİM sincerely believes that there should be a return to a cooperative security system in Eurasia and that intensive efforts should be made towards this end. In order to revive concepts such as the indivisibility of security and cooperative security, which are now considered outdated, it is necessary to provide lifeline support to international platforms that have unfortunately lost their functions. It should not be forgotten that these ideas, which seem like wishful thinking in today's chaotic global environment, were also described as wishful thinking by some when they were first put into practice. We believe that think tanks that can lead the way on an international scale have important roles to play in this regard.

About the Author :

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