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Derginin içeriğine ilişkin bir kaç söz söylemek gerekirse, bu sayıda da geçen sayımızda başlatmış olduğumuz yeni yaklaşımı sürdürmekteyiz. Yani geçen sayımızda Avrasya'nın Balkan coğrafyasına yoğunlaştığımız gibi bu sefer de Avrasya'nın doğu kanadı "Orta Asya'yı ana tema olarak seçtik. Balkanlar için yaptığımız gibi bu sayıda da Orta Asya'yı dört makaleden oluşan bir başlık altında sunuyoruz. Bunlardan Türkistan'ı irdeleyen makalenin, doğusu ve batısı ile bir bütün halinde tarihi Türkistan gerçeğini ortaya koyarken Türkistan'ın Orta Asya coğrafyası ile organik bağına da ışık tuttuğuna inanıyoruz.

Avrasya'ya içerdiği bölgeler itibariyle yakından bakmaya çalışmak şeklinde özetleyebileceğimiz yaklaşımımızı, sizlerin göstermekte olduğu yakın ilgiden cesaret alarak önümüzdeki sayılarımızda da devam ettirmek emelindeyiz.

Çok değerli görüş ve katkılarınıza ve gösterdiğiniz ilgiye şükranlarımızı yineleyerek "Avrasya Dünyası" dergimizin altıncı sayısını beğeninize sunuyor ve Koronavirüs afetinden uzakta sağlıklı ve mutlu günler diliyoruz.

Yiğit Alpogan  
Editör

# from the editor

### Dear Readers,

Periodic publications could be likened to a ship. Like ships weighing anchor and setting sail for the first time, periodicals, too, set sail to the open seas of their publication lives after finalizing the necessary preparations. All kinds of possibilities and challenges may appear in this journey. We, in our short publication life, of course could not foresee that we might face a great catastrophe, that is, the Coronavirus pandemic, which affects our country, as well as the entire world. However, the challenge was there. We are glad that we were able to resist tough and difficult circumstances emanating from that challenge and could do our job. We hope you will enjoy the sixth issue of the "Eurasian World." From the time we apologize for the mistakes we might have made under difficult conditions.

Few words about the content of this issue. We maintain the new approach that we followed in the last issue. Just like we had focused on the Balkans in the Eurasian region, this time we determined Central Asia - as the eastern wing of Eurasia - as the central theme of this issue. Like we did for the Balkans, in this issue, too, we present Central Asia under a heading with four articles. We believe that the one that addresses Turkestan among those four articles, while presenting the reality of Turkestan as a whole, also sheds light on its organic links with Central Asia.

We hope to continue our approach, which could be defined as zooming onto the regions within Eurasia, in our upcoming issues taking into account the close interest of our readers.

While presenting the sixth issue of "Eurasian World," once again, we would like to express our gratitude to our readers for their views, interest and contributions. We wish healthy and happy days clear of the Coronavirus disaster.

Yiğit Alpogan  
Editor

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# BİLDİĞİMİZ DÜNYA'NIN SONU MU? MÜNİH GÜVENLİK KONFERANSI'NIN DÜŞÜNDÜRDÜKLERİ

Son altı yılda gerçekleştirilen Münih Güvenlik Konferansları, hem Avro-Atlantik kampında hem de küresel düzende önemli değişim ve hatta dönüşümlerin ufukta olabileceğini düşündüren tartışmalara sahne olmuştur.

## Dr. Turgut Kerem Tuncel

*Kıdemli Analist, Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi (AVİM)*

Günümüzde küresel siyasete dair en saygın platformlardan biri olarak kabul edilen Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın yıllık toplantılarının esasını kuruluşundan bu yana Avro-Atlantik odaklı güvenlik meseleleri oluşturmuştur. Bunun yanında, Soğuk Savaş'ın son bulmasından bu yana Avro-Atlantik dışında kalan Güney Amerika, Uzak Asya, Orta Doğu

ve Avrasya gibi coğrafyalardaki gelişmeler de Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın gündeminde yer almaya başlamıştır. Böylece, Münih Güvenlik Konferansı güvenlik temelli küresel meselelerin Avro-Atlantik odaklı bir perspektifle tartışıldığı önemli bir platform haline gelmiştir. Bu nedenle, Münih Güvenlik Konferanslarında gerçekleştirilen oturumlarda

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ifade edilen görüşler ve 2015 yılından bu yana yayımladığı raporlar, Avro-Atlantik eksenindeki merkezlerin küresel siyaset hakkındaki değerlendirmelerine dair önemli veriler sağlayan kaynaklar olarak görülmektedir.

Bu makale, Münih Güvenlik Konferansı kapsamında 2015-2020 yılları arasında gerçekleştirilen altı toplantıda gerçekleştirilen oturumlarda yapılan tartışmalar ve bu yıllarda yayımlanan raporları esas alarak, Avro-Atlantik cephesinin kendine ve küresel siyasete dair tespitlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Yapılan inceleme, içinde bulunduğumuz dönemde Avro-Atlantik içinde hissedilir bir ideolojik ve siyasi karmaşanın yaşandığını ve Avro-Atlantik'in ne olduğu ve ne anlama geldiği gibi çok temel konular hakkında farklılaşan görüşlerin ortaya çıkmakta olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna paralel olarak, Avro-Atlantik'i oluşturan devlet bileşenlerin kendi aralarındaki ilişkiler, bunların üzerinde şekillendiği ilke, pratik ve kurumlar hakkında da bir tartışmanın yaşandığı görülmektedir. Avro-Atlantik'in bir kimlik krizi içinde olduğu ve kendini yeniden tanımlama ihtiyacı hissettiği anlaşılmaktadır. Tüm bunlarla bağlantılı olarak, Avro-Atlantik'in hamisi ve yararlanıcısı olduğu uluslararası liberal düzende yaşanan farklılaşma ve değişimlerin ve bu çerçevede Avro-Atlantik'in ve bileşeni olan devletlerin Avro-Atlantik dışı devlet aktörlerle ilişkilerinin de içinde bulunduğumuz dönemde yeniden düşünölmeye başlandığı görülmektedir. Kısaca ifade etmek gerekirse, son altı yılda gerçekleştirilen Münih Güvenlik Konferansları, hem Avro-Atlantik kampında hem de küresel düzende önemli değişim ve hatta dönüşümlerin ufukta olabileceğini düşündüren tartışmalara sahne olmuştur.

**Batı'nın, daha doğru bir ifadeyle Batı(lılaşıma) projesinin, içinde bulunduğumuz dönemde hem 'içeriden' hem de 'dışarıdan' daha çok sorgulanmakta olması, 'Batısızlık' diye tanımlanan durumun temel niteliğidir.**

### 'Batısızlık' Durumu

1963 yılından beri düzenli olarak gerçekleştirilmekte olan Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın elli altıncısı 14-16 Şubat 2020 tarihlerinde Münih'te, aralarında devlet başkanlarının, bakanların, uluslararası kuruluşların yöneticilerinin ve medya, sivil toplum ve akademiden temsilcilerin yer aldığı 450'yi aşkın üst düzey isim katılımıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir.<sup>1</sup> 'Batısızlık' (İng. *Westlessness*) kelimesi ile tarif edilen durum bu toplantının ana gündemi olarak tespit edilmiş, oturumlarda bu konuyla ilgili farklı meseleler tartışılmıştır.

Edebi İngilizce'de bulunmayan, Münih Güvenlik Konferansı tarafından imal edilmiş bir kelime olan *Westlessness* (Tr. Batısızlık) ile anlatılmak istenen durum Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın aynı alt başlıkla yayımladığı *Münih Güvenlik Konferansı Raporu 2020* başlıklı raporda şu şekilde tarif edilmiştir:<sup>2</sup>

Dünya daha az Batı(lı) [İng. *Western*] olmaya başladı. Ama bundan da önemlisi, Batı'nın kendisi daha az Batı(lı) hale gelmiş olabilir. 'Batısızlık'tan kastımız budur.

Konferans'ın resmi web sitesinde ise 'Batısızlık' durumu hakkında şunlar söylenmektedir:<sup>3</sup>

"Batısızlık" - Batı'nın nihai gayesi hakkında artmakta olan belirsizlik dolayısıyla meydana gelen yaygın rahatsızlık ve tedirginlik hissi. Çok sayıda güvenlik sorunu kimilerinin Batı projesinin yıkılışı olarak tarif ettiği durumdan ayrılmaz bir hale gelmiş gibi görünmekte. Buna ek olarak, Batılı toplum ve hükümetler, Batı'nın parçası olmanın ne demek olduğu hakkındaki ortak anlayışı da kaybetmiş görünüyor. Her ne kadar, muhtemelen Transatlantik ortaklığı için en önemli stratejik meydan okuma olsa da, Batı'nın büyük güçler arası mücadele dönemi için bütünlük bir strateji oluşturup oluşturamayacağı belirsiz.

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2020 yılı raporuna göre, Batı'nın, daha doğru bir ifadeyle Batı(lılaşıma) projesinin, içinde bulunduğumuz dönemde hem 'içeriden' hem de 'dışarıdan' daha çok sorgulanmakta olması, 'Batısızlık' diye tanımlanan durumun temel



niteliğidir. 'Batısızlık,' Avro-Atlantik, yani Batı için ciddi bir meydan okuma anlamına gelmektedir. Bu meydan okumanın en önemli bileşenlerinden biri Batı(lı) olmanın ne demek olduğu hakkında ortak anlayışın kaybedilmesidir. Tam da batılı olmayan dünyanın (İng. *non-Western world*) görece yükselişinin yaşandığı ve küresel zorluk ve krizlerin gitgide çoğaldığı bir dönemde ortaya çıkan bu ortak anlayış kaybı, Batı'nın bunlara ortak ve uyumlu tepkiler verememesine neden olmaktadır. Rapor'a göre bu durum, Batı(lılaştırma) projesinin üzerinde yeniden düşünülmesini zorunlu kılmaktadır.<sup>4</sup> Bu çerçevede, 1) Dünya'nın ve Batı'nın kendisinin daha az Batılı bir yer haline gelip gelmediği; 2) Batı'nın küresel siyasetteki alanı diğerlerine bırakmasının Dünya için ne anlama geleceği ve 3) büyük güçler arası mücadele çağında Batı'nın ortak bir stratejiyi nasıl oluşturabileceği soruları,<sup>5</sup> Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2020 yılındaki gündemi olarak belirlenmiştir.

### **Batı'nın 'Batısızlığı'**

*Münih Güvenlik Konferansı Raporu 2020*'ye göre eskiden 'Batı'yı bir arada tutan şey nedir' sorusunun üzerinde anlaşılmalı ve açık bir cevabı varken, günümüzde bu soruya farklı kişiler farklı cevaplar vermektedir. Bu durum, Batı'nın kendisinin daha az Batı(lı) bir yer haline gelmesinin başlıca sebebidir. Buna göre, geçmişte liberal demokrasi, insan hakları, pazar ekonomisi, uluslararası

örgüt ve kurumlar hakkında uzlaşma ve bunlar üzerinden uluslararası işbirliği anlayışının Batı'yı Batı yapan ve Batı'yı bir arada tutan değerler olduğuna dair ortak bir kabul söz konusuysen, bugün bu ortak zemin erozyona uğramış durumdadır. Ortak kabulde yaşanan erozyon, Batı'nın birlik ve bütünlüğünün de erozyona uğraması anlamına gelmektedir.<sup>6</sup>

"Manevi bölünmüşlük" olarak tarif edilen bu durumun esas müsebbibi olarak Batı'da yükselişte olan bağınaz ve milliyetçi kampa işaret edilmektedir. Bu kampın Batı'yı 'değerler' üzerinden yükselen bir bütünlük olarak değil etnik, kültürel ve dinsel kıstaslar üzerinden tanımlaması Batı(lılaştırma) projesinin karşı karşıya olduğu en büyük tehdit olarak nitelendirilmektedir. Tehdit algıları üzerinden şekillenen meşru öz savunma anlayışı, Batı'daki 'Batı karşıtı bağınaz milliyetçilerin' ulusal egemenlik ve türdeş ulus-devlet savunusu temelinde liberal uluslararasılığı reddetmelerinin sebebidir.

*Münih Güvenlik Konferansı Raporu 2020*'de, Batı içindeki Batı karşıtı kampın yükselmesinin sebeplerine dair bazı tespitler de yer almaktadır. Liberalizmin kesin zaferine inanmış olan liberallerin kendi hakkında/kendine yönelik düşünme alışkanlığını terk etmiş olmaları, bu nedenle yaşanan ekonomik ve kültürel süreçlerle ilgili düşünce ve toplumların karşılaştığı somut sorunlara yönelik çözüm geliştirememeleri bu sebeplerin başında gelmektedir. Bunun yanında, Batı toplumlarında



siyasetin gitgide teknokratların hâkim olduğu bir alana dönüşmüş olması da bir diğer sorundur. Böylesi bir bağlamda, Batı içindeki Batı karşıtı yani liberal olmayan kamp toplumlari etkileyebilecek bir söylem geliştirmeyi başarmakta, mesajlarını geniş kitlelere ulaştırabilmekte, böylece Batılı toplumlarda taban kazanmaktadır.<sup>7</sup>

### Kürenin 'Batısızlığı'

Batı içindeki Batı karşıtı gelişmelere dair değerlendirmelerin yanında *Münih Güvenlik Konferansı Raporu 2020*, küresel boyuttaki 'Batısızlık' sorunsalına dair de bazı tespitler yapmaktadır. Bu tespitlere göre, Batı'nın Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde elde ettiği askeri üstünlüğün günümüzde mutlak olmaktan çıkması ve Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde yaşanan fikir ayrılıkları, Batılı devletlerin askeri kapasitelerinin görece azalmasına neden olmuştur. Bunun yanında, NATO ve AB içindeki liberal olmayan devlet ve güçler, bunların küresel etkinliklerini sekteye uğratmaktadır. Liberal devletlerin uluslararası kuruluşları yeterince desteklememesi ve bazen bunları hiçe sayan pratikler geliştirmeleri uluslararası liberal düzeninin en önemli temel taşları olan bu örgütlerin etkililiklerinin zayıflaması sonucunu doğurmaktadır. Bunlara ek olarak, başta Çin olmak üzere liberal olmayan devletlerin bir yandan uluslararası liberal düzenin temeli olan uluslararası kuruluşları kendi liberal olmayan amaçları doğrultusunda araçsallaştırmaları diğer yandan bunlara paralel uluslararası kuruluşlar kurmaları da uluslararası liberal sistemi tehdit eden unsurlardır.<sup>8</sup> Kendi içinde "manevi bölünmüşlük" yaşayan ve ortak bir strateji ve eylem geliştiremeyen Batı'nın, liberal olmayan devletlerin artan etkinlikleri karşısında, küresel boyuttaki gelişmeleri kontrol etme ve şekillendirme gücünün azalması ve Batılı devletlerin "liberal düzen inşası"na desteğinin zafiyete uğraması,<sup>9</sup> liberal olmayan devletlerin küresel siyasette etkinliklerini artırabilmelerinin en önemli nedeni olarak görülmektedir.

### Batı Dışı Yükselen Güçler

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2015'ten bu yana yayımladığı raporların bir arada incelenmesi küresel bağlamda ortaya çıkan bu durumun arka planı hakkında yapılan değerlendirmelerin neler olduğunu göstermektedir.

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2015 yılında yayımladığı raporda dikkat çeken tespitlerden bir tanesi küresel siyasette etki sahibi olan aktörlerin sayısının artmakta olduğu ve Batı dışı devlet aktörlerin küresel siyasette önemli faktörler haline geldiğidir. Bu raporda, uluslararası sistem için bir takım belirsizliklere neden olsalar da bu aktörlerin sistemi etkileme güçlerinin sınırlı olduğuna dair bir değerlendirme de yer almaktadır.

**2015 yılından sonra yayımlanan raporlarda Batı dışı aktörler hakkındaki değerlendirmelerin gitgide daha kuşkucu bir hal aldığı ve nihayetinde bunların uluslararası sisteme karşı ciddi tehditler olarak tanımlanmaya başlandığı görülmektedir. Münih Güvenlik Konferansı raporlarında üzerinde en çok durulan Batı dışı devlet aktörler Rusya ve Çin'dir.**

Bunun yanında, 2015 yılından sonra yayımlanan raporlarda Batı dışı aktörler hakkındaki değerlendirmelerin gitgide daha kuşkucu bir hal aldığı ve nihayetinde bunların uluslararası sisteme karşı ciddi tehditler olarak tanımlanmaya başlandığı görülmektedir. Münih Güvenlik Konferansı raporlarında üzerinde en çok durulan Batı dışı devlet aktörler Rusya ve Çin'dir.

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2015 yılı raporunda, Rusya'nın Ukrayna siyaseti eleştirilmekte, bu siyasetin Rusya'yla işbirliği önünde ciddi bir engel teşkil ettiği vurgulanmaktadır. Buna rağmen, Rusya'nın uluslararası sisteme bazı olumlu katkılarından da bahsedilmektedir.<sup>10</sup> Benzer şekilde, 2016 yılı raporunda da, Rusya'yla ilişkilerin tepetaklak bir hal aldığına vurgulanmasına rağmen Ukrayna ve Suriye'de Rusya'sız bir çözümün mümkün olmadığı ifade edilerek dolaylı olarak bu ülkeyle ilişkilerin belli bir düzeyde muhafaza edilmesi önerilmektedir.<sup>11</sup> 2018 yılına gelindiğinde ise Rusya'nın Batı'yla 'etki alanı' mücadelesi içine girdiğinden bahsedilmektedir. Bundan bir yıl sonra, 2019'da, Rusya'nın Batı ile uzlaşma anlayışını iyice terk ederek, uluslararası liberal sistemin dışında kalan konumunu benimsediğine dair görüşler ifade edilmiştir.

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın Rusya'ya dair son yıllarda yaptığı tespitler doğrultusunda, silahlanmaya ciddi kaynak aktaran<sup>12</sup> ve "sıkletin üzerinde yumruklar savurmayı"<sup>13</sup> başaran Rusya'nın uluslararası alanda bir takım kazanımlar elde etse de yaşadığı ekonomik ve diğer sorunlar, izlediği politikaların çevresindeki ülkelerde neden olduğu tedirginlik ve bunun sonucu olarak rıza üretme kabiliyetinin zayıflaması<sup>14</sup> nedeniyle kazanımlarının uzun vadeli olamayacağını<sup>15</sup> düşünüldüğü anlaşılmaktadır.

Batı dışı devlet aktörler içinde en çok tartışılan ve kaygı uyandıran devletin Çin olduğu ise yayımlanan raporlarda ve konferanslarda gerçekleştirilen oturumlardaki tartışmalarda açıkça görülmektedir. Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2016 yılında yayımlanan raporunda Çin'in bir "kural koyucu" (İng. *rule-maker*) ve "kurum kurucu" (İng. *institution-builder*)

hâline geldiği ancak bu kurumların uluslararası liberal düzen içinde değil, var olan düzene paralel bir şekilde işleyen kurumlar olduğu belirtilmektedir.<sup>16</sup> Çin'in, despotik liderlik ve kapitalizmi bir araya getiren bir modeli Batı modelinin alternatifi olarak sunduğu tespiti de yapılmaktadır. Çin, Batı dışı alternatif bir model sunabilme anlamında uluslararası liberal düzeni tehdit eden diğer Batı dışı aktörler olarak görülen İran ve Rusya gibi devletlerden ayrılmaktadır.<sup>17</sup> Saldırgan bir ekonomi siyaseti izleyen ve askeri kapasitesini artıran Çin, bunlara rağmen kendisini barışçıl gelişimi sürdüren ve çok taraflılığın savunucusu sorumlu bir güç olarak sunmayı başarmıştır.<sup>18</sup> Çin'in teknoloji alanında yaptığı atılımların bu ülkeye büyük avantajlar sağlaması da ayrıca önemli bir husustur.<sup>19</sup> Tüm bunların sonucu olarak, Çin'in Batı'nın hegemonyasındaki uluslararası sistemde yeni bir hegemon olarak ortaya çıkabileceği ve sistemin üzerine kurulu olan hiyerarşiyi değiştirebileceği veya bu sisteme paralel bir sistemin inşasına girişebileceği öngörülmektedir. Bu nedenle Çin, uluslararası liberal düzeni tehdit eden en önemli Batı dışı devlet aktör olarak görülmektedir.

### Transatlantik'teki Gelişmeler

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın tespitlerine göre Çin başta olmak üzere Batı dışı devlet aktörlerin uluslararası liberal düzenin üzerinde durduğu dengeleri bozabilecek unsurlar olarak ortaya çıkmaya başlamaları, bu düzenin esas hamisi ve yaralanıcısı olan Batılı devletlerin Batılı ilkelere sapmaya başladığı, bu nedenle uluslararası örgütlerin eskisi kadar güçlü olmadığı ve Batılı devletler arasındaki güvene ve liberal ilkelere dayalı ilişkilerin yıpranmaya başladığı bir döneme denk gelmektedir. Bir başka deyişle, uluslararası liberal düzen bir yandan 'dışarıdan' bir zorlamayla karşı karşıya gelirken, diğer yandan da bu düzenden en çok fayda sağlayan ve onun 'sahibi' olan aktörlerin politikaları nedeniyle 'içeriden' bir erozyona uğramaktadır.

ABD, uluslararası liberal sistemin 'içeriden' uğradığı erozyonla ilgili olarak en çok eleştirilen aktör olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu eleştirilerin 2015'ten 2020'ye gelinen süreçte daha özlü bir hale geldiği görülmektedir. 2015 yılında, ABD'nin askeri ve ekonomik gücü ve dünyanın çeşitli yerlerindeki müdahalelerinin seviye ve derinliği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, uluslararası liberal düzenin muhafızlığı rolünden geri adım attığına dair iddiaların abartılı olduğu, buna rağmen böyle bir algının

oluşmuş olmasının önem arz ettiği ifade edilmiştir.<sup>20</sup> Ancak, Trump yönetiminin başa gelmesiyle ABD'nin uluslararası liberal düzenin korunması konusundaki iradesinden daha da fazla şüphe duyulmaya başlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda, Trump yönetiminin net bir politik söylem geliştirmek yerine sürekli birbiriyle çelişen mesajlar vermesinin bu tedirginliği artıran en önemli faktör olduğu görülmektedir.<sup>21</sup>

ABD'nin uluslararası liberal düzen içindeki rolüyle ilgili artan kaygılarla ilgili olarak dikkat çeken bir husus 2018'e geldiğinde izolasyoncu bir 'geri çekilmeden' çok "Önce Amerika" sloganıyla ifadesini bulan Amerikan ulusal çıkarlarının peşinde tek taraflı bir dış politika izlemeye başladığı yönünde görüşlerin ifade edilmesidir.<sup>22</sup> ABD'nin diplomasiye yatırım yapmak yerine askeri harcamalarını artırması, uluslararası çok taraflı kuruluşlardaki geleneksel liderlik rolünden çekilmeye başladığını düşündüren pratikleri ve bazı çok taraflı uluslararası anlaşmalardan tek taraflı olarak ayrılmasının,<sup>23</sup> özellikle Avrupa ülkelerinde büyük rahatsızlığa neden olduğu görülmektedir. 2020 yılı raporunda ABD'nin izlediği bu politikanın, özellikle Çin, Kuzey Kore, İran, Venezuela ve Orta Doğu'da geri teptiği ve genel anlamda başarılı olmadığı belirtilmektedir.<sup>24</sup>

ABD'nin söylem ve politikaları Avrupa'da kaygı yaratmakta, bu kaygılar ABD ve Avrupa arasındaki ilişkileri etkileyen bir faktör haline gelmektedir. Bu durum Avrupa'yı uluslararası düzeni ve bu alana dair yaklaşım ve politikalarını yeniden gözden geçirmeye yöneltmektedir. Bu çerçevede, Avrupa'nın muteber bir dış politikasının olmadığı, bunun oluşturulabilmesi için ise askeri kapasiteyle desteklenmiş ortak bir dış politika stratejisinin oluşturulması gerektiğine dair fikirler daha fazla ifade edilir hale gelmiştir. Ne var ki, kaynakların kısıtlılığı, Avrupa Birliği'nin esas dinamosu olan Almanya ve Fransa arasındaki görüş farklılıkları, Brexit süreci gibi nedenler bunun gerçekleştirilmesinin önündeki zorluklar olarak görülmektedir.<sup>25</sup> Sonuçta, Avrupa'da ABD karşısında "stratejik özerklik" olgusunun ve gerçek bir Avrupa dış politikasının hayata geçirilmesi hakkında yürütülen tartışmalara rağmen en azından askeri alanda ABD'ye "stratejik olmayan bağımlılığın" söz konusu olduğu istenmeyen bir gerçeklik olarak kabul edilmektedir.<sup>26</sup>

Özellikle 2015 ve 2016 yıllarında, uluslararası liberal düzenle ilgili gözlemlenen sorun ve tehditler ele alınırken, bunların gündeme gelmesindeki en önemli etkenin 'düzenin muhafızları'nın düzeni koruma sorumluluklarını yeterince yerine getirmemeleri vurgulanmıştır. Nitekim bu yıllara ait raporların alt başlıklarının sırasıyla *Çöken Düzen, Gönülsüz Muhafızlar?* ve *Sınırsız Krizler, Pervasız Bozguncular, Çaresiz Muhafızlar* olması dikkat çekicidir.

**Çin, uluslararası liberal düzeni tehdit eden en önemli Batı dışı devlet aktör olarak görülmektedir.**



Uluslararası liberal düzenin muhafazasıyla ilgili olarak Transatlantik ilişkilerine dair dikkat çeken hususlardan biri, Avrupa'nın 'düzen muhafızlığı' işini ABD'ye havale etmiş olmasıdır. Bu çerçevede, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında oluşan uluslararası liberal düzene esas şekli verdiğini ifade edilen ABD'den<sup>27</sup> beklenen şeyin, bu düzenin üzerine inşa edildiği çok taraflı uluslararası ilişkiler ilkesi çerçevesinde 'küresel jandarma' rolünü devam ettirmesi olduğu görülmektedir. Öyle anlaşılmaktadır ki Avrupa, ABD'nin 'küresel jandarmalık' rolünden ve 'güvenlik meselelerini' ABD'ye havale etmiş olmaktan gayet memnundur. Bu sayede Avrupa, bir yandan askeri harcamalarını mümkün olan en alt düzeyde tutarak bunun ekonomik yükünden kurtulmakta diğer yandan, ABD'nin aksine, Batı dışı dünyaya kendine dair olumlu bir imaj sunabilmektedir. ABD'nin böylesi bir 'iş bölümüne' dair itirazları Avrupa için kuşkusuz ekonomik ve siyasi açıdan sorun teşkil eden bir durumdur. Nitekim, ABD'nin bu rolü oynamadaki isteksizliği veya sadece kendi ulusal çıkarlarını merkeze alarak 'jandarmalık görevini' yerine getirmeye yönelik tutumu, Avrupa'yı askeri kapasite ile desteklenmiş ortak bir dış politikanın gerekliliğine ve bunun maliyetine dair düşüncelere itmektir.

### Büyük Güçler Arası Mücadele

Batı dışı devlet aktörlerin küresel siyasette etkilerinin artması, uluslararası liberal düzenin dayanak noktaları olan uluslararası örgüt ve kurumların etkinliklerinin azalması, ABD'nin tek taraflı bir dış politika çizgisine doğru kayması, Avrupa'nın buna tepki olarak askeri savunma kapasitesinin artırılmasını da içeren bir ortak

Avrupa dış politikasının oluşturulmasını tartışmaya başlaması gibi gelişmeler küresel siyasetin 'büyük güçler arası mücadele' dönemine girmekte olduğu hakkındaki değerlendirmelerin arka planını oluşturmaktadır.

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2016 yılı raporunda yer alan bazı güçlü devletler arasındaki gerilimlerin tırmandığı tespiti<sup>28</sup> ve "devletlerarası büyük bir savaş halen uzak bir risk olsa da, Soğuk Savaş'tan sonra ilk defa, büyük güçler arasında şiddetin tırmanması ihtimali gerçekçi olmayan bir kâbus olarak düşünülemez"<sup>29</sup> ifadesi dikkat çekicidir. Bundan iki sene sonra, 2018'de, biraz daha kesin bir ifadeyle "geçtiğimiz yıl Dünya ciddi bir çatışmanın eşiğine yaklaştı – çok yaklaştı"<sup>30</sup> şeklinde yapılan tespit de aynı şekilde dikkat çekmektedir. 2019 yılında ise, tabiri caiz ise meselenin adı konularak, ABD, Çin ve Rusya arasında yeni bir 'büyük güçler arası mücadele' döneminin oluşmakta olduğu belirtilmiş, devletlerarası savaş olasılığının temel bir güvenlik tehdidi olarak yaklaşık son yirmi yıldır ABD stratejisini şekillendiren terörizm sorununun önüne geçtiği belirtilmiştir.<sup>31</sup> 2020'de ise, 2016 yılındaki "devletlerarası büyük bir savaş halen uzak bir risk" tespitiyle zıtlık oluşturacak şekilde büyük bir devletlerarası savaşın geçmişe ait bir şey olmadığı, büyük güçler arası mücadelenin giderek yoğun bir hal almasının böylesi bir savaşı daha yakın bir olasılık haline getirdiği ifade edilmiştir.<sup>32</sup>

### Uluslararası Liberal Düzenin Bunalımı

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2015-2020 yıllarındaki toplantıları ve yayımladığı raporlar kronolojik bir sırada incelendiğinde, altı yıl gibi kısa bir





sürede uluslararası liberal düzene dair kaygılarla ilgili değerlendirmelerin odak noktasının tekil aktörlerden düzenin kendisine doğru kaydığı görülmektedir. Bir başka deyişle, 2015-2016 yıllarında sistemin 'muhafızı' olan aktörlerin bu sistemin devamının sağlanması yönünde yeterli ve etkin çaba göstermedikleri, 'düzenin muhafızlarının' boşalttığı alanı doldurmakta olan yeni aktörlerin sistemi tehdit etme potansiyeline sahip olabileceği tartışılırken, 2017 yılından itibaren uluslararası liberal düzenin zayıflamaya başladığına dair sistemin kendisine odaklanan değerlendirmeler öne çıkmaya başlamıştır. Bununla ilgili olarak, Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2017 yılı raporundaki şu ifadeler önemlidir:<sup>33</sup>

İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan bu yana uluslararası güvenlik ortamı muhtemelen hiçbir zaman şimdi olduğu kadar kırılğan olmadı. Batı ve uluslararası liberal düzenin temel payandaları zayıflamakta. Açık toplumların düşmanları hücumda... Demokrasilerin yurttaşları, sistemlerinin olumlu sonuçlar getirebileceğine gitgide daha az inanıyor ve globalizm ve açıklığa karşı gitgide daha çok ulusal çözümleri ve kapalı sınırları tercih ediyor. Öte yandan, liberal olmayan rejimler daha sağlam bir zeminde duruyor gibi gözüküyor. Batı demokrasilerinin uluslararası ilişkileri ve kural

temelli liberal düzeni şekillendirme istek ve kapasitesi azalırken, bunlar daha iddialı hareket ediyor...Bu nedenle, Batı dışı aktörlerin uluslararası ilişkileri 1945'ten bu yana liberal düzenin temellerini oluşturan çok taraflı çerçevelere paralel veya bunların aleyhine olacak tarzda şekillendirdiği Batı sonrası dönemin [İng. *post-Western age*] eşliğine gelmiş olabiliriz. Düzen sonrası [İng. *post-order*] döneme mi giriyoruz? Bu sorunun önümüzdeki yıllarda nasıl cevaplandırılacağı bize bağlı.

2019 raporunda uluslararası liberal düzene dair sorulan aşağıdaki sorular da uluslararası liberal düzenin geleceği hakkında Avro-Atlantik'te ortaya çıkan endişeye işaret etmektedir.<sup>34</sup>

...Uluslararası düzenin parçalarının ciddi bir şekilde yeniden düzenlenmesine mi şahitlik ediyoruz? 1945 sonrası uluslararası düzenin savunucuları, bu düzenin esas öğelerinin muhafazasını ve bunların en azında bazılarının yeniden bir araya getirilmesini başarabilecekler mi? Yoksa dünya, yenisini inşa etmeye başlayamadan eski sistemi yerle edecek eş zamanlı bir takım krizlere, ...müthiş bir fırtınaya doğru yaklaşmaya devam mı edecek?

Yukarıda değinildiği üzere, Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın 2020 yılındaki son toplantısının ana teması olan 'Batısızlık' durumu da uluslararası liberal düzenin içine düştüğü krize gönderme yapmaktadır.

### Sonuç

Son altı yılda düzenlenen Münih Güvenlik Konferansları irdelendiğinde, Batılı merkezlerde, Avro-Atlantik ve Avro-Atlantik'in hamisi ve yararlanıcısı olduğu uluslararası liberal düzenin ideolojik ve siyasi meydan okumalarla karşı karşıya bulunduğu dair bir düşüncenin yaygınlık kazanmakta olduğu görülmektedir. Bu meydan okumaların gün geçtikçe daha ciddi bir hale geldiği ve 1945 sonrasında ortaya çıkan ve 1991'le birlikte en üst seviyesine ulaşan uluslararası liberal düzeni artık tehdit eder bir hale geldiğinin düşünüldüğü de anlaşılmaktadır.

Avro-Atlantik 1991 yılında küresel ölçekteki mutlak ideolojik ve siyasi zaferini ilan ettikten yaklaşık otuz yıl sonra uluslararası liberal düzenin çökme tehlikesinden bahsedilmesi bu duruma nasıl ve niçin geldiğini düşünmeyi gerekli kılmaktadır. Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın son yıllardaki toplantılarında bu soruların yanıtlarının aranmakta olduğu görülmektedir.

Kuşkusuz Münih Güvenlik Konferansı gibi güvenlik temelli küresel meselelerin Avro-Atlantik odaklı küresel bir perspektifle tartışıldığı bir platformda nasıl ve niçin sorularının uluslararası alandaki ampirik cevaplarının

**Avro-Atlantik 1991 yılında küresel ölçekteki mutlak ideolojik ve siyasi zaferini ilan ettikten yaklaşık otuz yıl sonra uluslararası liberal düzenin çökme tehlikesinden bahsedilmesi bu duruma nasıl ve niçin geldiğini düşünmeyi gerekli kılmaktadır.**

aranması oldukça anlaşılır ve tabii ki faydalı bir çabadır. Ne var ki, bu sorulara dair daha bütünlüklü yanıtlara ancak 'içeriye dönük' hem ampirik hem de felsefi/teorik tartışmaların da yürütülmesiyle ulaşılabilecektir.

2020 yılında gerçekleştirilen Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın raporunda, 'Batısızlık' durumuyla ilgili Batı içinden çıkan dinamiklere vurgu yapılmış ve bir takım sosyolojik tespitlere yer verilmiştir. Öyle ki, 2015-2019 yıllarında yayımlanan önceki raporlarla kıyaslandığında, 2020 raporu içerdiği 'içeriye' dönük eleştirel değerlendirmeler ve 'içsel hesaplaşma' çabası anlamında oldukça farklılaşmaktadır. 2020 yılı raporunun bu niteliği Avro-Atlantik'in faydalı bir 'iç hesaplaşma' içine girdiğini düşündürülebilir. Ancak 'iç hesaplaşma' çabasının oldukça sınırlı ve yüzeysel kaldığını da belirtilmesi yerinde olacaktır. Nitekim, 'Batısızlık' diye tarif edilen durumun müsebbibi olduğu düşünülen Avro-Atlantikteki liberal olmayan aktörler bir nevi günah keçisi



olarak bu eleştirilerin nesnesi haline getirilmekte, liberalizme dair özel bir eleştiriden kaçınılmaktadır. Bu kapsamda, Batı içindeki Batı karşıtı güçlerin, dışarıdaki liberal olmayan güçlerin içerideki Truva atları olarak hareket ettiklerine yönelik görüşlere yer verilerek,<sup>35</sup> son tahlilde, 'Batısızlığın' sorumluluğunun Batı dışı aktörlerde olduğu vurgulanmakta, böylece Avro-Atlantik'in 'özel liberal erdemleri'nin sorgulanmasından imtina edilmektedir. Bu, liberalizmin dogmatlaştırılmasına,

dolayısıyla günümüzde yaşanan sorunlara yanıt olabilecek bir felsefi ve siyasi akım olmaktan çıkmasına neden olacak bir yaklaşımdır. Liberalizmin tarihsel maddeci bir perspektifle irdelenmesi bu durumun önüne geçebilecek bir yol olabilir. Her hâlükârda, 'Batısızlığın' sorumluluğunu Batı dışı aktörlere faturalamak gibi kolaycı yaklaşımların bir yana bırakılmasının ve liberalizmin özüne dair eleştiri ve değerlendirmelerin yapılmaya başlanması zamanı gelmiş görünmektedir.

## Sonnotlar

- 1 Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nın <https://securityconference.org/en/> adresindeki resmi web sitesinde, bu organizasyon hakkında genel bilgiye, 2015-2020 yıllarında gerçekleştirilen toplantıların raporlarına ve bu toplantılardaki oturumların bazılarının videolarına ulaşılabilir.
- 2 Munich Security Conference, *Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness* (2020), 6, [https://securityconference.org/assets/user\\_upload/MunichSecurityReport2020.pdf](https://securityconference.org/assets/user_upload/MunichSecurityReport2020.pdf).
- 3 "Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness," *Munich Security Conference*, erişim Mart 30, 2020, <https://securityconference.org/en/publications/munich-security-report-2020/>.
- 4 Munich Security Conference, *Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness* (2020), 5-6.
- 5 "Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness," *Munich Security Conference*.
- 6 Munich Security Conference, *Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness* (2020), 6-8.
- 7 Munich Security Conference, *Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness* (2020), 8-12.
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- 9 Munich Security Conference, *Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness* (2020), 12.
- 10 Munich Security Conference, *The Munich Security Report 2015: Collapsing Order, Reluctant Guardians?* (2015), 6, [https://securityconference.org/assets/02\\_Dokumente/01\\_Publikationen/MunichSecurityReport\\_2015.pdf](https://securityconference.org/assets/02_Dokumente/01_Publikationen/MunichSecurityReport_2015.pdf).
- 11 Munich Security Conference, *Munich Security Report 2016: Boundless Crises, Reckless Spoilers, Helpless Guardians* (2016), 16, [https://securityconference.org/assets/user\\_upload/MunichSecurityReport\\_2016.pdf](https://securityconference.org/assets/user_upload/MunichSecurityReport_2016.pdf).
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# AUGMENTING RUSSIAN AND CHINESE INTERESTS IN THE BALTIC COUNTRIES, IS IT OUT OF FRIENDSHIP ONLY?

When discussing growing Russian and Chinese influence, the biggest mistake that policy makers in the West do is a rather complete laser focus on these “big issues.”

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## Introduction

For much of the post-Cold War era, Russia’s ability to project its influence abroad had been constrained by internal challenges and limited resources. But since Putin’s return to presidency in 2012, Moscow has been steadily increasing its international reach. Invasion of Ukraine, intervention in Syria and meddling in elections are few of the most well-known examples of Russia’s growing global ambitions. China, albeit through quite different means than Russia, has been also expanding its global reach. Foreign investment, trade and development assistance has helped China to slowly displace the United States as the leading trading partner in a number of markets. 5G and the Belt and Road Initiative are the most well-known examples.

However, when discussing growing Russian and Chinese influence, the biggest mistake that policy makers in the West do is a rather complete laser focus on these “big issues.” To this day, “Russian meddling in the 2016 elections” remains quite a hot topic in the United States. What these policy makers fail to understand, is that Russia and China is actually casting a far broader net that consists of small but strategically important moves, which allows Moscow and Beijing to further increase their influence abroad, as these actions often remain unchecked.



**Russia still considers these states as “near abroad” and would like to see them under exclusive Moscow’s sphere of influence. China sees the Baltics as a convenient passage to the Nordic countries. Lastly, the Baltics remain one of the loudest critics of Russia’s and China’s expanding influence.**

To understand these strategic moves, this paper will analyze Russia’s and China’s recent policies and actions in the Baltic states. One might wonder, why the Baltics? These three states have negligible importance on the world stage, as the combined GDP of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia barely reaches 100 billion euros. However, Russia still considers these states as “near abroad” and would like to see them under Moscow’s exclusive sphere of influence. China sees the Baltics as a convenient passage to the Nordic countries. Lastly, the Baltics remain one of the loudest critics of Russia’s and China’s expanding influence, which has been bothering Moscow and especially Beijing. For these reasons, both China and Russia has been increasingly active in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

### **Moscow’s Policies**

#### *Remilitarization of Kaliningrad as an Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) zone*

In the case of an armed conflict between the Baltics/NATO and Russia, Kaliningrad would play a crucial role. The missiles stationed there could be used to breach the Suwalki Gap, effectively cutting off any land support coming from Poland to the Baltics. On the same note, Russia could deploy sea mines and use their anti-air missiles to prevent any further air or maritime support from NATO.<sup>1</sup> With most of the Polish and Lithuanian army bases located quite far away from Kaliningrad, the exclave could also act as a platform to launch an effective offensive.

Steps that have been taken by Moscow regarding the remilitarization of Kaliningrad as an A2/AD zone can be separated into four different subcategories.

- 1) Deployment of advanced ballistic and cruise missile systems. Among many other missile systems, the most notable one deployed in Kaliningrad is Iskander-M tactical ballistic missile complex, with a range of at least 400 kilometers and equipped with both conventional and nuclear missiles.<sup>2</sup> This missile system is unquestionably one of the most advanced such systems in the world. Equipped with such power, Iskander

missiles would be one of the key factors in an armed conflict.

- 2) Deployment of anti-ship, aircraft and air defense systems. The Russians use a combination of the K-300P Bastion-P and the 3K60 Bal missile systems, which can be used against both ground and water based targets. Further on, they also employ the S-400 and Pantsir as mobile short- to medium-range, surface-to-air and anti-aircraft artillery weapon system.<sup>3</sup>
- 3) Development of the electronic warfare (EW) capabilities. In the conflict with Ukraine, Russians have demonstrated huge success in hindering the communication capabilities of the Ukrainian armed forces. This was allowed by a mobile and powerful arsenal of EW capabilities, which could and for the most part is deployed in Kaliningrad Oblast.
- 4) Expansion of naval capabilities. Even though the Baltic Sea Fleet (BSF) had lost much of its pre-1991 potential during 1990s, it has been slowly rebuilding itself in the recent years, with the overall potential of the BSF being two submarines and 56 surface ships.<sup>4</sup> From the available sources, it seems like the BSF has been mostly working on bolstering its A2/D2 capabilities. For example, during an exercise in 2017, the fleet has been practicing its anti-submarine and anti-aviation operations.<sup>5</sup> This would allow Moscow to effectively control the Baltic Sea and deny any access to the area.

#### *Financing Non-Governmental Organizations in the Baltics*

Kremlin’s reach in NGOs outside of Russia is also a well-known fact. At this point, it is an open secret in the Baltics that Russia financially supports local NGOs that advance Putin’s agenda. The only unknown is how generous that support is. According to an investigation done by Re:Baltica in 2015, there were more than forty such organizations that have received at least 1.5 million euros through legal means between 2012 and 2015.<sup>6</sup> That excludes cash transactions and financing through Russia friendly enterprises, thus the actual amount is expected to be way bigger.

Some of the NGOs include “Lithuania Without Nazism,” Estonia Without Nazism,” “AltMedia,” “Latvian Human Rights Committee,” “World Without Nazism,” “Legal Defense Centre,” “People’s Socialist Front,” “Independent Human Rights Centre,” “Paldiski Raadio Liit,” “Russky Mir.” While the scope of these NGOs is quite large ranging from protection of human rights and legal defense to promoting Russian media interests and combating Nazism, the circle of people who receive



Kremlin's money is narrow. The Baltic security services identify these individuals and organizations as key actors of executing Russian policies in the Baltics. All of these share some key features. Firstly, these individuals and organizations often times do not have any alternative sources of financing, meaning that they heavily rely on funding from Moscow.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, about 68% of grant recipients are connected with the pro-Kremlin parties in the Baltic states. Interestingly, some of these individuals often donate money to the pro-Kremlin parties in Latvia, meaning that there is a direct financing channel between Kremlin and pro-Kremlin political parties in the Baltic states.<sup>8</sup>

In general, the so called "antifascist organizations" in the Baltics are part of an organization called World Without Nazism, founded by Russian billionaire Boris Spiegel, then a Duma member.<sup>9</sup> The official agenda of these organizations is fighting against the rise of Nazism and fascist ideas. In reality, the group is often used as a tool for the Russian foreign policy, as the public statements from this NGO tend to match those of the Russian Foreign ministry. One of the allegations that the organizations successfully managed to spread is that the Baltic states heavily supported Nazis during the World War II and that these three states actively participated in the Holocaust.

#### *Russian influence in the Baltic transport sector*

For Kremlin, transport is not only a branch of the economy, but also an important tool to advance foreign

policy. According to Putin, "after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the railways helped to maintain the unity of economies that could not operate without specific links" - Russian leader explained at a Russian organized railway forum "Strategic Partnership 1520."<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, the railway forum "Strategic Partnership 1520" has for many years included railway leaders from all three Baltic states and was hosted there twice. In itself, this fact does not indicate much, but upon a closer look at the railway sector in the Baltic states, one can easily start questioning the transparency of railway sector in the Baltics and its ties with Russia.

In 2017, the National Security and Defense Committee of Lithuania stated that Lithuanian railways (*Lietuvos Gelezinkeliai*) did not evaluate the Russian made KLUB-U railway control system in terms of national security neither after Russian aggression in Georgia in 2008 nor after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. It was not evaluated because Stasys Dailydka, who was the CEO of Lithuanian railways between 2004 and 2016, did not see it as necessary. After further investigation, the Lithuania's Secret Services noted that the KLUB-U railway control system, which is manufactured by a Russian company related to arms industry and is operated through Russian satellites, poses considerable threats to the national security.<sup>11</sup> In the case of a cyberattack, the potential hackers could obtain all the information regarding Lithuanian Railways and could control all the locomotives in Lithuania.<sup>12</sup>

In Latvia, similar cases also exist. In 2015, Latvian Railways bought four 2TE116 engines from Skinest Rail

for eight million euros.<sup>13</sup> The catch here is that two of them were not operational. The same weekend when the information about the purchase came out, the head of Latvian Railways Uģis Magonis was arrested for receiving a bribe of 500,000 euros from Oleg Osinovsky.<sup>14</sup> In fact, Oleg Osinovsky, who owns a locomotive repair factory in Latvia and a rail company in Estonia, did not deny giving Magonis the 500,000 euros.

It is not a coincidence that after leaving Lithuanian Railways and Latvian Railways, respectively, Mr. Dailydka and Mr. Magonis were employed in companies closely related to Russian railways.

### Disinformation

Even though Russia is not the most environmentally-friendly country, Russian media, however, appears to be very interested in environmental issues in neighboring countries. The media is particularly concerned with the projects that will help integrate the Baltics into the European Union or help them become less dependent on Russian energy. To understand the scale of this mobilization against strategic projects in the Baltics, this research will analyze two separate cases.

The idea to build a new nuclear plant in Lithuania had been gaining popularity since 2004, when Lithuania

was forced to close an unsafe nuclear power plant as one of the conditions to join the EU. From 2009-2012, the Lithuanian government seriously worked on this idea of building a new nuclear power plant, so that the whole region would be less reliant on Russian electricity. Even though the negotiations were almost finished, the project was cut off by a referendum, in which 65% of the voters were against this idea. Even though governments should definitely respect referendums, it should also take into account the influence that foreign governments might have had on the voters.

Environmental organizations from the whole region protested against this nuclear plant in Lithuania. In addition to these local representatives, such as *Lietuvos Valstiečių ir Žaliųjų Sąjunga's Atgaja*, The Žali.lt and many others, the protests were also joined by the Belarusian organization EkoDom<sup>15</sup> and EkoZaszcziata from Kaliningrad.<sup>16</sup> However, these two groups were not the only ones involved in the protests. According to Latvian special services, there was an active and organized information offensive against the nuclear plant in Lithuania by Sputnik, which is the main Russian media outlet in the Baltics and the Russian REGNUM Agency.<sup>17</sup> Further on, one of the main organizers behind the protests was the Russo-Baltic Media Center, whose director, Igor Pavlovski, is forbidden from entering





Latvia.<sup>18</sup> The list of organizers also includes Algirdas Paleckis, one of the most prominent Lithuanian neo-communists now arrested for espionage and Modest Kolerov, who is also forbidden from entering Latvia. In short, we can see that Russia possess a range of assets which can disturb political and strategic developments in the Baltics.

For the second case, this research will use a less polarizing topic; the building of a strategically important railway. Since the Baltics are the only EU countries that were part of Soviet Union, they still to this day use a different rail (1520mm gauge) through which no European trains can pass. To offset this huge strategic disadvantage, the Baltic governments initiated a project called Rail Baltica, which is set to connect Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia with Poland and Germany. The importance of such project is simply unquestionable, as it would accelerate the flow of people and goods between the Baltics and the rest of the EU.

For this reason, Russian media and more specifically the previously mentioned Sputnik has been heavily criticizing the project.<sup>19</sup> For example, articles criticizing the project Rail Baltica are always published under a special heading in Sputnik Estonia.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, in 2015 Latvian Security Police has discovered that articles related to this project had been targeted by Russian “troll factories.”<sup>21</sup> However, the reach of these campaigns is questionable as the populations in the Baltic countries are well aware of the direct threat that Russia poses through media manipulation. That is why the Russian government utilized more covert tools. For example, in Estonia, where the discussions about this project were the most active out of the three Baltic states, environmental organizations purely devoted to criticizing the Rail Baltica project managed to organize protests with over 300 native Estonians.<sup>22</sup> While the number does not seem very high, it is very important to note that the people in the Baltics are one of the biggest EU supporters and any anti-NATO/anti-EU protests usually involve 5 to 10 natives.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the organizers of these protests have refused to disclose the nature of their funding sources.<sup>24</sup>

There are many other cases of Russian media and other groups being involved in trying to stop strategic investments, such as the development of Klaipėda LNG FSRU, LitPol Link or NordBalt.<sup>25</sup>

### *Economic pressure on key transport infrastructure in the Baltic states*

Since 2014, when Russia invaded Ukraine, Moscow has been working to punish the Baltic states for their unfriendly policies. Putin's first target is cargo traffic going through the Baltic ports. Moscow has been putting pressure on Belarus and other CIS countries to avoid using the Baltic ports, as well as counting on the EU to block China's attempts to expand there.<sup>26</sup> At the same

**Even though China has managed to stop meetings between high-ranking Baltic officials and representatives from Taiwan or Tibet, China's mission of spreading the “correct” version of Chinese history and culture is not over.**

time, Moscow has been heavily expanding the capacity of western Russian ports, which has dramatically decreased the passage of goods travelling through the Baltic ports. This harms not only the ports, but also the railways which do not receive the extra transit fees for transporting Russian goods.

Moscow has been also working to put pressure on the Rail Baltica project. For example, in 2018, Russians began building a terminal near St. Petersburg, through which they began transporting oil production. As a result, Estonian railways have been facing huge losses, as they do not receive the transit fees for transporting Russian oil.<sup>27</sup> In this way, the potential financial benefits of the Rail Baltica are slowly decreasing. Similar scenario is playing out in Latvia. According to the Latvia's Railway Administration's director Juris Iesalnieks, Russia's largest freight carriers have signed with the Russian government a contract to reduce cargo flow through Latvia's ports. This is evident in the fact that, for example, the volume of coal and oil transported through Latvian railways has decreased heavily by 15.5% and 19.1% compared to 2018.<sup>28</sup> As a result, the Latvian authorities are not sure whether it will have enough money to finance the electrification project of their railways, which might further decrease the competitiveness of Latvian railways.<sup>29</sup>

This pressure on the Rail Baltica and Baltic rail companies have few reasons. First of all, as previously described, this approach compliments Russia's disinformation campaign against the Rail Baltica, as some experts in the Baltics are beginning to doubt the economic benefits of the project. Secondly, the Russians could promise to bring back the much needed revenue for the Baltic railways if they agree to certain deals, which could further increase Russia's influence in the Baltic transportation sector.

### **China's policies**

#### *Forcing the Baltic States to conform to China's opinion on Tibet and Taiwan*

Over the past two years, China's embassy in Estonia has protested against meetings between Estonian government representatives and Dalai Lama. However, Estonia is not alone in facing pressure from China. In 2015, the head of Latvian parliament's foreign affairs committee received a phone call from Chinese



language. As discovered by the US Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, these teachers also have to sign contracts with the Chinese government promising that “they will not damage the national interests of China”<sup>31</sup> The teachers are also given pre-prepared answers on issues relating to Taiwan, Tibet and other sensitive issues, which was confirmed by a Latvian student who asked one of the teachers about the situation in Hong Kong. In response to the question, the teacher said that this question is not relevant and the discussion was shut down.<sup>32</sup>

The Confucius Institutes are also aimed at collecting information on students. According to an investigation done by an independent newspaper, the teachers of Confucius Institutes often take pictures of students, saying that it is necessary for their reports.<sup>33</sup> When

ambassador who advised that no one from the Latvian parliament should meet with Dalai Lama.<sup>30</sup> It’s not only the big politicians that get noticed by China. In 2013, Riga’s International Airport removed a poster advertising Dalai Lama’s public lecture following instructions from higher ups. Airport’s official representative refused to comment on the issue. In 2015, similar thing happened in Tallinn, when posters regarding Tibet were removed. The amount of attention China directs towards these issues is surprising, especially considering the relative insignificance of the Baltic states on the world stage. But for China, it seems like every single opinion counts.

Even though China has managed to stop meetings between high-ranking Baltic officials and representatives from Taiwan or Tibet, China’s mission of spreading the “correct” version of Chinese history and culture is not over. This task is achieved through the Confucius Institutes, which are located at three major Baltic Universities. In each Baltic country, only the director and secretary are hired by the local universities. The teachers are always selected and paid by Hanban, a non-profit government organization under China’s Education Ministry that is officially aiming at promoting Chinese

asked about these reports, the director of Latvian Confucius Institute admitted that he hasn’t seen any of them. Further, the Chinese wanted to receive lists of people attending the Confucius Institute’s events, student’s learning time and their career trajectories. This is a serious attempt by the Chinese government to collect intelligence on people who could later on be recruited. But the issues regarding Confucius Institutes are even more far reaching. According to some sources, these institutes have influence over administrators and college professors who are forced to self-censor.<sup>34</sup>

In essence, the Communist Party has been successfully forcing high-ranking officials in the Baltic states to comply with the official China’s position on Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong. However, that is not enough for the Chinese. The Chinese government knows that Confucius Institutes are appealing to colleges and universities as they provide native Chinese teachers and finance half of the funds of these institutes. In turn, these institutes spread the “correct” version of Chinese history and force not only politicians, but also students and intellectuals to comply with it. On top of that, these institutes collect valuable information on people who are interested in China,

which could later on be used for recruiting people to work for the Communist Party. As seen in the Lithuanian intelligence annual report of foreign threats, the Lithuanian secret services had already acknowledged these dangers posed by Confucian Institutes, however, the attractiveness of such institutes seemingly outweigh the negatives.

### *Chinese government's cooperation with willing Chinese citizens to further Beijing's agenda*

On 23 August 2019, thousands of protesters in Hong Kong formed a human chain to protest against a bill on extradition to mainland China and police violence. The protests were also supported in Vilnius, when several hundreds of Lithuanians joined in solidarity with the protesters in Hong Kong. These Lithuanians were confronted by a small but vocal group of pro-Beijing counter-demonstrators, who were shouting that Hong Kong is part of China forever.<sup>35</sup> The group's leader Wang Hoanan, the alleged chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania (who was curiously appointed to the position on the same day of the incident)<sup>36</sup> said that the Lithuanian protesters are misled by fake news. The official accounts of the event is not too interesting, besides the fact that it was openly orchestrated by the chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania. However, upon a closer look, the protest reveals quite a lot of details about the organizational structure of Chinese people living in Lithuania, whether they are simple citizens or government representatives.

According to an independent research carried out by LRT (Lithuania's national news agency) the Chinese embassy in cooperation with a local Chinese expat association were responsible for sparking up the anti-Hong Kong protests.<sup>37</sup> The counter-protest was attended not only by the association's leader, who also happens to be the owner of a local Chinese restaurant "Asia Tasty," but also by two other restaurant owners and a journalist from a Chinese national newspaper "Xinhua." When some Lithuanian journalists asked the owner of Asia Tasty about the protests, he denied that the Chinese Embassy was involved.<sup>38</sup>

However, Chinese Embassy's involvement in the situation goes much deeper. Some Lithuanian journalists managed to capture a Chinese diplomat handing out anti-Hong Kong posters to Chinese citizens.<sup>39</sup> Another video captured the Chinese Ambassador in Lithuania watching closely the protest.<sup>40</sup> While the fact that the Chinese Embassy helped orchestrate the counter-protest is not that surprising, however, the fact that they did it publicly is quite interesting. In essence, it shows that the Chinese government is not scared to officially demonstrate that they are willing to cooperate with the local Chinese population to further the Communist Party's agenda. Additionally, it shows that the local Chinese, even the restaurant owners who are interested in having a good

image, are willing to cooperate with the Chinese government. While such instances are not new in the Western Europe, it is the first such incident that happened in Lithuania and the Baltics.

### *Securing the transportation infrastructure*

Similar to Russia, China is also interested in the transportation infrastructure in the Baltics. Just last year, a famous Finnish entrepreneur Peter Vesterbacka has allegedly secured 15-20 billion euros and agreed with three Chinese construction companies to build what may become the world's largest undersea railway tunnel connecting Tallinn and Helsinki.<sup>41</sup> As the companies promised to finish the project by 2024 and all the money is coming from China, naturally, the Estonian government had many questions regarding this project. For example, what happens if the project is not finished on time? What if the tunnel is sold to a third party? What kind of leverage do the Chinese operators have over Estonian and Finnish governments? On top of that, some studies point to the fact that the Chinese companies have severely overestimated the benefits of the project. None of the questions have been answered by the potential Chinese developer.

The main reason behind China's interest in this tunnel is that it provides a convenient, Chinese operated infrastructure that would connect the Baltics to the Nordic countries. After all, Finland and Sweden receive more foreign direct investment (FDI) from China than the whole Eastern Europe combined.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the main economic Chinese activities in the Baltics are motivated by the fact that Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia provide the easiest access to the Nordic States. In a way, this infrastructure would be indirectly connected to the Belt and Road Initiative going through Belarus to Europe.

However, the potential tunnel is not the only transportation infrastructure eyed by the Chinese. Lithuania's Klaipeda port has attracted quite a lot of Chinese business interest for certain reasons. Firstly, if the future Arctic trade routes open up, Klaipeda's port could serve as a convenient link connecting China and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the Klaipeda's port could unofficially join the Belt and Road Initiative by providing China access to Nordic Countries, which, as

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**The above discussed Chinese and Russian policies/strategies towards the Baltic states exemplify the increasingly complex set of tools that Beijing and Moscow utilize to advance their foreign policy goals. It is evident that these two countries are not merely interested in influencing the “grand politics” of the Baltic states, but are also interested in influencing cultural/social/economical/security dimensions of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.**

previously mentioned, are of great interest to China. Most importantly, China wants to help its new ally Belarus. In essence, the nearest port to Belarus is the Klaipeda port and a third of all cargo passing through Klaipeda's port now comes from Belarus.<sup>43</sup> This growth in Belarus exports is fueled by the new Chinese-Belarusian joint industrial park called The Great Stone, which is set to be the largest Chinese project abroad as estimated by China's Ministry of Commerce.<sup>44</sup> As of now, all the building materials for the construction of the industrial park arrive in Belarus via Klaipeda and all parties involved want to make sure that this cooperation continues. Additionally, Klaipeda's port has expressed its willingness to help Belarus in providing oil, following an oil tariff dispute between Moscow and Minsk.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the port of Klaipeda is an essential part in China's strategy regarding Belarus.

## Conclusions and Forecasts

The above discussed Chinese and Russian policies/strategies towards the Baltic states exemplify the increasingly complex set of tools that Beijing and Moscow utilize to advance their foreign policy goals. It is evident that these two countries are not merely interested in influencing the “grand politics” of the Baltic states, but are also interested in influencing cultural/social/economical/security dimensions of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

It is highly likely that the intensity of Russian activities in the Baltics will remain strong. There is no indication that Moscow will re-adjust its military policies towards de-escalation, as Russia's domestic and foreign policy remains highly militarized. Besides trying to further keep the military balance in favor of Russia, Kremlin will seek to further influence the local politics, intensify disinformation campaigns, increase its intelligence operations and put economic pressure on the Baltics. As for China, considering the growing activity of Beijing's intelligence services in NATO and EU countries, it is most likely that Chinese intelligence activities in the Baltics will also expand.

One area that should receive more attention from the Baltic and NATO policy makers is the transportation sector. Both Russia and China have a lot of influence over the transportation of goods in the Baltic states and have strong reasons to cooperate, as it would help each other greatly. For now, one should follow the development of the Rail Baltica project and the enlargement projects in the Baltic ports. In the future, Russia and China might even compete over controlling railways, as the Baltics occupy a key geographic intersection between East/West and South/North.

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# EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, A HOTBED OF TENSIONS: PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF CYPRUS AND A NEW ZERO-SUM GAME FOR HYDROCARBON RESOURCES

Turkey waived its legal sovereign rights over the Island of Cyprus less than a century ago as part of the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, and in 1925 the island was declared a crown colony of the United Kingdom

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## **Introduction**

As the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), we continue to study the Eurasian geography extending from the Adriatic Sea in Europe to the Chinese Wall in Asia. Within this very wide area, the regions that AVİM has thus far primarily focused on are the Balkans, the wider Black Sea Region, the Southern Caucasus and Central

Asia. In this context, we consider the Caucasus and the Balkans as the two major fault lines of this geography. However, we do not neglect to follow the developments in the wider Mediterranean region where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet. In this context, the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region has gained prominence in recent years.



## Wider Mediterranean region

The Mediterranean Sea is the largest of the semi-enclosed European seas. It encompasses several countries: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey. The region also encompasses the Island of Cyprus divided between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus (GASC). All these countries together share a coastline of 46,000 km.<sup>1</sup>

It should be underlined in connection with the international status of Island of Cyprus that the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia on the Island of Cyprus have also coastlines on the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>2</sup> As it is known, Turkey waived its legal sovereign rights over the Island of Cyprus less than a century ago as part of the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, and in 1925 the island was declared a crown colony of the United Kingdom (the UK/Britain).<sup>3</sup> Article 20 of the Lausanne Treaty states in that respect that “Turkey hereby recognizes the annexation of Cyprus proclaimed by the British Government on the 5th November, 1914.”<sup>4</sup>

## Basic Facts about the Cyprus Issue

During the British colonial rule,

pursuant to their demand for enosis, the Greek Cypriots started rioting against the British presence on the Island. To this end, the Greek Orthodox Church organized a plebiscite in 1950. On 1 April 1955, the Greek Cypriot terrorist organization, EOKA, was founded with the aim of advancing ‘enosis’ through armed struggle and annexing Cyprus to Greece. The Turkish Cypriots, as co-inhabitants of the Island, refused the annexation of the Island to Greece and rightfully sought equal say over the future of Cyprus. Unfortunately, the Greek Cypriot armed attacks against the British were also directed toward Turkish Cypriots, which, as a result, led to the deterioration of relations between the two communities. By 1959, the situation on the Island became intolerable to both Turkish Cypriots and the British administration.<sup>5</sup>

In 1959, a compromise was reached by Turkey, Greece, and the UK through the London and Zurich agreements, and the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 as a bi-communal state based on partnership between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. Through this compromise, Cyprus gained its independence, while the UK retained two military bases mentioned above on the Island. Along with the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960 between Turkey, Greece, the UK and the newly

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independent bi-communal Cyprus, Turkey was conferred with comprehensive guarantor rights over Cyprus. It should be noted at this point that the 1960 settlement of Cyprus was a “sui generis” one and created a delicate “state of affairs” in the Island.

The 1960 partnership, however, lasted only three years. With a view to initiating the Akritas Plan, which put forward a deliberate campaign for changing “the state of affairs” created by the Constitution (which is the annex of the Treaty of Establishment), ultimately realizing the ideal for *enosis*, the Greek Cypriots proposed amendments to the Constitution, known as the Thirteen Points that entailed usurping the rights of Turkish Cypriots and degrading their equal co-founder status to that of a minority on the Island. The disagreements between the two communities pertaining to the Constitution and other inter-communal matters consequently led to the tragic events of 1963 during which many Turkish Cypriot civilians lost their lives. At this point, the Greek Cypriots forcibly seized the partnership of the Republic of Cyprus, ejected all Turkish Cypriots from state organs and unilaterally amended the fundamental articles of the Constitution. In the wake of inter-communal havoc, Turkish Cypriots were forced to live in small and confined enclaves corresponding to only 3% of the territory, which consequently led to the physical separation of the populations in the capital city of Lefkoşa/Nicosia by the demarcation of the Green Line. As a result of the acceleration of the inter-communal conflict, the situation on the Island was debated at the United Nations (UN) Security Council, leading to the adoption of Resolution 186 of 4 March 1964, which called for the creation of a UN Peace Keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). After their expulsion from the partnership republic of 1960, the Turkish Cypriots established administrative mechanisms to regulate day-to-day affairs.

In July 1974 a powerful force of mainland Greek troops had assembled in Cyprus and with the backing of the Greek Cypriot National Guard, staged a coup d'état, overthrew the-then Greek Cypriot administration and installed a fascist EOKA leader as so-called “President.” Turkey was forced to intervene as the guarantor country in order to restore the “state of affairs” and the problem that came into being as a result of this fascist coup d'état has persisted since then. The result of these unfortunate events is that currently there are *de facto* two entities on the Island: TRNC and GASC. Another fact of the matter is that efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the issue under the good offices mission of the UN Secretary

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General did not lead to a settlement due to the unwillingness and intransigent attitude of the Greek Cypriot side for a solution on the island. Since the first attempt for reconciliation between the two sides in 1968 through intercommunal talks, more than half of a century has been wasted by the Greek Cypriots. Hence, a bi-communal, bi-zonal federal settlement based on political equality, which has been tried during the last nearly fifty years seems to have failed. It should be expected that this situation will be detrimental not only for the wider Mediterranean region but also for the security and stability of the Eurasian geography.

### **Eastern Mediterranean Sub-Region**

From my perspective, the central parameter of the term “region” is geography. There should be a limit to geographic unit that is conceived as “region” or “sub-region.” This limitation to geography brings along the notion of proximity. Joseph Nye Jr. defined the region in macro scale in 1968 “as a limited number of states linked by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence.”<sup>6</sup> William R. Thomson, in 1973, described “the necessary and sufficient conditions for the regional subsystem” as follows:

- 1) The actors’ pattern of relations or interactions exhibit a particular degree of regularity and intensity to the extent that a change at one point in the subsystem affects other points.
- 2) The actors are generally proximate.
- 3) Internal and external observers and actors recognize the subsystem as a distinctive area or ‘theatre of operation’
- 4) The subsystem logically consists of at least and quite probably more actors.<sup>7</sup>

The geographical proximity parameter is also emphasized in the context of regional security studies. For instance, Barry Gordon Buzan states that “In security terms, ‘region’ means that a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations exists among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into geographical proximity with each other.”<sup>8</sup>



Eastern Mediterranean, geographically, is a sub-region of the wider Mediterranean region. We can describe this sub-region generically as the easternmost part of the Mediterranean Sea. It is referred to in some sources as the Levantine Sea region, which basically denotes a region situated in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> For the purposes of this article, I consider the Eastern Mediterranean as a sub-region of wider Mediterranean region which includes Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the Island of Cyprus, Egypt, Libya, and Greece. It should be underlined that the above referenced sub-region does not have any security connotation.

As to the geographical facts, Turkey’s coast strip in Mediterranean is one of the longest coastlines among the all Mediterranean littoral countries and the longest in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey’s Mediterranean coastline length is (Aegean+ Mediterranean) 4382 km. As a matter of fact, its long coastline, 83 million population, unique geographical position between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, full sovereignty over Turkish Straits, and a rich historical heritage make Turkey a pivotal country in the Eastern Mediterranean.





### **The Oil and Gas Resources in the Region and the EastMed Gas Pipeline Project**

There is no doubt that the discovery of significant deposits of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean beginning in 2009 opened a new chapter in the history of the region. The major gas discoveries were made off the coast of Israel and the Island of Cyprus between 2009 and 2011 in the Leviathan and the so-called Aphrodite fields, and also off the coast of Egypt in the Zohr field in 2015. It is reported in the international press that “The big finds are the Aphrodite field off Cyprus (thought to hold 8 trillion cubic feet of gas); the Tamar and Leviathan fields off Israel’s coast, (11 and 22 trillion cubic feet respectively; and Egypt’s Zohr field (30 trillion cubic feet).”<sup>10</sup> It is reported in various expert sources that recoverable natural gas reserves in the region are estimated more than 120 trillion cubic feet. For instance, a frequently cited fact sheet published by the United States (US) Department of the Interior/US Geological Survey estimates “a mean of 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and a mean of 122 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas in the Levant Basin Province using a geology based assessment methodology.”<sup>11</sup>

The said fact-sheet summarizes the resources as follows:

... The mean of the distribution for undiscovered oil is about 1,689 MMBO (million barrels of oil), with a range from 483 MMBO to 3,759 MMBO. For undiscovered gas, the total mean volume is 122,378 billion cubic feet of gas (BCFG), with a range from 50,087 BCFG to 227,430 BCFG... These estimates represent technically recoverable oil and gas resources; no attempt was made to estimate economically recoverable resources.

As broadly reflected in international and domestic press reports, Greece, GASC, and Israel signed on 2 January 2020 a deal for constructing the Eastern Mediterranean subsea natural gas pipeline (shortly called EastMed). The project aims to construct a 1900 km pipeline for carrying discovered and to-be-discovered gas in the said fields through Island of Cyprus, Greece, and Italy to European markets.<sup>12</sup> Besides that, Egypt, Greece, GASC, Israel, Italy, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority signed on 16 January the East Med Gas Forum (EMGF) foundation charter, creating a platform for East Mediterranean natural gas cooperation.<sup>13</sup>

### Forming Opportunistic Loose Groupings for Playing Zero-Sum Games

The discovery of hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region could be considered as a game-changer event which has deeply affected and virtually inverted the established patterns of relations among the littoral states of the sub-region. It would not be wrong to state that the discovered gas and oil resources become a catalyst for forming opportunistic loose groupings between certain states and administrations in the region.

These groupings seem to be guided by Greece and GASC. Greece and GASC, for the time being, seem to have enticed Egypt and, to a certain degree, Israel to act together for maximizing their benefits from these hydrocarbon resources.

We notice that these temporary groupings are in some cases called in the press reports and analysis as “alliance.” There is a reason why I refer to this term in quotation marks. Alliance is essentially a legal international law term that “means a union or association of two or more states or nations formed by league or treaty for jointly waging war or mutually protecting against and repelling hostile attacks. For example, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).”<sup>14</sup> In fact, certain collaborations made with some organizations in Syria were also described as “alliance” in the press reports of certain countries. From my point of view, this terminology does not accurately reflect the true nature of neither such temporary collaborations in northern Syria nor opportunistic temporary groupings in the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region.

There is no need to be an international relations expert to understand that the main goal of all these endeavors is to exclude Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots from energy equation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

I have tried to briefly explain above the facts of the Cyprus issue without going into its historical details. While explaining the objective facts, I have diligently refrained from touching upon the irrational hostility cultivated against Turkey and Turks by the certain Greek Cypriot and mainland Greek groups. I have only tried to draw attention to the facts regarding the Cyprus issue which are normally not referred to in most of the sources explaining the developments regarding the hydrocarbon resources around the island of Cyprus.

At this point, what I want to dwell on is whether the roguish, uncreative gambit that Greeks and Greek Cypriots are trying to play against Turkey would yield any positive result for both the security and stability of the Eastern Mediterranean region and its actors.

Turkey has officially stated on number of occasions that;

such initiatives launched against Turkey and the

Turkish Cypriots will never contribute to peace and cooperation in the region. Any initiative not involving Turkey and Turkish Cypriots in the Eastern Mediterranean will not succeed either... We will resolutely continue to protect the legitimate rights and interests of both Turkey and TRNC in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>15</sup>

Turkey has very recently made a comprehensive statement regarding the hydrocarbon resources of the Island of Cyprus. Since this statement explains Turkey's position, I consider it useful to quote some passages from this statement:

As we have repeatedly emphasized, the Turkish Cypriots, as the co-owners of the Island have equal rights on the hydrocarbon resources of the Island. Based on these rights, the TRNC Government granted exploration and exploitation licenses to the Turkish Petroleum (TP) in 2011. TP's ongoing survey and drilling activities in these license areas aim at protecting the rights of the Turkish Cypriots, not Turkey. Until these rights are guaranteed, the TP will continue to operate in these license areas.

These rights can only be guaranteed either by jointly suspending all off-shore activities in the south of the Island until a comprehensive settlement is reached in Cyprus, or by launching a cooperation mechanism by the Greek Cypriots with the Turkish Cypriots in accordance with the 13 July 2019 proposal. Otherwise, Turkey will continue resolutely to protect the rights of the Turkish Cypriots. Therefore, once again, we call on all the EU members, especially Italy to abandon their attitudes which ignore the very presence of Turkish Cypriots and their rights.

As we have also repeatedly stated in the past, the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas to the West of the Island of Cyprus will only be possible after the resolution of the Cyprus issue. It is out of question for Turkey to start maritime boundary delimitation negotiations with an entity that does not represent the Turkish Cypriots and usurps the title of the ‘Republic of Cyprus’ since 1963. The only interlocutor of the Greek Cypriots is only the Turkish Cypriots, until the resolution of the Cyprus issue.<sup>16</sup>

As is known, Turkey has signed a memorandum of understanding with Libya on the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas. This memorandum, objectively speaking, is a creative and constructive move by Turkey. Greece, GASC and, unsurprisingly, the existing government in Egypt made frantic statements against this memorandum. As usual, a number of erroneous “neo-Ottoman” stories on Turkish foreign policy appeared in the international press. As will be

appreciated by any impartial analyst, no government in Turkey can allow Greece and Greek Cypriots to play zero-sum energy games in the Eastern Mediterranean. What is at stake in East Mediterranean for Turkey is her vital national interests. To put it more clearly: Turkey has no “neo-Ottoman” ambitions here, the zero-sum game played by Greece and Greek Cypriots simply forces Turkey to respond to protect her interests.

While explaining above the involvement of Israel in these groupings, I preferred to use the terminology of “in a certain degree.” The reason for this cautious language is that it is not clear yet to me whether Israel’s well-known strategic thinking of the Middle East region has undergone a significant change. From my perspective, Israel’s traditional vital security interests still heavily lie in the Middle East. This is especially true because of what is currently going on in Syria. If Israel’s traditional vital security interests keep their relevance today, one should find answers to the following questions; Is it reasonable for Israel to participate in a blindfolded way to the loose and obscure groupings formed for playing a zero-sum game in the Eastern Mediterranean? What could be the strategic, geo-political and military implications of the economically linked zero-sum game in the Eastern Mediterranean for Israel?

In my opinion, Israel is the country that should be most careful in this game. In such a risky situation in Middle East and especially in Syria where certain countries that Israel considers as its arch-enemy is very

influential, Israel may regret irrevocably losing Turkey by taking an openly hostile position against Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean. What is at stake for Israel in that respect is more than a pipeline policy.

### Conclusion

What we need in Eastern Mediterranean is joint security, energy and prosperity. Zero-sum games cannot bring anything to the region other than insecurity, instability, and endless hostility. The crucial issue for the Eastern Mediterranean countries in the upcoming period is whether they will prefer the non-zero-sum game or zero-sum game in the region. It is useful to consider the risk of losing while aggressively striving for gaining everything. It should not be forgotten that sometimes you may initially go further yet far worse in the end.

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# TARİHİ SÜREÇTE TÜRKİSTAN: BATI TÜRKİSTAN (ORTA ASYA) VE DOĞU TÜRKİSTAN (SINCAN UYGUR ÖZERK BÖLGESİ)

Türkistan coğrafyası günümüzde beş Orta Asya cumhuriyetini (Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Tacikistan, Türkmenistan, Özbekistan), Çin'in Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi'ni, Afganistan'ın kuzeyini ve İran'ın kuzeyindeki Hazar Denizi kıyılarını kapsamaktadır.

## Gülperi Güngör

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**B**u yazıda öncelikle Türkistan'ın neresi olduğu, Türkistan'ın batısında ulusal sınırlandırmanın özellikleri kısaca ele alınacaktır. Daha sonra, tarihte belirli dönüm noktalarına dikkat çekilerek, Doğu Türkistan'da Çin'in politikalarının dönüşümüne etki eden faktörler incelenecek, Uygur ve diğer etnik gruplara uygulanmakta olan politikaların bir tablosu çizilecektir. Batı Türkistan halkı, Orta Asya cumhuriyetleri olacak kendi bağımsız ve egemen devletlerine sahip olurken, Doğu Türkistan'da Çin'in Uygur Özerk Bölgesindeki halka 1990'lı yıllardan itibaren uygulanmaya başlayan ve 2016 yılından sonra görülmemiş düzeye ulaşan baskı politikaları üzerinde durulacaktır.

### Türkistan (Batı Türkistan + Doğu Türkistan)

Türkistan coğrafyası günümüzde beş Orta Asya cumhuriyetini (Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Tacikistan, Türkmenistan, Özbekistan), Çin'in Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi'ni, Afganistan'ın kuzeyini ve İran'ın kuzeyindeki Hazar Denizi kıyılarını kapsamaktadır. Farsça kökenli Türkistan kelimesini bir tarihsel-coğrafi terim olarak ilk olarak Sasaniler'in kullandıkları düşünülmektedir.<sup>1</sup> Yazılı kaynaklarda, ilk olarak 7. yüzyılda Ermeni rahip Sebeos bu coğrafyayı ifade etmek için Türkistan kelimesini kullanmıştır.<sup>2</sup>

Arap coğrafyacılarına göre Türkistan, Ceyhun nehrinin ötesindeki topraklar anlamında Maveraünnehr

coğrafyasında bulunmaktadır. Ortaçağ'da, müslüman coğrafyacılar için Türkistan ya da *bilād al-Türk*, bozkırlarda Türk ve Moğolların yaşadığı Çin ile İslam Dünyası arasındaki topraktır.<sup>3</sup> Kaşgarlı Mahmut, Türkçe'nin ilk ansiklopedik sözlüğü, *Divanü Lugati't-Türk*'te bu coğrafyayı "Türk illeri" olarak adlandırmıştır.<sup>4</sup> Orta Çağ'da bölgenin Türki halkını Tatar olarak tanımlayan İngilizler bölge için "Tartary" ifadesini kullanmış, 18.yüzyıl ortalarında Farsça'nın etkisi ile Türkistan kelimesi İngilizce literatüre girmiştir.<sup>5</sup>

19. yüzyıl sonrasında, Türkistan idari bir anlam kazanarak daha dar bir coğrafyayı ifade etmeye başlamıştır. Hokand ve Buhara Hanlıkları'na hükmederek bu coğrafyada geniş bir hâkimiyet kazanan Rusya, 1865 yılında başkenti Taşkent olan Türkistan Genel Valiliği'ni kurmuştur. Bu dönemde, Avrupalı yazarlar bu bölgeyi "Rus Türkistanı" (ya da Batı Türkistan) olarak adlandırırken, yazarların Mezarı Şerif merkezli Afganistan'daki Türkistan vilayeti için "Afgan Türkistanı" (ya da Güney Türkistan), Mançu İmparatorluğu hâkimiyeti altında bulunan Sincan eyaleti için ise "Çin Türkistanı" ifadesini kullandıkları görülmektedir.

Geniş Türkistan coğrafyası yüzyıllardır, belirli ekonomik sistemleri, ortak gelenekleri, politik modelleri, göçebelik ve yerleşik uygarlık ilişkileri ile geçmişini birbirine bağlı bir topluma yurt olmuştur. Bölgede modern anlamda ulus kimliğinin 19. ve 20. yüzyılda

yaygınlaştığını kaydetmek gerekir. İsmail Gasprıralı'nın öncülük ettiği modern yöntemde (Usul-ü Cedid) eğitim programı oluşturma ve ulus kimliğini geliştirme amacını taşıyan Ceditçilik gibi sosyo-politik ve entelektüel hareketler bu dönemde Türkistan'da yayılmaya başlamıştır.

### **Sovyetler Birliği'nde Ulusal Sınırlandırma**

1917 Bolşevik Devrimi sonrasında, Sovyetler Birliği'nde Batı Türkistan'ın tarihinin çalışılmasına özel önem atfedilmiş, ancak akademik çalışmaların devlet tarafından açıkça kontrol edildiği görülmüştür. 1924-1936 yılları arasında Sovyetler Birliği'nde ulusal toprak sınırlarının belirlenmesi politikası uygulanmaya başlanmış ve 'böl ve yönet' politikası doğrultusunda Sovyetler Birliği çatısı altında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri ve otonom bölgeler oluşturulmuştur. Bu suretle Türkistan'ın batısının parçalanması süreci başlatılmıştır.

1920'de Çarlık Rusya'sı döneminin "Bozkır Genel Valiliği" Kırgız Özerk Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'ne dönüştürülmüştür. 1924'te Alma-ata ve Sir Derya bölgesi buraya bağlanmıştır. 1925'te bu cumhuriyetin ismi değişip, Kazak Özerk Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti olmuştur. 1936'da ise statüsü cumhuriyet olarak değişmiştir.

Kara-Kırgız Özerk Oblastı ise 1926-36 arasında Rus Sosyalist Federatif Sovyet Cumhuriyeti'nin bir parçası idi. 1936'da Kırgız Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti olmuştur.

Ulusal sınırlama sürecine dair arşiv çalışmaları yapan araştırmacılar Orta Asya'daki cumhuriyetlerin çizilen sınırlarının coğrafi, ekonomik ya da etnik hiçbir rasyonaliteye sahip olmadığını ifade etmektedir.<sup>6</sup> Örneğin Taşkent'in hangi cumhuriyete bağlanacağı Kazakistan – Özbekistan arasında bir mücadeleye sahne olmuştu, Taşkent Kazakistan tarihinde önemli bir kültür merkezi idi ancak Özbekistan'a bağlandı. Burada makul bir sınırlandırma yapmak neredeyse imkânsızdı. Bunun yanında Özbek nüfusu daha yoğun olan Çimkent, Kazakistan'a verildi. Özbekistan ve Tacikistan arasında da benzer durumlar yaşanmıştır.<sup>7</sup>

Orta Asya'da sovyet sosyalist cumhuriyetlerin kurulması sonrasında Sovyet oryantal çalışmaları araştırmacıları bölgenin tarihini ulusal parçalara bölerek, her bir cumhuriyetin ayrı tarihinin yazımına katkıda bulunmuşlardır. Avrupa merkezci kavramlar üzerinden her Orta Asya Cumhuriyeti için ayrı ulusal kimlikler yaratılması ve resmi tarih üretimi, sosyalizme giden yolda, öncelikle ayrı ulus devlet aşamasından geçilmesi gerekçesi ile meşrulaştırılmıştır. Bu kapsamda Orta Asya halkı eğitimde Rus sisteminin geçerli olması nedeniyle konuşma dilinin de Rusça olması istikametinde zorlanmış, kendi diline ilaveten dininden de uzaklaştırılması çabaları yoğunlaşmıştır.

A. Bustanov, Orta Asya tarihine dair kaynakların manipüle edilmesinin ve kültürel alanda ulusal sınırlar oluşturulmasının Orta Asya cumhuriyetleri üzerinde, politik sınırların çizilmesinden daha güçlü bir etki



yarattığını ifade etmektedir.<sup>8</sup> Öyle ki, 1970'lerde Brejnev'in liderliğindeki ekonomik durgunluk döneminde, Sovyet hükümeti cumhuriyetlerde milliyetçilik potansiyelini tespit ettiğinde, bir denge bulmaya çalışmış, Orta Asya'nın bölgesel tarihinin çalışılmasına destek verilmeye başlanmıştı. Ancak cumhuriyetler arasında kültürel duvarlar o kadar yüksek hale gelmişti ki bu dönemde tarih yazımına katılan ulusal aydınlar, komşularıyla ortak bir tarihsel alanda yer almak istemiyorlardı.<sup>9</sup> Sovyetler Birliği dağılınca Orta Asya'daki cumhuriyetler bağımsız devlet statüsünü kazanmışlardır. Ancak geçmiş siyasi uygulamaların da etkisiyle Orta Asya cumhuriyetleri arasında göç meselesi hala gündemde yer alan bir mesele olmaktadır.

### 1911 Yılına Kadar Doğu Türkistan

Doğu Türkistan - günümüzde Çin'in Sincan Uyğur Özerk Bölgesi – coğrafi olarak iki bölgeden oluşmaktadır: kuzeyde dağlık Cungarya bölgesi, güneyde ise Altışehir olarak da bilinen Tarım havzası. Mançu İmparatorluğu'nun kuzeydeki Moğol Cungar Devletini yenerek Cungarya ve Altışehir bölgelerini tek bir yönetim altında birleştirmesi 18. yüzyılda gerçekleşmiştir. Mançular bölgeye yeni sınır anlamına gelen Sincan (Xinjiang) adını vermiştir.

Asya'nın politik sınırlarının günümüzdeki durumu 16. Yüzyılın sonundan itibaren gerçekleşen olaylar neticesinde şekillenmiştir. Ruslar bu yüzyılda Sibiryaya doğru genişlemiş ve 17. yüzyılda Pasifik Okyanusu'na kadar ulaşmışlardır. Rus Çarı Birinci Petro bölgenin altın kaynaklarının arayışında Cungarya'ya askeri bir sefer düzenlemiş ancak Cungar ordusuna karşı mağlup olmuştur.<sup>10</sup> Cungar Devleti'ndeki taht mücadelesinden yararlanan Mançu İmparatorluğu 1756'da İli şehrine bir kuvvet göndererek savaşı kazanmış, Doğu Türkistan'da hâkimiyetini kurmuştur.<sup>11</sup>

1860'ların başlarında, Mançu İmparatorluğu'nun iç isyanlar ile sarsıldığı dönemde Doğu Türkistan'da Mançu yönetimi çökmüştü. Bu durumda, batıdaki Hokand Devleti'nin hükümdarı Alim Quli bölgeye komutan Yakup Bey'i göndermiş, Yakup Bey Kaşgar'ı ve Sincan'ın güneydoğusunda bulunan şehirleri fethedince, bölgede kendi devletini ilan etmiştir.

Yakup Bey güneyde egemenliğini ilan ederken, kuzeydeki Cungarya bölgesine 1871'de Rus kuvvetleri müdahale etmiştir. Rusya, bölgede Mançu hakimiyetini desteklediğini ancak bu işgalin - Mançuların bölgeyi yeniden kontrolüne dek - güvenlik nedeniyle, geçici bir durum olduğunu ifade etmiştir.<sup>12</sup> Bu zaman, tarihte İngiltere ve Rusya'nın Orta Asya'da jeopolitik nüfuz rekabetinin yoğun olduğu "Büyük Oyun" olarak tabir edilen döneme denk gelmektedir. İlk kez Rudyard Kipling'in romanında geçen, 19. yüzyılda İngiliz-Rus çekişmesini betimleyen "Büyük Oyun" tabiri, yaygınlaşarak bu dönemdeki Orta Asya'da İngiliz - Rus

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politik rekabetini ifade eden bir terime dönüşmüştür.<sup>13</sup> Yakup Beyin bu rekabetten yararlandığını söylemek yanlış olmaz. İngiltere, Hindistan sınırlarını güvende tutmak amacı ile, Yakup Bey devletini tanıyarak ilişkilerini geliştirmiştir.<sup>14</sup> Rusya da Yakup Bey devleti ile anlaşma yoluna gitmiştir.

Bu dönem Çin'de deniz savunmasına mı, batı savunmasına mı ağırlık verilmesi gerektiği tartışmaları gündemde olmuştur. Batı savunmasına ağırlık verilmesi fikri Doğu Türkistan'ın ele geçirilmesinden yana olan komutan Zuo Zongtang'a destek sağlamış, adı geçen bölgeye askeri operasyon gerçekleştirerek güneydeki Altışehir bölgesini fethetmiştir.<sup>15</sup>

Bölgenin kuzeyi hala Ruslarda iken, 1881 yılında Rusya ile Mançu İmparatorluğu arasında imzalan St.Petersburg anlaşması sonucu Rusya işgal ettiği bölgeden geri çekilmeyi kabul etmiştir. Buna karşılık Mançu Devleti Rusya'nın işgal maliyetleri ve tazminat talepleri için Rusya'ya 9.000.000 metal ruble ödemiş, ayrıca Sincan'daki Rus tüccarları vergiden muaf kılmıştır.<sup>16</sup>

### Harp Beyleri Dönemi

1911'de Mançu İmparatorluğu Xinhai devrimi tarafından yıkılıp, Çin Cumhuriyeti kurulunca, merkezdeki Çin hükümeti önce Japonya, sonra Komünistler ile yapılan savaşlar nedeni ile Sincan eyaleti üzerinde sadece kağıt üzerinde yönetim sahibi olmuştur. Bu dönem eyaletlerin askeri genel valileri (duban) asıl söz sahibidir, bu yüzden Harp Beyleri dönemi olarak adlandırılmaktadır.

Bu dönemin ilk genel valisi Yang Zengxin, Sincan'ın güneyinde İngiliz etkisinin gelişmesini sağlayıp, bir yandan da Ruslar ile ticaret anlaşmaları yapıp denge siyaseti izleyerek iktidarını sağlamlaştırmıştır. Sincan'ın özellikle kuzey bölgeleri Rusya ile yoğun bağlantı halinde olmuştur. Bu dönem, Sincan'ın Rusya ile ticareti Çin'in diğer bölgeleri ile ticari ilişkilerden 10 kat daha fazla idi.<sup>17</sup> Yang Zengxin din adamlarını Ceditçiler'e karşı kullanması gibi uyguladığı taktikler ile iktidarını sağlamıştır.<sup>18</sup>



**Orta Asya'da sovyet sosyalist cumhuriyetlerin kurulması sonrasında Sovyet oryantnal çalışmaları araştırmacıları bölgenin tarihini ulusal parçalara bölerek, her bir cumhuriyetin ayrı tarihinin yazımına katkıda bulunmuşlardır.**

Ancak sonraki vali Jin Shuren'in kabiliyetleri Yang'a göre kısıtlıydı. Nitekim, bölgedeki dengeleri yönetememiştir.<sup>19</sup> Vergileri arttırması, madenleri tekelleştirmesi<sup>20</sup> ve memleketi Gansu eyaletinden Çinli nüfusunu Hami bölgesine yerleştirmesi sonucu,<sup>21</sup> ayaklanmalar patlak vermiştir. Kuzeyde başlayan ayaklanmalar bölgenin güneyine de yayılmıştır. Bu ayaklanmaların eyalet genelinde tek bir lideri yoktu ve bölgesel ayaklanmalar idi. Kaşgar'daki grup 1. Doğu Türkistan Cumhuriyetini (DTC) 1933 yılında ilan etti. Ancak bu devlet -Yakup Bey devletinin aksine - uluslararası tanıma bulamadı. Yanı başında bağımsız bir Türki Cumhuriyet kurulması Sovyetler Birliği içerisindeki cumhuriyetleri etkileyebileceğinden, Sovyetler, DTC'nin varlığını kabul etmedi. İngiltere ise Çin'in bölgenin meşru yönetimi olduğu görüşündeydi. Bu noktada İngiltere'nin DTC'yi bölgede Rusya'yı dengeleyecek kadar güçlü görmediği ve Çin'in burada dengeleyici bir rol oynamasını daha uygun gördüğü söylenebilir.

1933'te gerçekleşen darbe sonrası genel vali olan Sheng Shicai Sovyetlerin desteği ile DTC'yi bertaraf etmiştir.<sup>22</sup> Sheng Shicai döneminde Sincan tam bir Sovyet uydusu haline gelmişti. Ancak Almanya Mayıs 1941'de Sovyetler Birliği'ni işgal ettiğinde, Sheng'in politikası tamamen değişmiş, 1942'den itibaren Sheng, Sovyet yanlılarını ve Çinli komünistleri tasfiyeye girilerek, Sovyetlerle ticareti kesmişti.<sup>23</sup> ABD 2.Dünya Savaşına girince de Çin Milliyetçi Hükümeti'nin (Guomindang) eli güçlenmiş, merkezi hükümet Sincan'ın kontrolünü tekrar sağlamış, Sheng Shicai'yi görevden almıştır.<sup>24</sup>

Ancak kısa süre sonra Guomindang'ın Sincan'da Kazakların yaşadığı bölgeye Çinli göçmen yerleştirme politikası ve artan vergiler Kazak milliyetçisi Osman Batur'un liderliğinde ayaklanmaya yol açmıştır.<sup>25</sup> Kazakların Altay'da başlattığı ayaklanma daha sonra İli'ye yayılmıştır. İli'deki ihtilalciler şehri ele geçirmiş ve 15 Kasım 1944'te ikinci defa Doğu Türkistan Cumhuriyeti (DTC) ilan edilmiştir.<sup>26</sup>

Guomindang yöneticileri Sovyetler Birliği'ni ihtilalcileri desteklemekle suçlamıştır ve Çin Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Sovyetler Birliği'ne bir protesto notası vermiştir.<sup>27</sup> Bahsedildiği üzere İli, 19. yüzyıldan beri Rus etkisinin fazla olduğu bir bölge idi. Tarihçi N.N Mingulov'a göre İli'deki ayaklanmanın koordinasyonunu 1942'den itibaren başlayan Sheng'in komünistleri tasfiyesi sürecinde Sovyetlere kaçan grup gerçekleştirmiştir.<sup>28</sup>



Bu noktada Doğu Türkistan tarihinde önemli bir dönüm noktası gerçekleşmiş, bu bölge Çin ve SSCB arasında pazarlık meselesi olmuştur. İkinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında Şubat 1945'te İngiltere, ABD ve Sovyetler Birliği liderlerinin katıldığı Yalta Konferansı'nda, Stalin Dış Moğolistan'ın bağımsızlık statüsünün sürdürülmesi koşulunu öne sürmüştür. Konferansta uzlaşa sağlanması neticesinde ABD ve SSCB, Dış Moğolistan'ın statüsü konusunda Çin'e baskıyı arttırmış, Çin ise bu talebi kabul etmesi karşılığında "SSCB'nin Çin'in Sincan toprağı üzerindeki egemenliğini tanıması ve Sincan'daki ayaklanmaya destek vermemesi" şartını koşmuştur. Stalin,

Gerek Yanan (komünist ihtilal üssü) gerek Sincan Çan Kay Şek'in liderliğine bağlı kalmalıdır. SSCB Çin hükümetinin talebi doğrultusunda bu konuda açıklama yapabilir, ayrıca Çin tarafının SSCB'den Sincan'a yapılan silah kaçakçılığını önleme talebini de kabul edebilir.

diye ifade ederek, Çin'in talebini onaylamıştır.<sup>29</sup> Bunun sonucunda Sovyetler Birliği arabuluculuğunda DTC temsilcileri ve Çin hükümeti Eylül 1945'te ateşkes ilan etmiş, koalisyon görüşmeleri başlatılmıştır. Haziran 1946'da imzalanan anlaşma ile Sincan'da ihtilalciler bağımsızlık amacından vazgeçmiş, Sincan'daki 25 kişilik hükümet konseyinde Çinli olmayan 14 yetkilinin olması kabul edilmiş, Uygur ve diğer azınlıkların hakları genişletilmiştir. Sovyetlerin Çin'e destek vermesinin nedeninin, Yalta'da Sovyetler'in avantaj elde etmesinin yanında, Sovyetler'in ABD'nin konuya müdahil olmasını istememesi ve ayrıca uzaklardaki İli'de bulunan ihtilalciler üzerinde Sovyet etkisinin zayıf olması olduğu düşünülmektedir.<sup>30</sup>

Anlaşma sonrası Çin tarafından belirlenen hükümet başkanı seçilmiş ancak kendisi bir süre sonra destek bulmayınca, İstanbul'da okumuş Türk milliyetçisi Mesud Sabri Baykuzu, Sovyet karşıtlığı bilindiği için, Çin tarafında Cumhurbaşkanlığı'na getirilmiştir. Sovyet karşıtlığıyla bilinen Baykuzu ve genel sekreter İsa Yusuf Alptekin'e karşı çıkan İli grubu Urumçi'den ayrılarak İli'ye taşınmışlardır.<sup>31</sup> Bir süre bu ikili durum devam etmiş, bu sırada Çin İç Savaşı devam ederken Chiang Kai Şek, Sovyetler ile uzlaşma yollarını aramıştır. Bu yüzden Ocak 1949'da Mesud Sabri Baykuzu görevinden alınmış, yerine Burhan Şahidi getirilmiştir.<sup>32</sup>

### Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti Dönemi

Çin'de iç savaş komünistler lehine gelişmiş, Eylül 1949'da, Sincan'daki Guomindang askerleri Halk Kurtuluş Ordusuna (PLA) teslim olmuştur. Burhan Şahidi, Guomindang yönetimiyle bağlarını koparıktan sonra, Çin Komünist Partisi'ne üye olup, görevine devam etmiştir. Çin'in yeni komünist yönetimi ile görüşmek isteyen İli grubu liderlerinden bir heyet Pekin'e giderken şüpheli bir uçak kazasında hayatını kaybetmiştir.<sup>33</sup>

**Doğu Türkistan tarihinde önemli bir dönüm noktası gerçekleşmiş, bu bölge Çin ve SSCB arasında pazarlık meselesi olmuştur. İkinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında Şubat 1945'te İngiltere, ABD ve Sovyetler Birliği liderlerinin katıldığı Yalta Konferansı'nda, Stalin Dış Moğolistan'ın bağımsızlık statüsünün sürdürülmesi koşulunu öne sürmüştür.**

Komünistlerin yönetimindeki Çin'de, Doğu Türkistan'da, Ekim 1955'de Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi kurulmuştur. Bölgede on üç etnik grubun varlığı kabul edilmiştir: Uygur, Han Çinlisi, Kazak, Kırgız, Tungan, Moğol, Mançu, Xibe, Tacik, Tatar, Rus, Özbek, Daur. Bölgede Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nin yönetiminin ilk döneminde azınlıklara karşı ılımlı bir yaklaşım hâkim olmuştur.<sup>34</sup> 1956'da ilan edilen Yüz Çiçek Kampanyası ile Mao'nun "Yüz çiçek açsın; bin fikir yarışsın" sözüne dayanarak hükümet, ilerleme kaydedilmesi ve sosyalizmin yerleşmesi için, halkın eleştirilerini dile getirmesini teşvik etmeye başlamıştır. Ancak hemen ardından 1957'de Anti-Sağcı Hareket'in başlaması ile sarkaç diğer yöne savrulmuştur: sağcı düşünceye sahip olduğu düşünülen birçok entelektüel, memur, öğrenci ve sanatçının tutuklanmaları başlamıştır.<sup>35</sup>

Mao'nun politikalarının tam anlamıyla sertleştiği dönem Çin – Sovyet ilişkilerinin ve Çin ekonomisinin kötüleşmeye başladığı döneme denk gelmektedir. 1958-1962 yılları arasında hızlı endüstrileşme ve kollektifleştirme amacıyla başlatılan Çin genelindeki Büyük İleri Atılım kampanyası iyi sonuçlar vermemiştir. Büyük İleri Atılım'ın başarısızlığı nedeniyle ve Sovyetler'de Stalin'in ölümünden sonra Kruşçev tarafından başlatılan reformların ilhamıyla, Mao önderliğine karşı bir muhalefet oluşmuştur. Buna karşılık Mao, revizyonistlerin tasfiyesi, burjuva unsurların bertaraf edilmesi ve bürokratik komünizm anlayışının bitirilmesi amaçlarını öne sürerek Kültür Devrimi'ni başlatmıştır. Kültür Devrimi sırasında burjuva unsur veya revizyonist olarak addedilen her türlü yaklaşım ve geleneklere yönelik saldırılar gerçekleşir ve Kızıl Muhafızlar adıyla kurulan teşkilatlarda şehirli gençler kontrolden çıkarken, Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi'nde de Uygur ve diğer azınlıkların kültürlerine ve dinlerine karşı saldırılar gerçekleşmiştir.<sup>36</sup>

### Reform ve Açılımdan Sonra

Mao Zedung 1976'da öldükten sonra, Dörtlü Çete (Gang of Four) olarak adlandırılan grup tavsiye edilmiş, yeni liderlik tarafından Mao'nun politikaları, Büyük Atılım ve Kültür Devrimi eleştirilmiş ve 1978'de ekonomik reform kabul edilerek sosyalist pazar ekonomisine geçilmiştir.



Bu yeni dönemde, Sincan'da uygulanan eski politikalar da eleştirilere tabi tutulmuştur. Kültürel ve dini farklılıklara karşı daha ılımlı ve özgürlüklere vurgu yapan bir söylem benimsenmeye başlanmış, Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi'nin yönetiminde Çinliler'in ağırlıkta olması eleştirilmiştir. Yerel dillerde yayınlar yapılması sağlanmıştır. İslam'a karşı da daha ılımlı bir yaklaşım ifade edilen bu dönemde yeni camiler açılmış, Sincan İslam Derneği yeniden kurulmuştur.<sup>37</sup>

Fakat bu özgürlük dönemi 1990'larda değişmeye başlamıştır. Batı Türkistan'ın bağımsız olması sonrasında, küreselleşme ile iletişim araçlarının gelişiminin de etkisi ile bölgedeki Uygur halkı ve diğer azınlıklar kendi kimliklerine sahip çıkmaya başlamıştır. Burada bahsedilmesi gereken diğer bir husus ise bölgenin ekonomik olarak geri kalmışlığıdır.

Çin piyasa ekonomisine geçtikten sonra öncelikli olarak dış ticaret odaklı bir ekonomi planı ile doğudaki kıyı bölgelerinde kalkınmaya öncelik vermiştir. Ancak doğudaki bu bölgeler ile batıdaki eyaletler arasında zamanla bir ekonomik uçurum meydana gelmiştir. Henüz 1980'de Çin Komünist Partisi Genel Sekreteri Hu Yaobang, Tibet'i ziyaretinde batıdaki ekonomik açıdan dezavantajlı durumu görmüş ve batıda reformun önemini vurgulamıştı.<sup>38</sup>

Sovyetler Birliği dağılınca Batı Türkistan'da yeni kurulan Orta Asya devletleri ile ticari ilişkiler geliştirmek ve bu ilişkiler aracılığıyla Çin'in batı bölgesinin kalkınmasını gerçekleştirmek amacıyla Çin'de 1990'lı yıllarda Büyük Batı Kalkınma Projesi oluşturulmuştur. Bu proje hem batı bölgelerinin Çin'e tam bir entegrasyonunu sağlamak hem de batıdaki ülkelerle yeni ticaret fırsatlarından yararlanmak amacıyla başlatılmıştır. Xi Jiping tarafından 2013 yılında Kazakistan'da açıklanan Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi bu projenin genişletilmiş bir versiyonu olarak kabul edilmektedir.<sup>39</sup>

Reform ve açılım sonrasında Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi'nde askeri çiftlikler, "Sincan Üretim ve İnşaat Kolordusu" (Bingtuan) adıyla yeniden kurulmuştur. Çin tarihinde çok eski bir sistem olan Bingtuan'da bu sefer yeni olan, bu çiftliklerde hibrit bir özel sektör ve bürokrasi sisteminin kurulmasıdır.<sup>40</sup> Bu çiftliklerde otel ve restoranlar inşa edilmiş<sup>41</sup> ve burada çalışmak üzere Çin'in diğer bölgelerinden göç teşvik edilmiştir.<sup>42</sup> 1983'te 2.26 milyon Bingtuan sakini, Sincan nüfusunun% 16'sını ve Sincan'daki Çinli nüfusun ise % 42'sini oluşturmaktaydı.<sup>43</sup> Ayrıca kentleşme de zamanla artmış ve Çin'in diğer bölgelerinden Sincan'daki şehirlerde yeni iş fırsatları için göçenler olmuştur.

Bölgede yeni petrol sahalarının keşfi sonrasında, petrokimya ve maden endüstrileri bölgenin kalkınmasında temel endüstrilerden sayılmıştır. Kaynak geliştirme stratejisi kapsamında, 1990 yılında Sincan'da 7 milyon ton olan yıllık petrol üretimi, 2002 yılında 20 milyon tonu aşmıştır.<sup>44</sup> Büyük Batı Kalkınma Projesi

çerçevesinde merkezi hükümetin finansal yardımı ile eyalet hükümeti ve işletmeler bölgede binlerce yatırım projesi oluşturmuştur.

Tüm bu gelişmeler ile birlikte, kalkınma politikalarının bölgedeki halka eşit düzeyde yansımadağı görülmektedir. Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi'nin kuzeyinin kentleşmesine ve gelişmesine rağmen, güneyi çoğunlukla kırsal olarak kalmıştır. Bölgede Çinliler kentsel nüfusun çoğunu oluştururken Uygurların % 80-90'ı kırsal alanlarda yaşamaktadır. Uygur nüfusunun ancak 1/5'i bölgenin kuzeyinde yaşamaktadır.<sup>45</sup> Kentleşmenin geliştiğı bölgelere diğer eyaletlerden göçün desteklenmesi bunda etkindir. Uygurlar'ın da şehirlere göçü artmaktadır. Ancak A.Cappaletti'nin araştırmasının gösterdiği üzere Uygurlar çoğunlukla inşaat ve gıda sektörlerinde düşük ücretli işlerde çalışmaktadırlar.<sup>46</sup>

Bu eşitsiz durum sonucu, ayrıca Uygurların ve bölgedeki diğer etnik grupların Orta Asya'da ve dünyada dolaşımlarının ve bilgi akışının artmasıyla 1990larda huzursuzluklar baş göstermeye başlayınca yönetim Sincan'daki Uygur ve diğer azınlıklara müdahalelerini arttırmıştır. Dini organizasyonlara ve dini olmayan topluluk toplantılarına kısıtlamalar getirilmiş, partinin kontrolü dışındaki faaliyetler etnik ayrılıkçılık ile ilişkilendirilmiştir.<sup>47</sup>

Kaşgar yakınlarındaki Baren kasabasında Çinli göçüne karşı protestolar silahlı bir çatışmaya dönüşmüş, bunu takiben büyük çaplı tutuklamalar olmuştur. 1991, 1992 ve 1993 yıllarında bir dizi bombalama olayı vuku bulmuş, bu dönemde Çinli yetkililer bu olayları "ayrılıkçı unsurlar" ile ilişkilendirmişlerdir.<sup>48</sup>

1996 yılından itibaren ise, Sincan politikasında sert vuruş (strike hard) dönemi başlamıştır. Ayrılıkçı faaliyetler

ve şiddet olayları ile ilgili binlerce kişi tutuklanmış, ayrılıkçılığı teşvik ettiği düşünülen kitap ve yayınlara el konulmuştur. Rusya'nın Çeçenistan'da savaştığı, Tacikistan'da iç savaşın olduğu bu dönemde Çin uluslararası platformda Şangay Beşlisi ile (2001'de kurulan Şangay İşbirliği Örgütü) işbirliği mekanizmaları yürütmüş, böylece Sincan politikasına da destek bulmayı amaçlamıştır.

Araştırmacı E. Clarke'a göre, 11 Eylül 2001'den sonra ABD "terörle savaş" ve Afganistan'daki koalisyon savaşını başlattığında, ardından Orta Asya devletleri yeni işbirliği mekanizmaları geliştirmeye başladıkça Şangay İşbirliği Örgütü'nün etkisi azalmaya başlamıştır.<sup>49</sup> 19. yüzyılda ülkelerin Orta Asya'daki rekabeti hatırlatılarak "Yeni Büyük Oyun" un varlığı tartışılmaya başlanmıştır.

Çin, ABD'nin bölgede terörle mücadele konusundaki politikalarına karşı bir tutum sergilememiştir. Ancak Çin bu dönemden sonra iç politikada "terörle savaş" söylemini kullanmaya başlamıştır. Çin'de 1990'lı yıllarda ayrılıkçılık ile ilişkilendirilen olaylar, 2001 sonrası İslami terörizm ile ilişkilendirilmeye başlamıştır.<sup>50</sup>

2016'dan itibaren ise Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi'nde "terörizm ile savaş" adı altında eşi görülmemiş politikalar uygulanmaya başlamıştır. Bir milyondan fazla Uygur ve diğer azınlıklar mahkemeye çıkarılmadan, yeniden eğitim kamplarında tutuklanmaktadır. Kişilerin partiye bağlılıklarını sağlamak amacıyla "yeniden eğitimleri"nin gerçekleştirilmesi gerekliliğı kamplarda tutuklama nedeni olarak gösterilmektedir. Ayrıca "keyfi tutuklama" tehdidi ile azınlıkların Çin'in diğer bölgelerine gönderilerek zorla çalıştırıldıkları ortaya çıkmıştır.<sup>51</sup> "Kardeş aile programı" kapsamında memurlar ev



ziyaretlerinde bulunmaktadır ve bir haftalık sürelerle Uygur ve Kazak ailelerin evlerinde vakit geçirmektedir. Memurlar kişilerin evde televizyonda ne izledikleri gibi hususları takip ederek gözetimin ve baskı politikasının aracı olmaktadır.<sup>52</sup>

Uluslararası ilişkiler uzmanı S.Roberts, bölgedeki azınlıklar üzerindeki baskı arttıkça, huzursuzluk ve şiddetin artmakta olduğunu ve bu durumun kısır döngü yarattığını, devlet tarafından daha fazla baskıya yol açtığını ifade etmektedir.<sup>53</sup> Çin'in bu duruma rağmen neden bu politikaları uyguladığını kendimize sorarsak,

iktidar mekanizmasını genişletmek ve gözetimi arttırmak için bölgede "güvensizliğin" körüklendiği söylenebilir.

Netice itibari ile Türkistan'ın batısındaki Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri'nde halklar kendi bağımsız ve egemen devletlerini kurmuş ve gelişmelerini günümüzün normal standartlarında ilerletmektedirler. Türkistan'ın doğusundaki Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi için ise bunu söylemek mümkün değildir. Bu bölgenin insan hakları, kalkınma, temel haklar ve özgürlükler açısından Türkistan'ın en şanssız bölgesi olduğunu söylemek abartılı bir değerlendirme olmayacaktır.

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# **THE EUROPEAN UNION'S NEW STRATEGY FOR CENTRAL ASIA: A GAME CHANGER OR MORE OF THE SAME?**

Over the past two decades, the EU's role in Central Asia has gradually evolved from an invisible and ineffective donor to that of a more full-fledged external actor. The strategy that the EU developed back in 2007 played an important part in enhancing the EU's role in Central Asia.

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## **Introduction**

This article provides an early assessment of the European Union's (EU) new strategy for Central Asia,<sup>1</sup> which was launched in May 2019. In particular, it evaluates whether the new strategy can enable the EU to further optimize its role as an external actor in Central Asia and whether it can ensure that the EU's involvement in the region produces tangible and lasting results, especially in view of contributing to the sustainable development of the Central Asian countries, one of the key goals identified in the new strategy.

Over the past two decades, the EU's role in Central Asia has gradually evolved from an invisible and ineffective donor to that of a more full-fledged external actor. The strategy that the EU developed back in 2007<sup>2</sup> played an important part in enhancing the EU's role in Central Asia. Nevertheless, almost 13 years after the strategy was launched, the EU still punches below its weight in the region, where it clearly plays second fiddle to Russia and China. And admittedly, it is still facing substantial challenges in having a tangible impact in a region considered as one of the most authoritarian in the world.<sup>3</sup>

After several attempts to revamp the 2007 strategy, the EU came to the realization that it was time to design a new strategy, one that would put it in a stronger position to contribute to the development of the Central Asian countries and better represent its interests in the region in line with the fast-changing geopolitical and domestic contexts in and around Central Asia. Under the aegis of the EU's Special Representative for Central Asia, Peter Burian, a long and intensive consultation process was initiated, which saw the EU solicit the views from a very wide range of European and Central Asian stakeholders over a period of more than two years. If anything, this significantly raised the expectations of the new strategy, which has faced the daunting challenge of meeting those expectations.

Hence, the question remains how the EU can optimize its role as an external actor in Central Asia to ensure that its involvement in the region produces tangible and lasting results, and effectively contributes to the sustainable development of the Central Asian countries. Now that the EU has launched its long-awaited new strategy for Central Asia, the question is also whether the new strategy will be up to this challenge, and thus



whether it will effectively enable the EU to further optimize its role as an external actor in Central Asia.

### **Balancing and Building Synergies via a 'Non-Exclusive' Partnership**

What immediately strikes the eye in the new strategy and in the rhetoric used by EU officials to present it is the emphasis on the positive developments and dynamics in the region, which the EU claims have created new opportunities for taking the EU-Central Asia partnership forward. Among these positive developments and dynamics, the EU refers to the domestic reform processes (in Uzbekistan and to a lesser extent in Kazakhstan), the new momentum in regional cooperation, and the development of connectivity initiatives between Asia and Europe. This does not mean that the EU is ignorant of the negative developments and challenges in the region,

**Although the EU has become an increasingly important actor in Central Asia, it clearly plays second fiddle to Russia and China. It would be naïve to think that one day the EU will become as influential in the region as Russia and China; in fact, this is not the EU's ambition.**

such as the shrinking space for civil society, increasing radicalization, and resilient authoritarianism. The reason why the EU is using this positive narrative is because it believes this is the best way to rally the five states behind further engagement with the EU. Starting from this positive narrative, the EU seeks to present a new agenda for cooperation, focused on liberalization, reforms, and modernization.

Although the EU has become an increasingly important actor in Central Asia, it clearly plays second fiddle to Russia and China. It would be naïve to think that one day the EU will become as influential in the region as Russia and China; in fact, this is not the EU's ambition. However, if we consider that China and Russia pose both opportunities and challenges for Central Asia and that the region remains vulnerable to the influence of these two dominant actors, then it becomes straightforward to acknowledge that the EU occupies a distinct position as an external actor in Central Asia. This applies on two accounts.

First of all, the EU is considered by the Central Asian states as an important actor in terms of balancing the influence of Russia and China. The EU is perfectly aware of this, and even explicitly mentions this in the new strategy. Secondly, and related to the first point, the EU is also an important actor in Central Asia in terms of offering alternative models and solutions, especially in specific soft policy areas, including education, environmental protection, border management and

technological innovation. Given that the EU is considered as a role model for modernization in these specific fields throughout the region, it is uniquely placed to offer support and share its experience in these areas. In several soft policy areas, the EU has a competitive edge compared to other external actors. Also this aspect is now explicitly acknowledged in the new strategy of the EU.

However, at the same time, the EU should also build synergies in Central Asia with other external actors, including with China and Russia. This seems necessary for two reasons. First of all, this seems necessary as a way to maximize the impact of the EU's involvement in the region. Clearly, for certain policy areas, joining forces with other powerful actors will amplify the likelihood of having a positive and lasting effect than when going it alone. Connectivity is one such area. Connectivity also stands out as an area where collaboration with China and Russia actually seems feasible. This is especially so for China, which recognizes that it will need to cooperate with the EU if it is to successfully pursue its Belt and Road Initiative.

A second reason why the EU needs to build synergies with other external actors is to counterbalance or temper the negative effects of other actors' involvement, including those of Russia's and China's involvement. Again the area of connectivity serves as a prime example. By collaborating with China on investing in transport infrastructure, the EU could help to enhance the sustainability of these investments and ensure that they comply with international norms and standards, including transparency and environmental sustainability.

The new EU strategy for Central Asia fully acknowledges this need for building synergies with other external actors operating in the region. In fact, it is one of the key elements of the new strategy. This is captured in the aim of forging what the strategy labels a 'non-exclusive' partnership with the countries of Central Asia. In the strategy it is outlined that in forging this non-exclusive partnership the EU aims to help the region develop as a more resilient, prosperous and closely interconnected economic and political space. These aspects are singled out as the main priorities of the new strategy. The strategy singles out two interlinked priorities, namely resilience and prosperity. The first priority is to promote the resilience of Central Asian states and societies. The second one is to help the Central Asian countries take on - what the strategy calls - an ambitious agenda for prosperity.

These two priorities of strengthening resilience and enhancing prosperity are singled out, because the EU believes they capture the niche areas where the EU has comparative advantages compared to other external

**The new EU strategy for Central Asia fully acknowledges this need for building synergies with other external actors operating in the region.**

actors. At first sight, it thus appears that the strategy contains the necessary elements for enabling the EU to become a more influential and effective actor in Central Asia.

### **A More Mature Foreign Policy Actor**

All in all, the new strategy does represent a considerable improvement compared to the 2007 strategy. If anything, the new strategy testifies to the EU having matured as a foreign policy actor. Moreover, many of the key recommendations that have been given to the EU as part of the consultation process for the new strategy have been taken up and are reflected in the strategy.

First of all, the EU has redefined its interests in Central Asia, although perhaps not as prominently and explicitly as it could have, but at least it is clear that in redefining its interests the EU is taking into account the new global realities, as well as the new dynamics in and around the region.

Back in 2007, the EU was mainly drawn to Central Asia by the region's strategic location, vast energy resources and market potential. As it now stands, the EU seems to be drawn mostly by the goal of maintaining stability and security in Central Asia, as well as the goal of tapping into the connectivity potential of the region.

The strategy also reflects a more accurate understanding of the region and the different realities and aspirations of the five countries. On this point, the EU explicitly states that it respects the national trajectories, aspirations and interests of each of its Central Asian partners and it will seek to deepen its engagement with the interested countries of the region that are willing and able to step up cooperation on shared goals. In this respect, it should be noted that the risk of the EU compromising its fundamental values under the guise of 'principled pragmatism' did not materialize. In contrast, the EU is seizing the recent wind of change in some Central Asian countries, in particular Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, as an opportunity to uphold its commitment to promoting democracy, rule of law, and human rights.

Connected to this, the strategy also reflects a more realistic notion of the leverage that the EU has in Central Asia. It also does a better job at identifying how it can make a difference and in what ways it stands out. In this regard, it is clear that the EU has tried to take on board

**However, when looking at the strategy in more depth, it quickly becomes clear that the new strategy suffers from some arguably inevitable and even predictable flaws that are likely to undermine the potential of the strategy to deliver. Like the previous strategy, the new strategy covers too many areas.**

the central recommendation of making sure that the key areas to be covered in future EU-Central Asia cooperation reflect a match between the EU’s comparative advantages (namely areas where the EU can provide real added value and achieve concrete results) and the vital needs of the Central Asian countries.

Given that the EU is considered a role model for modernization and regional cooperation throughout the region, the EU now took advantage of this by stressing that it is uniquely placed to offer support and share its experience in specific soft policy areas like education and the environment.

**Broad Scope**

However, when looking at the strategy in more depth, it quickly becomes clear that the new strategy suffers from some arguably inevitable and even predictable flaws that are likely to undermine the potential of the strategy to

deliver. Like the previous strategy, the new strategy covers too many areas. The two priority areas of boosting resilience and enhancing prosperity are also very broadly defined. One of the key recommendations that had been given to the EU by several experts was that the new strategy for Central Asia should focus on fewer areas in order to increase its effectiveness. Basically, the advice to the EU was: do less but better. Given the relatively limited budget, doing a bit of everything is not effective. Despite the EU being among the main donors in Central Asia and despite a steady increase in the budget allocations for the EU’s involvement in the region in the past decade, the financial resources that the EU has at its disposal to implement the strategy remain fairly limited, and this is unlikely to change.

Instead of following up on the recommendation of doing less and hence reducing the number of cooperation areas, the EU actually increased the number of cooperation areas, and even explicitly refers to a widening partnership agenda. That said, this is not really a big surprise. It was predictable that it would be hard to make the new strategy focus on only a few areas. Let’s say, it’s the nature of the beast. When it comes to EU foreign policy making, the policies will always have to reflect the different priorities of the EU member states and of the wide range of institutional actors involved in drafting and adopting the strategy. The penholder of the strategy faced the daunting task of reconciling the (diverging) preferences of the EU member states and EU institutional actors with the input of the extensive consultation process that had accompanied the preparation of the new strategy. From this perspective, it seems that the strategy should







be considered in the first place as a broad framework for the EU's relations with the region.

### Conclusion

This article has provided an early assessment of the EU's new strategy for Central Asia. The article has shown that, at first sight, the new strategy appears to contain the necessary elements for enabling the EU to become a more influential and effective actor in Central Asia and represents a considerable improvement compared to the 2007 strategy. If anything, the new strategy testifies to the EU having matured as a foreign policy actor and reflects many of the key recommendations that have been given to the EU as part of the consultation process for the new strategy. However, the article also critically evaluated the broad scope of the strategy and argued that the ambition of contributing to so many cooperation areas is likely to undermine the EU's potential to deliver.

As a concluding remark, it should be pointed out that

a more fundamental change in the EU's approach would be needed in order for the EU's involvement in the region to eventually have a more tangible and effective impact. Indeed, if the EU is serious about promoting resilience as a way to empower the Central Asian societies and contribute towards a truly sustainable future for the Central Asian countries, then the EU would have to accept the Central Asian societies for what they are and advocate home-grown self-organization and self-governance predicated on a deep understanding of the local meaning of good life.<sup>4</sup> The new strategy does not reflect any such approach, and instead shows that the EU remains too much entrenched in its own way of thinking and acting, which is literally miles away from the local way of thinking and doing things in Central Asia. As the EU's messages of democracy, good governance and human rights hardly resonate with the Central Asian societies, the EU will need to start embracing a more locally-inspired approach, which gives true ownership to the local societies of their own development.

### Endnotes

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# GELİŞEN TÜRK KENEŞİ (TÜRK KONSEYİ)

Turgut Özal ile başlayan Türk dili konuşan ülkeler ile işbirliği fikri günümüze kadar yavaş ancak sağlam adımlarla ilerlemiş ve 2010'da fikir olmaktan çıkıp kurumsal bir nitelik kazanmıştır.

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**A**zerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Tacikistan ve Türkmenistan, küreselleşme ve küreselleşmenin doğal sonucu olan serbest ticaret çağına doğmuş ve bağımsızlıklarını yeni kazanan bu devletler, ayakta kalıp sağlıklı büyümek için kendileriyle ilgilenen Türkiye'yi rol-model almıştır. Türkiye, bu devletler için dünya piyasasına açılma ve serbest piyasa ekonomisine giriş için geniş bir kapı niteliğindedir. Buradan hareketle Turgut Özal ile başlayan Türk dili konuşan ülkeler ile işbirliği fikri günümüze kadar yavaş ancak sağlam adımlarla ilerlemiş ve 2010'da fikir olmaktan çıkıp kurumsal bir nitelik kazanmıştır. Bahsi geçen devletlerle işbirliği halen gelişme aşamasında olmakla birlikte somut icraatlar da söz konusudur.

Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler Konseyi (Türk Keneşi/TDİK), 2009 yılında Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Türkiye'nin bir araya gelerek aralarında çok taraflı ve ikili işbirliği ilişkilerini geliştirmek amacı ile kurulmuş uluslararası bir kuruluştur. Türk Keneşi'ni oluşturan temel belgeler 3 Ekim 2009 tarihli Nahçıvan Anlaşması ve 16 Eylül 2010 tarihli İstanbul Bildirisi'dir. Bu belgelere göre Türk Keneşi, uluslararası hukuka uygun biçimde ortak çıkarlar doğrultusunda işbirliğini hedeflemekte ve taraf

ülkeler arası siyasi, ekonomik, ticari, askeri, enerji ve ulaştırma konularının yanında ortak tarih, dil, kültür, kimlik doğrultusunda kültürel bağların derinleştirilmesi adına dayanışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Türk Keneşi'nin kurulmasına giden yolda, Orta Asya cumhuriyetlerinin bağımsızlıklarını kazanmalarının ardından 1992 yılından başlayarak 2010 yılına kadar aralarında Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Türkiye ve Türkmenistan devlet başkanlarının bulunduğu on toplantı gerçekleştirilmiş ve bildirimler yayımlanmıştır. Bundan sonra da yine her yıl devlet başkanları düzeyinde toplanan Türk Keneşi, bildirimler yayımlayarak hedeflerini açıklamışlardır. Özbekistan, 2019 yılında gerçekleştirilen 7. Türk Keneşi Zirvesi'ne tam üye olarak katılmıştır.

2019 yılı itibari ile Türk Keneşi üyeleri Azerbaycan, Türkiye, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Özbekistan olmakla birlikte Macaristan da gözlemci üye statüsündedir. Macaristan'ın Türk Keneşi bünyesinde gözlemci üye statüsünü kazanması ise Türk Keneşi'nin üye devletlerin coğrafyası ve ekonomik anlamdaki işlevi sebebi ile artık diğer bölgelerin de yavaş yavaş dikkatini çektiğinin kanıtıdır. Zira Macaristan'ın Türk Keneşi üyesi ülkelerin bir kısmı ile ayrı ayrı ilişkileri ve ekonomi konulu





toplantıları mevcuttur; Macaristan'ın bu temaslarını Türk Keneşi bünyesinde de göstermesi, Türk Keneşi'ne dair farkındalığının uluslararası toplumda yayıldığını göstermektedir.

Yayımlanan bildiriler ışığında alınan ortak kararlar genellikle ortak kültür ve kimlik altında dayanışmanın derinleştirilmesi, yeni bağımsızlığını kazanmış devletler ile Türkiye'nin toprak bütünlüğü, bağımsızlığı, egemenliğine saygı gösterilmesi ve iç işlerine karışmamak üzerinedir. Ayrıca ekonomi, enerji ve ulaşım konularında da işbirliği yapılması ve Avrupa'ya açılım, bildirilerin ortak maddeleri arasında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır.

Türk Keneşi, Birleşmiş Milletler Anlaşması'nın amaç ve ilkelerine bağlılığını ifade ederek, Türk dili konuşan devletler arasında etkili ve geniş işbirliğini geliştirmek, bölgesel ve küresel barış konusunda görüşmeler yaparak katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Keneş, demokrasi, insan haklarına saygı, hukukun üstünlüğü gibi temel ilkelere

bağlılığını ifade etmiştir. Türk Keneşi kapsamındaki işbirliği, üye ülkeler arasındaki ortak dil, tarih, kültür ve kimlikten doğan ortaklık temelinde oluşmaktadır.<sup>1</sup>

Türk Keneşi'nin amaçları "Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler İşbirliğinin Kurulmasına Dair Nahcivan Anlaşması" belgesindeki 2. maddede belirtilmiştir. Bu bağlamda Konsey'in amaçları, taraflar arasında karşılıklı güvenin, dostluk ve iyi komşuluğun güçlendirilmesi, bölgede ve dünya genelinde barışın sağlanması, ortak çıkarların olduğu dış politika konularında ortak bir tutumun belirlenmesi, uluslararası suçlar konusunda ortak tavrın takınılmasıdır. Ortak çıkarları ilgilendiren alanlarda etkili bölgesel ve ikili işbirliğinin geliştirilmesi, ticaret ve yatırım için uygun koşulların oluşturulması ve kolaylıklar sağlanması, bölgede geniş ve etkili bir ekonomik büyüme ile bilim, spor, eğitim, teknoloji, sağlık, kültür konularında ve basın-iletişim araçlarında etkileşimin ve hukuki bilgi değişiminin sağlanması da amaçlar arasındadır.

**Türk Keneşi, Birleşmiş Milletler Anlaşması'nın amaç ve ilkelerine bağlılığını ifade ederek, Türk dili konuşan devletler arasında etkili ve geniş işbirliğini geliştirmek, bölgesel ve küresel barış konusunda görüşmeler yaparak katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir.**

Türk Keneşi sadece ekonomik temelli bir kuruluş değildir; Türk kültürü ve dünyasını uluslararası topluma tanıtmaya amacına da sahiptir; TÜRKSOY ile ilişkisi bu konuya önemli bir örnek teşkil etmektedir. Türk Keneşi 2010 öncesinde sadece üye devletler içinde gelişen ve kültürel/ekonomi temelli bir yapı iken şu sıralarda uluslararası topluma açılmış hem diğer devletler hem de diğer uluslararası örgütlerle işbirliği içinde olan ve ekonomi/kültür konularını yumuşak güç olarak kullanan bir yapıdır. 2010 öncesi dönemde kültür ve ekonomik konuları sadece üye devletler ve bölge devletleri arasında sıkça kullanılan konular iken 2010 sonrasında ekonomi ve kültür artık Konsey için uluslararası topluma kullanılan yumuşak güç haline gelmiştir.

Özellikle Türkiye açısından belirtilmelidir ki 1992 yılından 2019 yılına kadar Türkiye'de birçok hükümet,

birbirinden farklı görüşteki başbakanlar ve cumhurbaşkanları görev yapmıştır. Bu uzun yıllar içerisinde ilgili hükümetler ve devlet başkanlarının Türk Keneşi'ne dair politikaları istikrarlı bir şekilde seyretmiştir. Türk Keneşi'nin toplantılarında alınan kararlar incelendiğinde anlaşılmaktadır ki Türkiye'de göreve gelen her hükümet ve devlet başkanı Türk Keneşi'nin amaçlarından sapmadan, ilk zirve bildirisine sadık kalarak Türk Keneşi'ni geliştirme yolunda adımlar atmışlardır. Türk Keneşi hem Türkiye hem diğer üye ve bölge ülkeleri hem de gelinen noktada uluslararası toplum için önem arz etmektedir.

### **Türk Keneşi Zirvelerinde Öne Çıkan Konular**

#### **- 1994 İstanbul Zirvesi Bildirisi, Md. 18:**

Devlet Başkanları, doğal gaz ve petrol başta olmak üzere, ülkelerindeki zengin doğal kaynakların işletilmesinin ve dünya pazarına en ekonomik yoldan ve kısa sürede ulaştırılmasının önemini bir kez daha vurgulayarak, bu hususta işbirliği gerçekleştirilmesini kabul etmişlerdir. Bu çerçevede, doğal gaz ve petrol boru hatlarının Türkiye üzerinden Avrupa'ya ve Akdeniz'e ulaştırılması hususunda ilgili ülkeler arasında yapılan çalışmaları memnuniyetle kaydetmişlerdir.

Madde 18, içeriği itibarıyla oldukça önemli ve birçok hususu barındıran bir maddedir. Öncelikle





bağımsızlıklarını yeni kazanan bu devletlerin doğdukları çağ gereği dünyaya açılmalarının en hızlı ve etkili yolu enerjilerini ihraç etmekten geçmektedir ve enerji ihracında Türkiye'nin enerji koridoru olarak konumlandırılması fikri, yapılan işbirliğini sağlam temellere oturtmakla birlikte uzun süreli kılmaktadır. Aynı zamanda bu madde Türk dili konuşan ülkeler arasındaki işbirliğinin kurumsallaşarak uluslararası örgüt olması yolunu açmaktadır; ülkelerin jeopolitik yakınlıkları ulaşım ve enerji ulaşımı açısından büyük avantaj sağlamaktadır. Son olarak ilgili devletlerin serbest piyasa ekonomisine geçiş sürecinde Türkiye'nin desteği somutlaştırılmış ve destek yöntemi belirlenmiştir.

1994 yılından itibaren Türk Keneşi'nin özellikle üzerinde durduğu konular İpek Yolu'nun yeniden canlandırılması, ulaştırma yollarının geliştirilmesi ve enerji kaynaklarının dünyaya Türkiye üzerinden ulaştırılması olmuştur. Geldiğimiz noktada ise görülmektedir ki, 1990'larda bahsi geçen tüm bu konular şu an hayata geçmiştir ve Türk Keneşi bu noktada amacına ulaşmıştır.

**- 2009 Zirvesi Azerbaycan Bildirisi, Md.6:**

Avrupa'nın enerji güvenliğini temin eden Hazar havzası enerji kaynaklarının artan önemini teyit ederek, stratejik Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan petrol boru hattı ve Bakü-Tiflis-Erzurum doğalgaz boru hattının küresel enerji güvenliğine ve bölge ülkelerinin sürdürülebilir ekonomik kalkınmalarına hizmet ettiğine dair inançlarını

dile getirmişlerdir. Bu çerçevede, Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan Petrol Boru hattının kapasitesinin artırılması ve sözkonusu boru hattının Aktau limanı ile bağlantısının önemine dikkat çekmişlerdir.

Kökene Cumhurbaşkanı Süleyman Demirel'in girişimlerine dayanan ve 2005 yılında hayata geçen Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan Petrol Boru Hattı'nın, hattan geçen petrolün 2006'da Ceyhan'a ulaşması sebebi ile gerçekleştirilen 2006 yılındaki açılış töreninde dönemin Cumhurbaşkanı Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Kazakistan'ın da bu hatta dâhil olmasının önemini belirtmiştir. Azerbaycan ve Kazakistan arasında yapılan anlaşmadan sonra Kazakistan'ın Aktau Limanı da bu hatta dâhil olmuştur. Buradan hareketle görülmektedir ki Türk Keneşi henüz zirveler sürecindeyken dahi bölge devletleri arasındaki ilişkiyi geliştirip Konsey olma işlevini yerine getirmekle beraber önemli olayların gerçekleşmesine de zemin hazırlamıştır. Tüm bunlara ek olarak proje ortakları İngiltere, Amerika, Japonya, Fransa, İtalya, Norveç, Azerbaycan ve Türkiye'dir; Türkiye ve Azerbaycan'ın hisseleri toplam hissenin %50'sini oluşturmaktadır. Bu kapsamda görülmektedir ki bölge ülkeleri için yabancı yatırımcı sermayesi önemsenmekte ve bu sayede ticaret serbestleşmektedir.

**- 2009 Zirvesi Azerbaycan Bildirisi, Md. 7:**

Doğu-Batı Koridoru'nun bir bileşeni olan yeni Bakü-Tiflis-Kars Demiryolu bağlantısının Avrupa ve Asya arasındaki taşımacılığın hacmini



arttıracağını, uluslararası ulaştırma-iletişim hatlarının gelişimine, bölgenin ekonomik kalkınmasına, güvenlik ve istikrarına katkı sağlayacağını altını çizmişlerdir.

Bu madde de göstermektedir ki bölgedeki işbirliği enerji konusu ile sınırlı kalmamıştır; temeli 2007 yılında atılan Bakü-Tiflis-Kars Demiryolu Projesi ticareti doğrudan etkilemekte ve sadece bölgede kalmayan bu ekonomi bazlı trafiği küresel ölçüğe yaymaktadır.

Bu maddelerden de anlaşılacağı üzere hem Türkiye hem de bölge ülkeleri için hayati öneme sahip, geçmiş yıllarda kararlaştırılan ve ortak kaniya varılan enerji kaynaklarının değerlendirilmesi ve ulaştırma-iletişim hattının hayata geçiş sağlamlık kazanması ve aynı zamanda daha da geliştirilmesi yönünde önemli adımlar atılmıştır.

Türk Keneşi'nin Nahçıvan Anlaşması'nın 10. yılına özel belgesinde Türk Keneşi Genel Sekreteri Baghdad Amreyev, Türk devletlerinin tarih boyunca Avrupa'dan Çin'e uzanan geniş alanda ticari faaliyetlerin kolaylaştırılmasında ve Doğu-Batı arasında siyasi ve kültürel etkileşiminin sağlanmasında önemli rol oynadığını belirtmiştir. Amreyev, Türk Devletlerinin Çin ile Avrupa Birliği, Orta Asya ve Karadeniz arasında bir ticaret merkezi olma fırsatına da sahip olduğunu ifade etmiştir.

#### - 2009 Zirvesi Azerbaycan Bildirisi, Md. 16:

Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği yolunda kaydettiği ilerlemeden duydukları memnuniyeti dile getirmişler, aynı zamanda Avrasya coğrafyasının da önemli bir üyesi olan Türkiye'nin AB üyeliğinin bölgenin siyasi, ekonomik ve toplumsal kalkınmasına ivme kazandıracığına ve bölge ile AB arasındaki bağların pekişeceğine inandıklarını belirtmişlerdir.

16. madde, Türkiye'nin dönemin dış politika çizgisini açıkça göstermektedir; Türkiye, Orta Asya'da kurduğu ekonomik işbirliğini, batılı müttefikleri ile olan mevcut siyasi ve ekonomik ilişkilerine alternatif olarak geliştirmemiştir. Aynı zamanda bölge devletleri de Türkiye'yi dünyaya açmada bir yol olarak görmektedir. Diğer bir bakış açısı ile söylenebilir ki, bölge devletleri diğer bölgelere ve dünya ülkelerine kendilerini kapatmamakta ve işbirliğine açık konumda durmaktadırlar. Aynı zamanda da AB'nin Türk Keneşi ile yapacağı işbirliği, Avrasya'ya açılımı için önem arz etmektedir.

Türk Keneşi'nin 2019 yılında Nahçıvan Anlaşmasının 10. yıl dönümüne özel belgesinde Türk Keneşi gözlemci ve daimi üye devlet başkanlarının yazıları yer almaktadır. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ilgili yayındaki yazısında Türk Keneşi'nin

herhangi bir ittifaka veya uluslararası örgüte alternatif olmak için kurulmadığını ve çeşitli uluslararası örgütler ile işbirliğine açık olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Avrupa Birliği üyesi olan Macaristan'ın Devlet Başkanı Victor Orban da Türk Keneşi'nin 10. yıldönümüne özel yayınında Türk dünyasını jeopolitik fırsatları olan ve son yıllarda dünya ekonomisinin gelişen bir bölgesi olarak tanımlamış ve Avrupa Birliği üyelerini Türk dünyasının potansiyeline daha aşına hale getirme amacıyla olduklarını ilan etmiştir. Orban, siyaset ve iş alanında kalmayarak kişisel ilişkiler şeklinde bölgeler arasında köprü kurmak niyetinde olduklarını da belirtmiştir.

### - 2013 Gebele Zirvesi:

Türk Keneşi'nin 3. Zirvesi olup Zirve Bildirisinde en dikkat çeken kısım ulaştırma ile ilgili konular olmuş, İpek Yolu ve demiryolu ulaşımının önemi yinelenmiştir. Bu konuda Azerbaycan ile Türkiye arasında Cumhurbaşkanları düzeyinde ikili bir görüşme yapılmış olup, bu görüşmeye Türkiye'den dönemin Ulaştırma Bakanı Binali Yıldırım da katılmıştır. Hürriyet Gazetesi Cumhurbaşkanı Gül'ün açıklamalarını söyle haberleştirmiştir:

... İpek Yolu Türk dünyasının ekonomik refahı ve siyasi etkinliğinin anahtarıdır. Dolayısıyla İpek Yolu'nu yeniden diriltmek bizim açımızdan stratejik bir öncelik olmalıdır. Modern anlamdaki İpek Yolu, tarihi tren yolunun bu sefer geniş tren ağlarıyla, ulaşım hatlarıyla, enerji koridorlarıyla, doğalgaz boru hatlarıyla örülmesi demektir. Türk dünyası küresel ölçekte sahip olduğu coğrafi ve demografik ağırlığın çok altında bir ekonomik performans sergilemektedir.<sup>2</sup>

Dönemin Cumhurbaşkanı Gül'ün konuşmasından anlaşılmaktadır ki bölge ülkeleri ile stratejik ortaklık geliştirilmektedir. Aynı zamanda Temmuz 2013 tarihinde "Ulaştırma Bakanları 1. Toplantısı" düzenlenmesi planlanmış ve ulaştırma konusundaki işbirliğinin kurumsallaşması amaçlanmıştır.

## Türk Keneşi bu bağlamda Avrupa ve Çin arasında bir köprü görevi de görecektir.

Bu bağlamda, Üye Devletler arasında mevcut ulaştırma altyapılarının yanısıra Trans-Avrupa ve Trans-Asya ulaştırma ağlarının en kısa, güvenli ve ekonomik bakımdan etkin bağlantısı olarak İpek Rüzgarı projesinin (Hazar Denizi, Karadeniz ve Marmara Denizi'ni, Jezkazgan-Beynau karayolu, Bakü-Tiflis-Kars demiryolu, Aktau ve Bakü limanlarının yanısıra Marmaray Tüneli'yle etkin şekilde birbirine bağlamaktadır) önemini vurgulamışlardır.<sup>3</sup>

İpek Rüzgarı projesi ile Türkiye ve üye ülkeleri de içine alacak, Çin'e kadar uzayan bir ulaşım sistemi kurulması hedeflenmiştir. Bu bağlamda 2013 Gebele Zirvesi Bildirisi 5. maddesinin e fıkrası göstermektedir ki, üye ülkeler bölgedeki güçlü ülkeleri de projelerine dâhil etmek istemekte ve böylece bu güçlü ülkelerin yatırımlarını kendi ülkelerine çekip bölgede kalkınmayı hedeflemektedirler. Aynı zamanda bu konu sadece Türk Keneşi üye ülkeleri için bir fırsat yaratmamakta, hem Avrupa hem de Çin'in çıkarlarına da uygun düşmektedir. Türk Keneşi bu bağlamda Avrupa ve Çin arasında bir köprü görevi de görecektir.

Türk Keneşi'nin 'resmi olarak yeni' üyesi olan Özbekistan, Türk Keneşi tarafından yayımlanan Nahçıvan Anlaşması'nın 10. yılına özel belgede, ulaşım konularında daha yakın ilişkiler geliştirmek istediklerini belirterek, entegre taşımacılık ağlarını oluşturmanın dünya ve bölgesel pazarlara erişimi sağlayacağına değinmiştir. Orta Asya bölgesini Çin ve Avrupa ile birleştirmenin önemine işaret etmiştir. Örnek olarak ise "Andijan-Osh-Irkeshdam-Kashgar" otomobil koridoru ve Çin-Kırgızistan-Özbekistan demiryolunu göstermiştir. Bu suretle, Türk Keneşi Özbekistan'ın da üye olması ile bölgedeki etkinlik ve ağırlığının artmasında yeni bir aşamaya ulaşmış olmaktadır.

### Sonnotlar

- 1 [http://www.turkkon.org/tr-TR/genel\\_bilgi/1/10](http://www.turkkon.org/tr-TR/genel_bilgi/1/10)
- 2 "Güçlerimiz birleşsin," *Hürriyet Gazetesi*, 17.08.2013, (Son erişim tarihi: 14.02.2019)
- 3 *Gebele Bildirisi*, 2013, Gebele (md.5/e)

# HUNGARY'S OPENING TOWARDS THE TURKIC WORLD

Hungary's decision to join as an observer state to the Turkic Council relied on a significant historical and cultural background, as well as a result of a deliberate political and economic opening to the Turkic states.

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**H**ungarian Prime Minister's appearance at the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (Turkic Council or CCTS) meeting in 2018 hit the international media. At the first look, this might have been an unexpected move as Hungary, a European Union member state and depository of the V4 cooperation (alliance between four Central European countries, namely, Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) became part of an organisation founded exclusively for the Turkic World.

Nevertheless, Hungary's decision to join as an observer state to the Turkic Council relied on a significant historical and cultural background, as well as a result of a deliberate political and economic opening to the Turkic states. This development was followed by other steps such as the Hungarian participation in the Baku Summit in 2019 and the opening of the Turkic Council European Office in Budapest in the same year. This article will focus on the background and the dynamics of Hungary's intensifying relations with the Turkic states, and analyse its historical, economic and political tenets.





## Historical and Cultural Background

Hungarian tribes in the Middle Ages were living together with several Turkic-speaking people. Before conquering the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, they had strong contacts with the Khazars and the Hungarian migration towards the West was accelerated by the war with another Turkic group, the Pechenegs. Later, after establishing the Kingdom of Hungary, the rulers allowed the settlement of various Turkic groups like Pechenegs and Cumans in their territories. The Ottoman conquest of Central Hungary at the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century also marked a new, although belligerent and warlike phase in the relations. After the Ottoman period, Hungarian political leaders revolting against the Habsburgs took refuge in the Ottoman lands, like Ferenc Rákóczi II (who died in Tekirdağ in 1735 or Lajos Kossuth who spend a short time in Kütahya in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

In late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hungarian national awakening found its interest in the Ottoman Empire. The public showed sympathy towards its struggle against the Russian Empire which was also considered as a threat to Hungary. Academicians turned to the Turkish history, language and culture. That époque's famous traveller and Turkologist, Ármin Vámbéry spent years in the Ottoman Empire and after his journey to Central Asia, he provided the West with insightful information about the Turkic peoples. Probably not surprisingly, he was the founder of the world's first department of Turkish language in Budapest.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hungarian political, economic and cultural elites endeavoured to create even stronger relations with the Ottoman Empire. The famous and politically influential Turan Society (Hun. *Turáni Társaság*) founded in 1910 actively advocated this idea. Its journal called *Turán* was an important organ in publishing articles about the people of Turan, Turanism and the Ottoman Empire. The first Hungarian cultural centre was founded in Istanbul in 1916 and the state provided dozens of students from the Empire with scholarship to pursue their studies in Hungary.

The collapse of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire at the end of the WWI weakened Hungary's room for manoeuvre. However, academic and political cooperation remained vivid with Turkey during the interwar period as well. After 1945, the geopolitical circumstances changed dramatically. Hungary became part of the Eastern bloc while Turkey joined the NATO: this development limited the cooperation between the two countries. This situation lasted until the end of the Cold War. The regime change in Hungary gave new opportunities to establish closer relations with Turkey but also with the newly independent Azerbaijan and Central Asian states.

**The new, emerging economic centres of the globe like South- and East-Asia as well as several Middle Eastern and African countries attracted the attention of Hungarian elites. The Turkic World got strong emphasis in this context, as Turkey's robust economy, Azerbaijan's role in gas and oil transport and the developing Central Asian region offered tremendous investment and trade opportunities.**

## New Turn in Hungarian Foreign Policy

After 1989, Hungarian elites' main objective was bringing the country into the NATO and European Union. The first goal was achieved in 1999 and after many years of negotiation the country joined the EU in 2004. Despite the Hungarian public opinion's high expectations about economic growth and prosperity after the accession, the country had to face economic difficulties and was hit deeply by the global financial crisis in 2008-2009. This led to a slow economic recovery and a fast political change; the Centre-Right Fidesz party won the general elections in 2010 by winning two-thirds of the parliamentary seats (the party managed to repeat its electoral victory in 2014 and 2018). Having strong presence in the parliament, the new government launched economic and administrative reforms. Due to these efforts and benefitting from EU funds, Hungary went through a spectacular economic growth which made the political leadership more ambitious and also opened new opportunities in international relations.

This change did affect the country's foreign relations as well. The government announced the 'Eastern opening' after 2010. This new rhetoric served as an expression for the endeavour to create stronger economic ties with non-EU countries,<sup>1</sup> at least in the geopolitical proximity of Hungary. The overwhelming majority of Hungarian import and export went to its EU partners. As a result, such an economic program aiming to increase the share of non-EU countries seemed plausible and desirable. The new, emerging economic centres of the globe like South- and East-Asia as well as several Middle Eastern and African countries attracted the attention of Hungarian elites. The Turkic World got strong emphasis in this context, as Turkey's robust economy, Azerbaijan's role in gas and oil transport and the developing Central Asian region offered tremendous investment and trade opportunities.



Although economic incentives were influential, the political cooperation pointed out the Hungarian readiness to build closer ties. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán expressed several times that the country's foreign policy potential is determined within the Berlin–Moscow–Ankara triangle<sup>2</sup> highlighting the importance of Turkey and the Turkic world. After Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit in 2013, high-level meetings between Hungary and Turkey gained frequency. Along the multilateral summits, Viktor Orbán met Erdoğan in Istanbul or Budapest almost every year since then. The number of high-ranking visits with Azerbaijan increased, too. Although links with Central Asian countries remained relatively weaker in the 1990s and 2000s, recently one can see a change, as the Hungarian diplomatic presence increased in those countries. Hungary opened its first embassy in the region in Kazakhstan shortly after its declaration of independence. Almost one and a half decade later, it opened its second embassy in Tashkent in 2017,<sup>3</sup> and the third one in Bishkek three years later.<sup>4</sup>

Bilateral relations were also strengthened by new mechanisms and institutions, like the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council between Turkey and Hungary whose first meeting was held in 2013.<sup>5</sup> Other example, the Hungarian-Kazakh Strategic Cooperation Council aiming at fostering economic cooperation and making new proposals, was established in 2016 in Budapest.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond bilateral relations, Hungary gave great

importance to the multilateral relations. Thus, it became observer at Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TÜRKPA) in 2014. In September 2018, the Hungarian Prime Minister joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Summit of Turkic Council in Kyrgyzstan and the organisation granted an observer status to the country. Just before the summit, Hungary gained an observer status in the International Turkic Academy.<sup>7</sup>

Hungary's commitment was also apparent at the 10<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers of the Turkic Council which has taken place in Budapest on 19 September 2019. At that meeting, the ministers opened the Representation Office of the Turkic Council.<sup>8</sup> This step strengthened the importance of Budapest within the organisation as Hungary sought to facilitate the cooperation between the EU and Turkic states and to become a bridge.

### **Economy as a Driving Force of the Relations**

Significant economic incentives lie behind the aforementioned 'Eastern opening.' The relatively high GDP growth in Hungary (some 4-5 percent in previous years) had positive effects on the economic relations. Due to the geographical position, the good relations and relatively big domestic market, Turkey was a flagship in this economic activity. In 2012, Hungarian-Turkish Committee of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established. Budapest opened a trading house in Turkey, the Turkish and Hungarian business



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forums started to meet regularly as the political relations intensified after 2013.

The Hungarian and Turkish business cooperation has become more apparent during the last ten years. Turkish businessmen invested in Hungary in several sectors including infrastructure and solar systems, and Budapest was one of the first buyers of Turkish armoured vehicles.<sup>9</sup> Hungary counts on Turkey in its African opening as two Hungarian-Turkish African business forums have been held until now. The trade volume also increased from USD 1.7 billion in 2012 to USD 2.5 billion in 2018. This number is still below the target set by the two countries' leaders. Still, despite the economic turbulence in Turkey, a steady growth is expected. Turkey's relevance is also rising for Hungary in another field. As Budapest intends to diversify its energy supplies and seeks to find new routes, the Turkish Stream project is closely followed by the Hungarian government.

The economic rapprochement with Azerbaijan and Central Asian states has become also apparent. In the view of the Hungarian foreign policy, these countries having a dynamic economic growth may be strong economic partners, especially in the field of modern pharmaceuticals industry, health industry, water management, logistics and the construction industry,<sup>10</sup> where Hungarian companies have the competency to grab opportunities.

The government supports the economic opening. Beyond the diplomatic efforts to foster mutual trust and

cooperation, more tangible tools also appeared. The Hungarian Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) launched an EUR 577 million credit line to support cooperation with companies coming from the Turkic Council's members (EUR 195 million for Hungarian-Turkish businesses; EUR 80 million for Kazakh-Hungarian cooperation; EUR 80 million for Hungarian-Uzbek cooperation; EUR 80 million for Hungarian-Azeri cooperation; and 27 million for Hungarian-Kyrgyz cooperation).<sup>11</sup> Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó stated in Baku in 2019 that Hungary has doubled its trade with the countries of the Turkic Council, which now stands at some 4 billion dollars.<sup>12</sup> This spectacular rise in trade was mainly based on Turkey, which remained the main export-import partner of the country (in 2018, the trade value reached USD 2.55 billion).

Despite the fresh impetus demonstrated by the government, the trade volume with the Central Asian states (where Kazakhstan is the main trading partner) remains negligible. Nevertheless, this may change as the Central Asian countries and Hungary achieved an outstanding economic growth during the previous years.



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### **Intensifying Cultural Cooperation**

The shared historical heritage played an important role in Hungary's growing interest in the Turkic world and cultural relations gained momentum during the last ten years. Like in the case of economy, Turkey was the main depository. In cooperation with the Hungarian authorities, Turkey made efforts to save the Ottoman heritage in Hungary and boosted its presence by opening the offices of several institutions such as Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in 2014<sup>13</sup> and the Yunus Emre Cultural Centre in 2013. In reciprocity, Hungary opened Hungarian Cultural Centre

in 2013 in Istanbul which provides various language courses and programmes. Since the late 1980s, a Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Association has been operating in Hungary. In Turkey, there are several Turkish-Hungarian Friendship Associations that contribute to shape the perceptions about Hungary and help to maintain the cultural and historical ties. From this respect, Tekirdağ is especially active where the Rákóczi house is a place of frequent visits of Hungarian delegations. Turkey has several Hungary-related *lieu de memoirs*, such as Kocaeli (Imre Thököly), Kütahya (Lajos Kossuth), Osmaniye (Béla Bartók)<sup>14</sup> and several buildings in Istanbul.

Education also served as a tool of Hungarian government's policy to bring closer other countries. During the Cold War, Hungary was a popular destination for students especially from the Middle East and Asia. Thus, in 2013 the government launched the so-called *Stipendium hungaricum* program aiming to educate foreign students at Hungarian universities who would later become intermediaries between Hungary and the student-sending countries. Consequently, Budapest started to grant new scholarships in a great number. In 2019, as Viktor Orbán pointed out, Hungary provided 725 state scholarships for young people from the countries of the Turkic Council: 250 for Kazakhstan;

200 for Azerbaijan; 150 for Turkey; 75 for Uzbekistan; and 30 for Kyrgyzstan.<sup>15</sup>

Hungarian government also promoted tourism. The improving diplomatic relations contributed to lifting the visa requirement for short-term travels from Turkey (2014), Kazakhstan (2017), Uzbekistan (2019) (visa requirement for Kyrgyzstan was lifted even before). Furthermore, direct flights between Budapest and Turkic countries were promoted, although until the end of 2019 only Istanbul, Baku and Nursultan had direct flights with the Hungarian capital.

### The Social Background of the Growing Interests

A relatively new social phenomenon, the rising Neo-Turanism in Hungary also brought Turkey and the Turkic world to the domestic agenda. Several groups, associations are propagating the importance of common Turkic heritage in Hungary. Various events were organised, but probably the most influential is the so-called *Kurultáj* (gathering of Turkic people) organised by the Hungarian Turan Foundation (Magyar-Turán Alapítvány). The first *Kurultáj* was held in Hungary 2008.<sup>16</sup> This regular event got attention in the Turkic world and also in Hungary. Since then every second year, tens of thousands of people from all around the Turkic World meet in Bugac in Southern Hungary. These events are participated by diplomats and foreign delegations, and gain huge media coverage. The *Kurultáj* offers various programs for its visitors ranging from exhibitions about Ancient Hungarian, Avar, Hunnic life to cultural programs and concerts. Probably this event is the greatest soft power tool of Hungary in the Turkic world which

could gain the attention of public within the Turkic states.

Simultaneously, the rise of the radical Movement for a Better Hungary Party (Jobbik) also brought the issue of Turkic people to the domestic political agenda. As the party started to advocate the idea to build closer relations with the East, the Fidesz-KDNP government had to take it into consideration. The Jobbik as an autonomous political movement began to establish its own network and gathering support in the Turkic world. Its activities focused mainly on Turkey and Azerbaijan where the then party leader, Gábor Vona participated in several events and held lectures acquiring some popularity. The Jobbik raised the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh and was also in favour of creating sister city relations between Azeri and Hungarian towns. Nevertheless, this impetus gradually lost its momentum after 2014 when the party started to move to the political centre. Following the general elections in 2018, when Jobbik could not beat the government party, its leader resigned opening the way towards growing internal party struggle and finally a split in the party.

### Conclusion

Hungary's recent rapprochement with the Turkic World is a part of a wider opening aiming to strengthen its economic and political relations with emerging neighbouring regions. This policy had tangible results in case of Turkey with which its ties were relatively stronger since the end of the Cold War. Although, Budapest's turn towards Azerbaijan and Central Asia is a relatively new phenomenon, growing Hungarian diplomatic and



economic activities show its commitment to widen its ties with its partners.

The accession as an observer member to several Turkic organisations, such as TÜRKPA, International Turkic Academy and the Turkic Council are not only the sign of the success of these endeavours. They also strengthen Hungary's position within the whole Turkic world. The country's slow integration with the Turkic organisations will likely to continue as the government expresses its willingness to become an observer at Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation. Thus, the political cooperation among the leaders are good, their regular meetings, especially the Turkic Council's summits serve as an effective multilateral forum. Uzbekistan's recent accession to the organisation, which Hungary supported, increased its international importance as well.

Although Hungary established good relations at

political level, the economic success remains limited. Despite the growth in trade, the share of Central Asian countries in Hungarian import and export is still marginal. In case of Azerbaijan and Turkey where the economic cooperation is traditionally stronger, energy cooperation may have a major role as the Hungarian energy company MOL bought Chevron's stake in Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli (ACG) field in 2019.<sup>17</sup>

Budapest's policy to become a bridge between the EU and the Turkic world started to bear fruits. However, it still needs time. This opening also depends on external factors and the cooperation among other Turkic states. Along with the already good cultural relations, economic, energy and infrastructural cooperation (including the 'Belt and Road Initiative,' which is also followed by the Hungarian government) would be the engines in Hungary's intensifying relations with the Turkic world.

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# WESTERN BALKANS 6 (WB6): HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN?

As time passes by, it does make sense to refresh memory and bring back some of the elements that can help explain the early days of the WB6 initiative which later gained significant prominence with the Berlin Process established by Germany in August 2014.

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Regional cooperation since the end of the wars of the 1990s has been under its potential. Despite the existence of the different formats including the most important ones such as the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) the forms of cooperation could still be significantly streamlined. We started discussions about setting up an auxiliary mechanism by the name of Western Balkans 6 (WB6) in 2013. At first it was a rocky road, but little by little the potential albeit not fully absorbed, has become visible as it is totally project oriented such as the elimination of the trade barriers which resulted in the Regional Economic Area among other things. The current so-called “Mini Schengen” discussion is just another step.

### The Beginnings

As time passes by, it does make sense to refresh memory and bring back some of the elements that can help explain the early days of the WB6<sup>1</sup> initiative which later gained significant prominence with the Berlin Process established by Germany in August 2014. And these were not as easy as it might seem despite the tremendous enthusiasm that surrounded my team when the first step was made and the so-called *WB6 Non-paper* emerged in April 2013.

During my time as Prime Minister of Montenegro (2010-2012) I was addressing guests from the neighboring countries on different occasions which were linked to different frameworks/specific regional initiatives and I would always feel the same need/necessity so as to try to streamline many different agendas which already

existed. At the same time, there was also the feeling that some cooperation mechanisms were dormant despite their potential. Somehow the representatives of the European Commission<sup>2</sup> felt that the countries in the region needed some kind of an acceleration of the regional cooperation in order to quicken up their transformation into EU modeled countries.

As already mentioned, in April 2013 together with my colleagues<sup>3</sup> we produced the *WB6 Non-paper*. It came as a result of the informal dinner meeting held at the margins of a Council of Europe event which took place in Strasbourg during which some vague ideas were brainstormed among the participants.<sup>4</sup> I willingly and gladly took over the task to prepare a more systematic paper that would serve as a basis for discussions and later alignment. The eventual document was titled *Non-Paper on the New Concept of Joint Performance of the Western Balkans Countries aimed at Intensifying EU Integration (Western Balkans Six – G6) (WB6 Non-paper, MFA April 2013)*. This non-paper to be explained in more details later in this article was quite a structured and comprehensive approach to answer the question how to further develop regional cooperation, or rather how to better connect dots already discussed among the players in the field.

The reception of the non-paper was lukewarm at first, including in Montenegro. This was probably only so natural. The need for regional cooperation had been emphasized many times before and different ideas were mentioned and criticized. It also constitutes a pillar policy mandatory for any country aspiring to join EU. While the European Commission supported it straight away



there were different forms of opposition, such as the arguments presented by Brdo Process<sup>5</sup> which thought it was unnecessary (led by Slovenia and Croatia) or SEECP<sup>6</sup> (then Chairman in Office was Romania) which thought that initiative was redundant. There was an obvious lack of understanding as the WB6 format did jeopardize none of the already mentioned frameworks. In fact the point was to make the cooperation as tangible as possible and then different frameworks could exploit the benefits of such joint work. It took however some time to clear that. Another line of the opposition came from the future WB6 constituents themselves, as some claimed it to be a new incarnation of the long gone Yugoslavia, some others arguing that it would ghettoize the countries of the Western Balkans and eventually extinguish the hope of their future EU membership.<sup>7</sup>

All the arguments put against the concept were quite wrong in my view, and in the first stage it took a lot of efforts, during various meetings, to make it clear what WB6 is not about in order to be able to agree upon practical ideas. Still, one thing that has always been clear was the fact that initiative has always been about fostering EU integration of the entire region which over the years, as a process, has become very complex and multilayered with countries vacillating along the way. One of the strong policies that Western Balkan countries could drive to is strong and tangible regional cooperation as it brings benefits relatively quickly. Nevertheless, even now in 2020 after all the efforts invested we still seem to be half way through.

And there are many more good reasons to try to





streamline regional initiatives and formats. Although the Western Balkans was promised membership by the EU in 2003, only Croatia has formally entered (mid 2013) since the so called Big Bang in 2004<sup>8</sup> and it became clear that no new members would be allowed very soon.<sup>9</sup> And once you are inside the EU, you act differently and play by different rules while showing your bigger or smaller heart towards aspirants to join. But the ones who remain out still need to work for their demands and start to behave as if they would be a part of it soon. And that was pretty much the essential argument I used to pointing out the need for a more detailed project based on a cooperative approach.

Back then I thought 2021 would be the year for Montenegro to join EU and I was grossly mistaken – so

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at least 7 years, went my thinking, would still be enormously important span of time to strengthen the region's case and quicken up the integration process by (really) working together. True cooperation and speaking with one voice would make the moral argument of belonging to a modern and stronger Europe. Thematic fields like rule of law, infrastructure, economic interest, and trade without barriers were only so logical to deal with and if countries of the region would show consistency and interest it would attract more attention from the EU side.

One has to be fair and say that in the past twenty years there have been different calls or political statements towards ideas like transposing the Nordic Council<sup>10</sup> approach to the Balkans, but these mainly went into the tills after words were spoken. The only consistent call for that has been coming from the regional civil sector structures like Igman Initiative.<sup>11</sup> Maybe the time was not right for many of the previously auctioned ideas, or maybe there was not enough commitment. The WB6 could easily have been a still born had there not been patience and steadiness. Instead it has become a very tangible framework which has been supported by the EU member states through the Berlin Process<sup>12</sup>.

### The Papers

As it has already been mentioned, the April 2013 non-paper (WB6 non-paper, MFA April 2013) was a consistent attempt to offer both guidelines and content towards scaling regional cooperation up. Borrowing from the Visegrad group,<sup>13</sup> the Nordic Council and Benelux<sup>14</sup> formats, while at the same time emphasizing the eventual EU membership as the ultimate political goal of the six countries involved, the initiative never intended to abolish other cooperation formats but was rather oriented toward setting a mechanism to improve the way they operated. The non-paper also proposed areas of more concrete cooperation to be explored.

The representatives of the six countries were to meet twice a year to take stock of the action points agreed while all the meetings would be attended by the European Commission's Enlargement Commissioner and the RCC Secretary General. By that time RCC<sup>15</sup> had already become a proper hub to both coordinate and monitor regional matters and initiatives and the intention of the

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WB6 format was looking to strengthen such approach. At the same time wider networks like SEECP needed to be taken into account and the proper synergy was required.

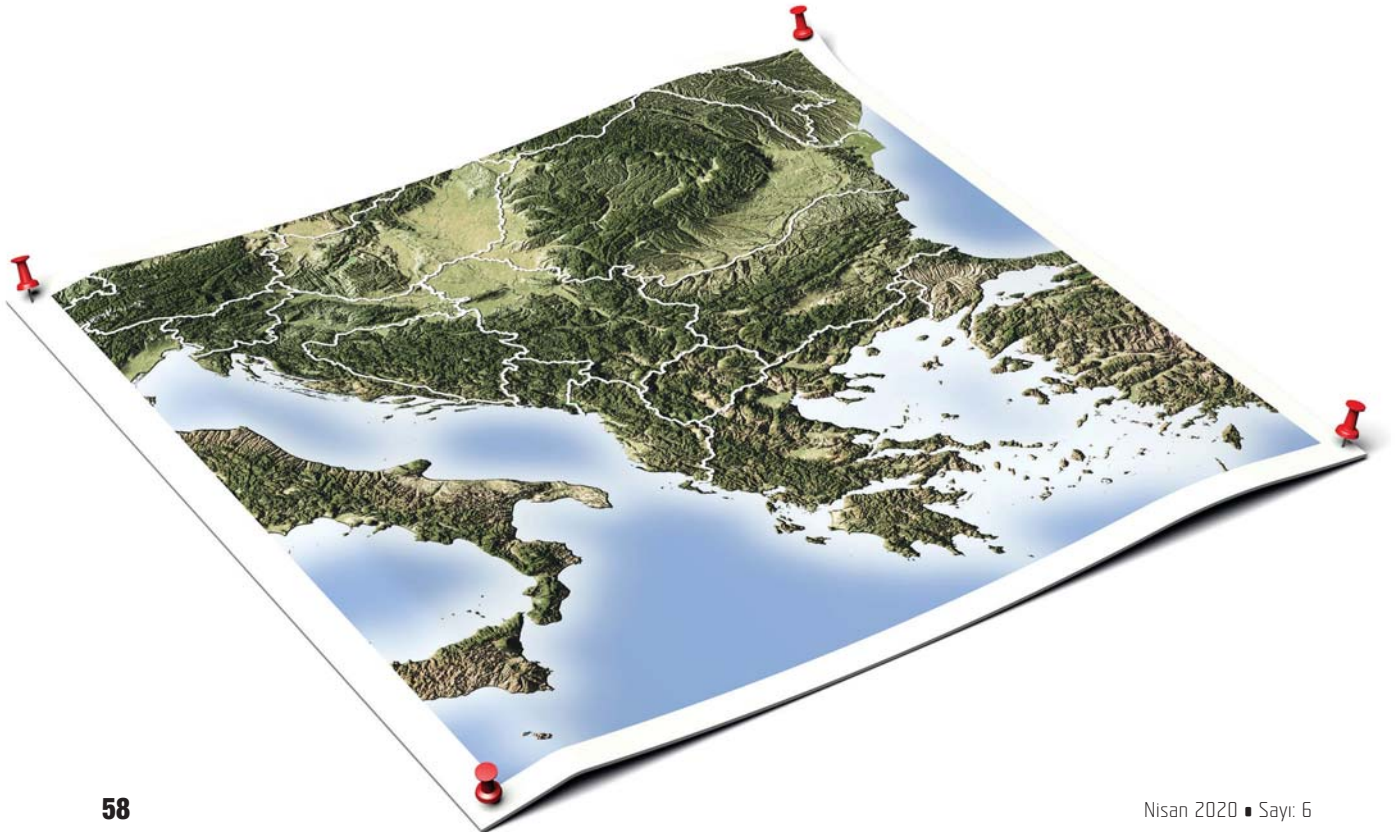
The proposed approach offered some of them less and some of them more controversial items for discussion. Elements like the improvement of the energy and roads infrastructure and the reduction of the “red tape” that smothers regional trade, the usage of the Single Euro Payment Area for mutual payment operations, or defining policies for a stronger mobility of human resources would not have been, in principle, difficult to agree. The non-paper also proposed simplification of the procedure for crossing national borders to the level of abolition of passports as mandatory travel document (something that reemerged again in 2019).<sup>16</sup>

Some more controversial proposals took a lot of flak, while not being carefully scrutinized. The proposal to

merge two existing frameworks Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) with the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) into a joint regional center for fight against corruption and organized crime moved nowhere. Probably one of the reasons was the proposed name BALPOL which raised some eyebrows. The other proposal related to the establishment of a parliamentary assembly, the sort of OESC or NATO countries have with 10 representatives from each of the national assemblies in order to give boost to the parliamentary dialogue over the region has also been met with skepticism. It is worth remembering that the Nordic Council actually had begun with the parliamentary dialogue. However, this one in a different format (but a satisfactory one) moved forward with the establishment of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly.

In order to make the proposal even more concrete in some of the aspects, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration hosted a meeting of political directors in Pržno near Montenegrin town of Budva in July 2013.<sup>17</sup> Montenegrin representatives presented three areas of tangible cooperation: stronger infrastructure investments through further development of the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), modalities to reduce transaction costs for citizens and economy and mechanisms for stronger regional fight against organized crime.

WBIF at that point had already existed for some time, but it was clear that it should be made more robust, by switching the focus from Technical Assistance to concrete





investment projects. It was established in 2009 as a regional blending facility to support EU enlargement and socio-economic development in the Western Balkans through the provision of finance and technical assistance for strategic investments in the region. Over the years, countries from the region understood the absolute necessity to speak with one voice when it comes to deciding about the most important infrastructural projects and corridors that would boost the overall regional development and would open access to more funds.

A simple look on the geography shows that the Western Balkans has always been and continues to be only a natural part of the EU. However, in 2013 we were still seriously lagging behind when it comes to the extension of the core network corridors of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)<sup>18</sup> in the Western Balkans, so one of the early and very important achievements of the WB6 cooperation was to tentatively identify three core network corridors to be extended to the Western Balkans as well as priority projects along sections of these corridors for possible EU funding. Concrete support for *Connectivity Agenda for the Western Balkans* was politically endorsed during the Vienna Summit organized within Berlin process in 2015.<sup>19</sup> In addition to financial support for concrete infrastructure projects, the European Commission used Vienna Summit to present to the countries “soft measures” which should be implemented in the region in order to further boost connectivity and overall economic development of the Western Balkans.

An area which has constantly been undermined has been the reduction of the trade costs in the region which should boost intraregional trade. While CEFTA indeed has been a very important mechanism, a number of

obstacles still remain until this day. These were tackled in both *Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans (MAP REA)* and the so-called *Mini Schengen*<sup>20</sup> which came years later which basically reiterates already assumed commitments of the region's countries. The reduction of the trade barriers has always been a powerful tool to boost trade and at the same time incomes in the markets involved. In the November 2019 discussions in Ohrid, North Macedonia very concrete action points, some of them first mentioned in April and July 2013 were stressed again.

The sheer fact that the Western Balkans has roughly 18 million people living in six relatively small markets suggests a more courageous approach to the matter. Some of it was mentioned in the WB6 non-paper of April 2013, but additional ideas were raised at the Pržno Meeting such as abolishing of roaming charges in the region (which eventually covered all six countries through signing of the second Regional Roaming Agreement in April 2019) or the adoption of the Concept of the Prior Notice to the customs authorities. The trade in the region still suffers significantly from the overburden of the necessary paperwork that relates, for example, to the phytosanitary rules.

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In this specific and other related areas, more ideas were picked by the participants and presented during the meetings which took place at the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York.<sup>21</sup>

As already mentioned, the work initiated in the April 2013 non-paper continued at Pržno Meeting and the subsequent meetings which followed within the Berlin Process resulted in the *Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans* (MAP REA)<sup>22</sup> and different agreements have been either signed or are under discussion. MAP REA was endorsed at the occasion of Trieste Summit, held in July 2017, as the proof of dedication of the leaders from six countries to “enable unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and highly skilled labour; making the region more attractive for investment and trade; and accelerating convergence with the EU, thus bringing prosperity to Western Balkans citizens.” MAP REA specifies multiple measures which are to be implemented in four main areas: trade, investment, mobility and digital integration if its main aim is about to be achieved. So far certain concrete results have been achieved (such as signing of Regional Roaming Agreement II, entering into force of Additional Protocol

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on trade facilitation, adoption and launch of implementation of Regional Investment Reform Agenda and adoption of corresponding Individual Reform Action Plans, agreement on the text of the Declaration on Recognition of Academic Qualifications, etc.). Still, it looks as if the countries will need to strive both further and stronger in order to resolve issues which can influence quality of life in the region (like, for example, agreeing on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications), rather than considering too cautiously the possible political consequences which these practical steps could entail.

The third area that relates to the organized crime has not seen much progress in the early days, but was later picked up by the United Kingdom who hosted the Berlin Process event in 2018. Ahead of the Summit of Interior ministers met and adopted the declaration that called for more activities related to serious and organized crime; violent extremism, terrorism and the financing of terrorism; *corruption*; money laundering and financial crime; trafficking of human beings and smuggling of migrants; the trafficking of weapons and drugs; and cybercrime and threats to cyber security.<sup>23</sup> Later the Summit reiterated the need to confront anticorruption and organized crime, but obviously there is enormous space to cooperate still.<sup>24</sup>

After a series of the meetings in different formats and clarification on what the WB6 initiative is about, less than two months before the inaugural Berlin Process meeting, the foreign ministers of the region met with European Commissioner for Enlargement and European

Neighbourhood Policy and RCC Secretary General for the final talks in July 2014 in Kotor. The meeting led to the Non-Paper Enhanced Cooperation within the Stabilisation and Association Process (Non-paper Enhanced Cooperation, July 2014) which proposes the establishment of the political framework for coordination in accession related areas, which inevitably includes a regional dimension. Non-paper specifies three specific areas: rule of law (with emphasis on combating organized crime), economic governance and SEE 2020<sup>25</sup> and connectivity. It was on that specific day of July 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 (pending approval of all the interested governments of course), that the WB6 was born and was ready to get more shape through the Berlin Process which started soon afterwards. It took some time between the moment when the idea was sown in April 2013 and when it materialized in July 2014.

### Show Must Go On

Although confronted with opposition and the lack of understanding in the beginning, I truly believe that the launching of the WB6 was indeed timely and a relevant contribution to the region's ambition to join EU and spur economic and social development. Being an informal setting it has produced relevant achievements such as the Multi-annual action plan that establishes regional economic area. Even the recent discussions under the Mini Schengen title receive a lot of flak although it only repeats what has already been agreed under the REA, RCC, CEFTA and Transport Community Treaty.

It's worth revisiting the European Commission's report on the credible enlargement from 2018 which

places importance on:

- Strengthened support to the rule of law
- Reinforcing engagement on security and on migration
- Supporting socio-economic development
- Increasing connectivity
- Launching a Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans
- Supporting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations

No doubt one may argue that sometimes in the Western Balkans region we just run rings around ourselves. It is time we speed up the regional cooperation and really make sense of all the political efforts that can be truly felt by the people of the Balkans. That of course does not by no means suggest that all the problems can be resolved through this channel of action as many national and internal issues remain of concern, but true commitment to the regional cooperation can help also put additional pressure on the decision makers to grapple with all the necessary reforms in order to build a prosperous society. As Majlinda Bregu, the secretary general of the RCC pointed out recently, Western Balkans is not yet ready for the European Union even we were offered membership today.<sup>26</sup> Looking back at 2013 and those efforts to set up WB6 and to promote new region's narrative I realize it remains one of the highlights in my public career and I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated in them.



## Endnotes

- 1 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia (back then still known as The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Serbia
- 2 Stefan Fule, the then Commissioner for the Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood voiced this need
- 3 Great support was provided by Tamara Mugosa the then director of the directorate for neighboring countries and later director of the regional initiative MARRI, Biljana Scekcic the then director general for economic diplomacy, Ivana Petricevic the then director general for the IPA coordination and Vlado Radulovic state secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and European Integration. I would like to take this opportunity and thank for helping in this important activity which has been reaffirmed over time.
- 4 The list of participants included Stefan Fule, Suzana Grubjesic the then deputy prime minister for European Integration of Serbia, Goran Svilanovic the then secretary general of the Regional Cooperation Council as well as deputy foreign ministers from the region.
- 5 Brdo Process was launched in 2010 by the then prime ministers of Slovenia and Croatia Borut Pahor and Jadranka Kosor and brings together Western Balkans countries with the aim to strengthen ties in the region while discussing different topics for cooperation. [www.mfa.gov.rs](http://www.mfa.gov.rs)
- 6 The South East European Cooperation Process was launched in 1996 at the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign affairs in Sofia/Bulgaria. The Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in SEE adopted in Bucharest in 2000 represents the essential document. It was formed by original 8 member states and now the membership is 13 countries. [www.rcc.int](http://www.rcc.int)
- 7 Inicijativa: Balkanski savez sest drzava (Initiative: Balkan Alliance of the Six States) Vikend Novine May 25-26 2013 was one of the articles that covered the topic.
- 8 Romania and Bulgaria joined of course in 2007 but they do not characterize as Western Balkans.
- 9 European Commission in their report in 2018 mentioned the possibility of 2025 but not unconditionally. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans_en.pdf). Currently, upon the French initiative the new methodological concept for the enlargement is discussed by the member states.
- 10 The Nordic council started in 1952 with the parliamentary hand only to be joined with the ministerial one from 1971 onward. Now the vision is to become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org)
- 11 Igman Initiative, very respectable movement, began with the gathering of the representatives of 100 civil sector organizations in November in Zagreb 2000 with the aim to foster regional cooperation after devastating war from 1990s. [www.igman-initiative.org](http://www.igman-initiative.org)
- 12 The Berlin Process started in August 2014. Instead of the pure commemoration of the events from 1914 when the WWI started chancellor Merkel wanted to set up a future oriented framework while remembering the past. I remember talking to her team of key advisors ahead of the launch event in Berlin of the need to support the doorstep of the EU which the Western Balkans is. The set-up of the Berlin Process shows commitment of Germany and other EU countries (Austria, France, Italy, London (no EU any longer), Poland... who have hosted Berlin Process events). In the meantime it has developed so that it does not bring together only politicians from the region and their European counterparts but also business people, civil sector, the youth forum. The Berlin Process itself will not be discussed in more details in this paper as it has already been talked about at length in other ones. For more info [www.berlinprocess.info](http://www.berlinprocess.info)
- 13 Visegrad Group also known as Visegrad 4 was named by the town Visegrad in Hungary where the Group of four (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary) was established in 1991 as one of the best regional formats that helped those countries meet their EU and NATO agenda goals. [www.en.m.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.m.wikipedia.org)
- 14 The Benelux Union set up by the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg started with the customs agreement in 1944 and developed further showing the way to the bigger EU integration process.
- 15 Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) is seated in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. RCC was officially launched in Sofia in 2008 during the ministerial SEEC meeting. [www.rcc.int](http://www.rcc.int)
- 16 Six years after the non-paper, Serbia, Albania and North Macedonia talk about the same issue under the "Mini Schengen" title, the form of the Ohrid Declaration that calls for the acceleration of the implementation of the EU four freedoms in the Western Balkans. Montenegrin citizens for example can already travel with only their IDs to all the WB6 countries. It's not the case with the rest. Besides the unresolved problem between Serbia and Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina does not recognize Kosovo which complicates the travel of the Kosovo citizens, and some countries still require passports.
- 17 Discussion points for the meeting of the political directors, Pržno, Budva jul 2013, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, archives
- 18 <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t-en>
- 19 <https://wbif.eu>
- 20 This title may seem puzzling as the original Schengen agreement signed in 1985 and turned effective in 1995 relates to the freedom of movement of people. In fact it has become a colloquial term, whereas the title of the Ohrid Declaration is Accelerating the Implementation of the Four Freedoms in the Western Balkans, November 2019
- 21 These meetings especially one in 2013 were quite hard. I remember being met with complete silence after presenting what seemed to the consolidated set of ideas. However things took more happily course in the following months
- 22 [www.rcc.int/priority\\_areas/39/map-rea](http://www.rcc.int/priority_areas/39/map-rea)
- 23 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/723746/Chair\\_s\\_Conclusions\\_-\\_Interior\\_Ministers\\_meeting\\_-\\_9\\_July\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/723746/Chair_s_Conclusions_-_Interior_Ministers_meeting_-_9_July_2018.pdf)
- 24 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/724295/Heads\\_Meeting\\_-\\_Chair\\_s\\_Conclusions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/724295/Heads_Meeting_-_Chair_s_Conclusions.pdf)
- 25 SEE 2020 is the strategy for the economic development of the region approved in 2013
- 26 Bregu: Zapadni Balkan jos nije spreman za EU, daily Vijesti January 8 2020, RCC Secretary General's interview

# STRATEGIC COMPETITION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: GEOPOLITICS OF MARITIME DELIMITATION

The gas explorations in the region may become a new hope for European countries since these states have a high natural gas import dependency on a few countries. Diversifying natural gas import sources are one of the key measures to increase energy supply security.

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The discoveries of natural gas since 2009 have changed the dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean. The gas explorations in the region may become a new hope for European countries since these states have a high natural gas import dependency on a few countries. Diversifying natural gas import sources are one of the key measures to increase energy supply security. However, the price of natural gas is a determinant in choosing among alternatives. Thus, this article examines the recent natural gas explorations in the Eastern Mediterranean and analyzes different options for exporting gas from this region. Nevertheless, the conflict between Turkish and Greek Cypriot administrations as well as the discord over the determination of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) between Turkey and countries in the region constitutes a hurdle for export options since some regional countries have tried to bypass Turkey. In this realm, this essay analyzes recent geopolitics in the region that rose from the new the EEZ agreement between Turkey and Libya. This agreement complicates the construction of the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline and demonstrates that Turkey is a significant actor in the region. At the same time, the continuing civil war in Libya put the agreement in danger. Therefore, the authors argue that Turkey needs to pay a special attention to its relations with Israel to

persuade the country to export its gas to Europe through Turkey.

### **Natural Gas Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean**

One of the major natural gas fields in the Eastern Mediterranean was discovered by Noble Energy in 2009. The capacity of the field of Tamar, in the EEZ of Israel is 310 billion cubic meters (bcm). This amount promises Israel to reduce its import dependency. One year later, the same company found another gas field called Leviathan in the same EEZ, which has a capacity of 621 bcm.<sup>1</sup> These discoveries attracted international energy companies' attention. After the discovery of Israeli fields, Noble Energy found another gas field in the EEZ of Cyprus in 2011. Compared to other gas fields, the capacity of the Cypriot gas field is limited to 120-130 bcm.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the Zohr field was discovered by the Italian energy company ENI in 2015 in the EEZ of Egypt. The gas field has the greatest capacity in the region which is 850 bcm of gas.<sup>3</sup> The extensive exploration activities of ENI in the region led the company to find another major gas field called Noor. The company announced in 2018 that it found a gas field that has a capacity of 2.5 trillion



cubic meters (tcm) which makes the field World's largest gas field.<sup>4</sup>

All these discoveries took place in the EEZ's of Israel, Cyprus<sup>5</sup> and Egypt, which created a necessity for these countries to find an export strategy. The efficient exploitation of the newly discovered natural gas allows these countries to decrease their import dependency as well as bringing up the opportunity to export the remaining gas. The gas could be exported as liquefied natural gas (LNG) or through a pipeline.

Regarding the export of natural gas as LNG, in 2013, a study was carried out for the construction of a LNG export facility at Vasilikos at southern part of Cyprus to export gas discovered in the Aphrodite field (Cyprus). However, it was concluded that the project is commercially not viable.<sup>6</sup> Since then, there has been no development in the construction of an export terminal. Rather, Greek Cypriots signed a contract for the

**All these discoveries took place in the EEZ's of Israel, Cyprus and Egypt, which created a necessity for these countries to find an export strategy.**

construction of import terminal at the same location which is estimated to cost around €300 million and estimated to be completed until 2022.<sup>7</sup> Even though LNG export is currently not economically viable for the Greek Cypriot Administration, it tries to seize alternative opportunities. In this realm, the Greek Cypriot Administration and Egypt agreed in 2019 to build a gas pipeline from the Aphrodite field to the LNG facilities of Egypt. With this agreement, the Greek Cypriot Administration could export its gas over Egypt.<sup>8</sup> However, as a significant gas exporter already, Egypt's own offshore gas activities have been gradually making the country's LNG facilities busy. For this reason, there will be a low spare capacity available for Cypriot gas in the coming decade for export.

This is also the case for Israeli gas. The country signed an agreement with Egypt to export around 5 bcm of gas to Europe over Egypt's LNG facilities for the next 15 years. Israel chooses to export its gas over Egypt because building Israeli LNG facilities is less attractive due to commercial reasons.<sup>9</sup> However, the main challenge for both Israel and the Greek Cypriot Administration is that the additional costs derived from transporting gas to Egypt's LNG facilities and liquefaction costs are added over gas prices which makes Israeli and Cypriot gas expensive and less competitive in the European market.



All these demonstrate that it is less likely for Israel and the Greek Cypriot Administration to export gas unless they find ways to reduce such costs. Alternatively, a gas pipeline could take place of LNG.

The most prominent pipeline project in the region is the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline. The proposal of the pipeline, which aims to bring gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe, was initiated in 2012. The project was designed to carry 10-20 bcm of gas from Israel to Italy via the Greek Cypriot Administration and Greece. The estimated cost of the project is €6 billion, and the length of the pipeline is over 2000km.<sup>10</sup> The supporters of the project believe that the pipeline will be one of the alternatives to Russian gas that will enable the EU to diversify its gas suppliers and break its high gas import dependency to Russia. On the contrary, critics argue that it is an unrealistic project and that it will be too costly to build such a pipeline. Energy markets are competitive and the price is determinant. The average gas price in the European market is around \$6.50 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) in 2019 and it is likely to remain at this level in the coming decade. On the opposite side, the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline will be commercially viable if the European gas price exceeds \$8 MMBtu.<sup>11</sup> The high cost of the project combined with uncompetitive gas prices result in the postponement of

the construction of the pipeline. While considering building such a significant project, it is a fatal mistake not to include Turkey which has enough gas infrastructure to bring Eastern Mediterranean gas to Europe.

### Turkey as a Key Player

In the field of energy both Turkey and the European Union share the same concerns. Both have a high dependency on Russian gas, and both try to increase the security of their gas supplies. For this reason, close cooperation between Turkey and the EU can make a significant contribution to enhance the energy securities of both parties. In addition to existing gas pipelines, with the realization of new pipelines such as Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) and Turkish Stream on the Turkish soils, the possibility of Turkey to transform into an energy hub has increased in recent years. Besides, in the strategic plan of 2015-2019 set by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MENR), it was clearly proclaimed that Turkey is suitable for being an energy hub.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the 11<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan covering the years between 2019 and 2023 also in line with the Strategic Plan of MENR underscores Turkey's ambition to become an energy hub by using its geostrategic location.<sup>13</sup> According to the statistics of Energy Market Regulatory Authority of Turkey, the



Proposed EEZ between Turkey and Libya. Source: Institute of Energy for Southeast Europe (IENE).

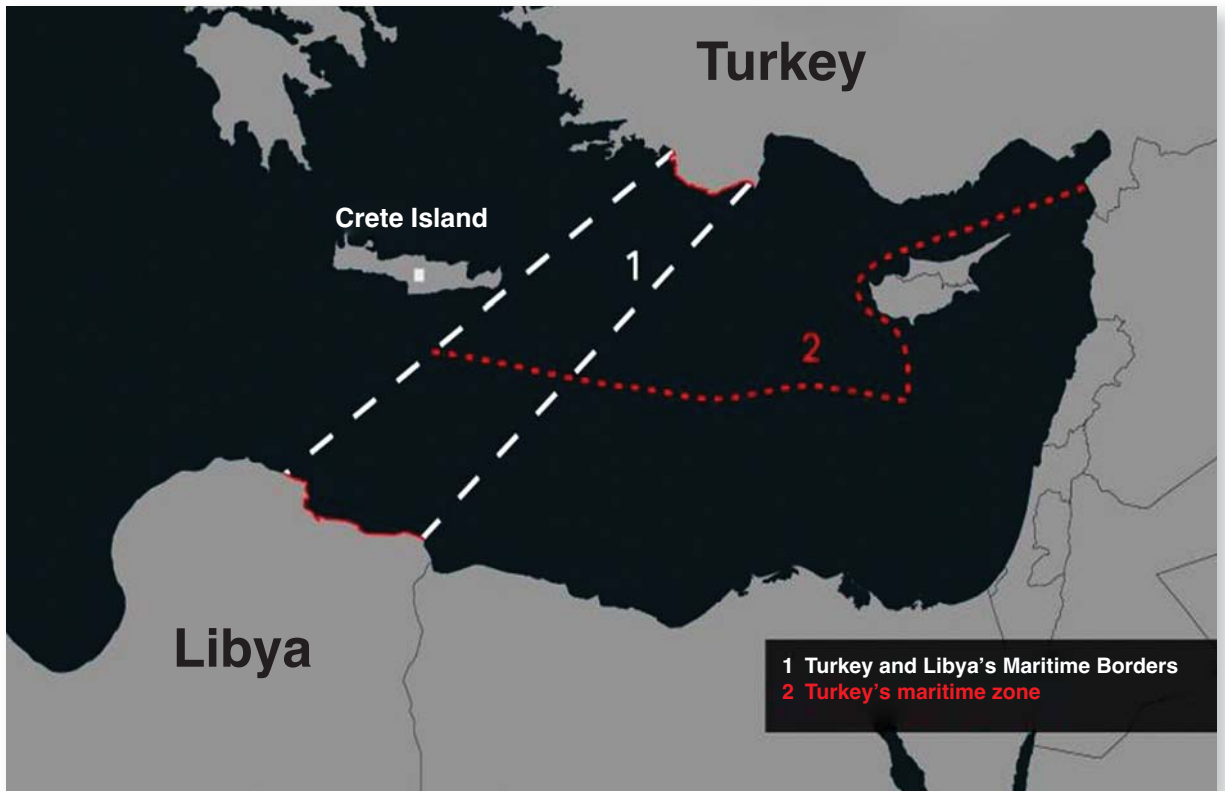
**Sending Turkish seismic ships for hydrocarbon explorations in the region, as well as signing of the Turkey-Libya maritime agreement is an important message to the regional actors that Turkey cannot be ignored in the Eastern Mediterranean.**

country produced 0,4 bcm, consumed 49,3 bcm and imported 50,3 bcm of gas in 2018.<sup>14</sup> This demonstrates Turkey's high dependency on gas imports. Therefore, becoming an intersection point of pipelines will enable Turkey both to access large volumes of gas for reducing its own import dependency and will enhance the security of supplies of the Southeastern part of the EU. Despite its geographical advantage, the formation of regional initiatives that ignore Turkey changes the balance of power in the region.

At the beginning of 2019, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Greece, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and the Greek Cypriot Administration established Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum with the EU and the U.S. support in order to form a regional gas market and realize the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline without including Turkey.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Turkey felt the necessity to take action against

this regional initiative. In this respect, sending Turkish seismic ships for hydrocarbon explorations in the region, as well as signing of the Turkey-Libya maritime agreement is an important message to the regional actors that Turkey cannot be ignored in the Eastern Mediterranean. The agreement establishes EEZ boundary between Turkey and Libya which complicates the realization of the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline. Besides, the deal vanishes the hopes for the possible EEZ agreement between Greece and the Greek Cypriot Administration or between Greece and Egypt. As shown in the map, it is not possible to construct a pipeline to Europe without the consent of Turkey.

However, even though Turkey signed an agreement with Libya, the ongoing civil war in the country since 2016 jeopardizes the maritime deal.<sup>16</sup> The UN recognized government has been under attack by renegade General Khalifa Haftar, who tries to capture Tripoli and therefore risks Turkey-Libya agreement. If the Libyan government is seized by Haftar, the agreement between the two countries will be invalid. In this realm, Turkey's military assistance to Libya and diplomatic efforts for ceasefire demonstrate that Turkey is a key player in the Eastern Mediterranean that will not allow regional actors to take unilateral actions. By blocking the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline, Turkey pushes regional countries to diverge to a shorter and more economical alternative which goes over Turkey.



## The Eastern Mediterranean Gas, Israel, and Turkey

One of the most important aspects of the maritime deal is that Turkey changes balances in the region in the way that Israel may choose Turkey to export its gas. Even though Turkey and Israel confronted several times in different issues in recent years, the trade between the two countries has grown steadily. The trade volume between the two countries was around \$3.4 billion in 2008 while it reached \$5.6 billion in 2019.<sup>17</sup> Despite increasing trade volumes between the two countries, there is a need for close diplomatic interaction to deepen cooperation in different sectors such as energy. A gas pipeline from Israel to Turkey is the most economical and profitable option for Israel. Compared to the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline which is over 2000km and costs around €6 billion, a pipeline to Turkey will be around 500km and costs approximately €2 billion.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, when the capacity of TANAP will be increased in the next few years, Israeli gas can be easily supplied to TANAP and then to Europe.

Moreover, Turkey's high dependency on gas imports can make the country a client of Israel. In the first half of 2019, the average gas price in Turkey was around \$7 MMBtu, slightly over the average European gas price.<sup>19</sup> The cost of Israeli gas is expected to be around \$4-5 MMBtu. When transportation costs are added, it will be around or less than Turkish gas market price, which is \$7 MMBtu. However, in the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline, gas prices need to exceed \$8 MMBtu to make the project economically viable.<sup>20</sup> In this case, it will be likely for both Turkey and the EU to buy gas from Israel since its gas will be competitive. Currently, Israel is not able to export its gas to Europe. However, with the Israel-Turkey pipeline, the country will sell its gas to both Turkey and the EU, which will significantly increase Israel's energy export incomes. The pipeline needs to cross either over the EEZ of the Cyprus or Syria. The most feasible option is the one crossing over the EEZ of Cyprus since the Syrian civil war may endanger the security of the pipeline. However, EEZ disputes between Turkey/Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots are the major obstacle for the realization of the Israel-Turkey pipeline.

### The Delimitation of EEZs in the Eastern Mediterranean

According to United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), coastal states have sovereign rights over the continental shelf and territorial sea boundaries for exploring and exploiting it; the shelf can extend to 200 (around 370km) nautical miles and territorial sea boundaries can extend to 12 nautical miles (around 22km) from the shore. In the case of overlaps of EEZ's, the law enables countries to sign bilateral EEZ agreements to achieve an equitable result.<sup>21</sup> As a party to the convention, the Greek Cypriot Administration

**The EEZ delimitation disputes between Turkey, Turkish and Greek Cypriots are one of the most important obstacles for the construction of the Israel-Turkey pipeline.**

signed three bilateral agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel to define its EEZ. On the contrary, both Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) are not a party to UNCLOS. Therefore, they do not recognize the EEZ delimitation agreements of the Greek Cypriot Administration. In the absence of EEZ agreements, countries can claim the areas up to the median line.<sup>22</sup>

Turkish ambassador Çağatay Erciyes claims that islands need to have a reduced maritime boundary since they are located at a considerable distance offshore and opposed to mainland coasts, so this would give a disproportionate right to them. He cites specific cases such as Libya- Malta; Qatar-Bahrain and Papua New Guinea- Australia in which islands are given limited effect in maritime boundary delimitation. Therefore, he argues that Turkey defines its EEZ in the region according to the definition of the continental shelf.<sup>23</sup> This means that the country takes the median line between the coastlines of Egypt and Turkey rather than taking the median line between the Greek Cypriot Administration and Turkey since Turkey does not recognize the Greek Cypriot Administration. On the contrary, Greek Cypriot ambassador Tasos Tzionis gives the example of bilateral negotiations between Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and the Greek Cypriot Administration for the determination of EEZs. He argues that Turkey's EEZ claims have no legal basis and he calls on Turkey to sign bilateral EEZ agreements with countries in the region.<sup>24</sup>

The EEZ delimitation disputes between Turkey, Turkish and Greek Cypriots are one of the most important obstacles for the construction of the Israel-Turkey pipeline. In this context, Israel can be regarded as a key country for changing the regional balances in favor of Turkey. Based on the discovered gas reserves, Israel owns the second biggest gas reserves after Egypt. Therefore, the country is the key for the determination of the export orientation of the Eastern Mediterranean gas through a pipeline. In this respect, Israel has the potential to convince the Greek Cypriot Administration for crossing a pipeline from its EEZ. Continuing the economic recovery process in the Greek Cypriot Administration as well as to maintain sustainable relations with Israel can force Greek Cypriots to sit at the negotiation table with Israel. This will not definitely solve Cypriot and the EEZ delimitation disputes but can open a way for regional cooperation.

## Conclusion

All in all, it is comprehensible that the cheapest and most feasible option to export gas from Israel and Cyprus to Europe is through Turkey. The maritime deal between Turkey and Libya has changed the regional balances in the way that it complicates the construction of the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline. Besides, it can be clearly observed that the Turkey-Libya deal has been a triggering effect on regional countries. Turkey's assertion of defending its rights in the region at any cost and highlighting that the country might resort to hard power if necessary is important to affect Israel's position regarding the route of export of gas. In this context, strategic dialogue and rapprochement in Turkish-Israeli relations in the following era will add an extra dimension to the bilateral relations which can open up further political and economic opportunities. In this sense, to renew the diplomatic process between Turkey and Israel in the context of recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean is necessary.

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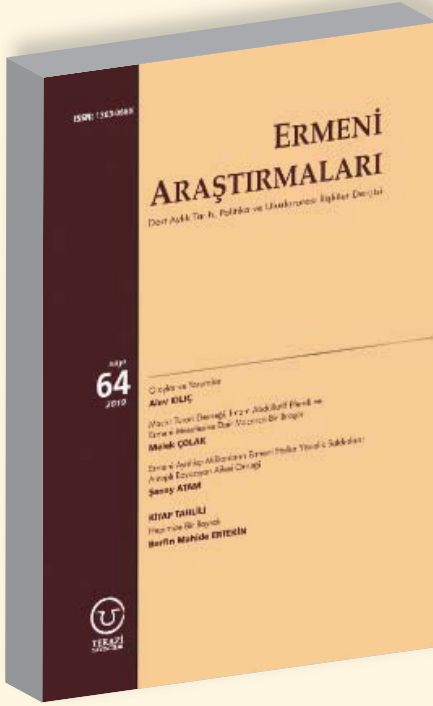
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