

Turkish foreign policy towards the Balkans: A Europeanised foreign policy in a de-europeanised national context?

Birgül Demirtaş

Department of International Relations, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Söğütözü Cad. No: 43, Söğütözü, 06560, Ankara, Turkey

ABSTRACT

There has been an increasing number of studies in international relations literature discussing the rising salience of regionalism and regional powers in global politics. Due to its economic prowess, geographical size, demographic credentials as well as foreign policy activism Turkey can be considered as one of the contemporary regional actors. This article critically examines the impact of Europeanisation process on Turkish foreign policy towards the Western Balkan states and its rising status in regional politics. It argues that although Turkey is currently experiencing de-europeanisation in its domestic politics, the impact of Europeanisation on its Balkans policy continues. This article shows, among others, that not the internalisation, but the instrumentalisation of 'Europe' has been the driving force of domestic and external foreign policy of Turkey.

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Introduction

Following his party's grandiose triumph at the local elections on March 30, 2014, despite all the turmoil in internal politics and allegations of wide-scale corruption, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the then Prime Minister of Turkey and leader of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) made a phone call to the mayor of Mamuşa, a village in Kosovo, populated mainly by Muslims. 'I am sending all of you my greetings from İstanbul, dear people of Mamuşa' he said at the beginning of his speech which was live transmitted to all the Turkish origin people in the village who came together to celebrate JDP's victory. After thanking the Turkish-origin mayor of the village, Arif Bütüç, for all his interest during the election campaign, Erdoğan continued his speech by heartfully thanking all people living in Mamuşa and asking them to continue their solidarity with Turkey permanently. The mayor of Mamuşa who had just visited the Prime Minister in Ankara one week before the elections, replied to the Turkish Prime Minister by stating 'People of Kosovo, Balkans and Mamuşa are proud of you. You are a leader who affects world politics.'¹ This phone-call was transmitted by many of the Turkish TV channels' prime time news, thus reaching the hearts and minds of the Turkish public.

This emotional phone call is just one example of what kind of ties the JDP leadership has cultivated in the Balkans in the recent period and how these ties are being instrumentalised in Turkish domestic politics. In fact, this phone call can be considered as a followup of the Prime Minister's traditional balcony speech after his party's landslide victory at the 2011 parliamentary elections. Stating that as a result of the elections Sarajevo has won as well to the extent that İstanbul has won, Prime Minister continued his speech: 'Turkey as well as Middle East, Caucasus and Balkans have won.'²

It should not be a surprise that the phone call with Mamuşa's mayor was made and transmitted to the Turkish public at a time when both the Prime Minister Erdoğan and some of the ministers have been facing large-scale corruption scandals which were posted on social media daily through tapes transmitted by a few anonymous users. This phone-call is a classic example of how the JDP tries to use its increasing and widening ties with the kin communities of the Balkans in order to get more support from the Turkish constituency by showing how charismatic and influential the JDP itself as well as its leader are in the neighboring, ex-Ottoman regions. New actors, issues, and role conceptualisations have become predominant in Turkey's attachments in neighbouring regions through the instrumentalisation of the Europeanisation process, though this is now being challenged by new developments since the Gezi Park protest movement starting in May 2013 at a central park in İstanbul.

As Turkey has been going through a turbulent time in its domestic and foreign policies mainly since the outbreak of Gezi Park protests and Arab Spring, it has been attracting the attention of international academia more than ever. Being generally characterised as a complex and multi-regional country with accompanying plural identities, its policies are becoming more difficult to grasp by the scholars. It is possible to observe contradictory policies both in the internal and external domains: With regard to the domestic arena, on one hand, one could experience a comprehensive Kurdish opening involving acknowledgement of many liberal cultural policies and negotiations with the important figures from the Kurdish political movement. But this development is ironically accompanied by growing restrictions towards the media and judiciary, considerable limitation of the right of freedom of assembly and of thought, weakening of checks and balances mechanisms in the political system. In the foreign policy field, on the other hand, similarly a highly resecuritized foreign policy towards the Middle East, mainly including hostile relations with Syria, Egypt and Israel, is paralleled by the attempts of possible rapprochement with Armenia as well as continuing friendly relations with the Balkan countries. All of these developments have been taking place under the hegemony of the single party government of the JDP which has won all the local and general elections in Turkey with landslide support for the last 12 years.

In light of the changing state of affairs in Turkish domestic politics since the brutal repression of the Gezi resistance movement and the December 17 Clean Hands operation one could argue that de-Europeanisation process has clearly speeded up. Despite its cooling of relations with the European Union since 2006, Turkey has been affected by the Europeanisation. But in recent times there has been an increasing Euro-skepticism among the decision makers. The current mood of the JDP elite towards the EU can well be characterised by the increasing hostile rhetoric of the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as he stated that Turkey should be a member to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization rather than waiting for full membership in the EU. The increasing limitations to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly as experienced in the high number of journalists in

prison and unproportionally violent police response towards peaceful demonstrators can be given as proof of Turkey's de-Europeanisation.

In this context of a decreasing EU anchor, Turkey has also experienced a complex variety of problems with its Middle Eastern neighbours. Arab Spring's eruption led to a dramatic failure of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's 'zero problems with neighbours' policy.

During the long reign of the JDP, relations with the Western Balkan countries, instead, have mainly remained stable and even improved considerably since 2009. This article aims at analysing the Europeanisation process' impact on Turkey's relations with the Western Balkan countries. Although the membership process has been stalled, it is one of the arguments of this article that Turkey's Europeanization process has had considerable impact on Turkey's security understanding and foreign policy approach towards the Balkans. This article critically examines how 'Brusselisation'³ has changed Turkey's approach to the region and looks at the opportunities and limits of this process. It is the basic argument of this paper that although Turkey has learnt to use Europeanised instruments in its regional policies, its basic approach has remained self-oriented, leading to questions of why Europeanisation has not been internalised in the Turkish case.

Despite the fact that there is an increasing number of academic publications on Turkey's Balkan ties, none of them examined it through the lenses of Europeanisation. Hence, it is one of the objectives of this article to contribute to the literature on the impact of Europeanisation on Turkey's regional policies. The second aim of the article is to analyse how the accession process affects the foreign policies of those countries whose membership negotiations have stalled for different reasons. Since the economic crisis within the EU is still a continuing phenomenon and there is the increasing impact of the enlargement exhaustion, it seems that Turkey will not be alone in the waiting room. Therefore, this article aims to contribute to Europeanisation's impact on the foreign policies of regional countries whose membership prospects are not that bright in the short or medium term. The article also pursues the objective of drawing conclusions for deconstructing the foreign policy trajectories of regional powers that have close ties with the European Union without the prospect of full membership in the short or medium term.

The article is divided into three parts: First, it defines the concepts of Europeanisation and de-Europeanisation and examines how specifically the foreign policy of candidate countries is being Europeanised. This section analyses different conceptualisations of Europeanisation throughout the history of the European integration process and looks at how the Turkish case can be evaluated in that respect. In the second part, it analyses the impact of Europeanisation on Turkish foreign in a general framework by looking at the various mechanisms in progress in the Brusselisation process. The next section provides an examination of how Ankara's policies towards Western Balkans have been effected by this process. New roles, issues and actors have been brought into discussion in order to analyse Ankara's attitude towards the region. In this part, the limitations and challenges of Turkey's foreign policy change are taken into consideration and the implications of the Balkans for internal politics are also discussed. The last section sums up this study's main arguments.

This article argues that the Turkey's Balkan relations have been an example of how the Europeanisation process has not been internalised by the foreign policy elite, but rather used as an instrument to establish Turkey as *primus inter pares*. Putting too much emphasis on religion and Ottoman history, overlooking local perceptions and misperceptions, exaggerating its own potential and de-europeanising internal environment have been burdens on

Turkey's regional politics. The study's another contribution to the literature is to show how Turkey's influence in the Balkans has been used as a legitimising instrument for internal politics by the political leaders.

Europeanisation and foreign policy: 'When Europe hits home'⁴ and foreign relations

Throughout its not so long history, the European integration process has led to a remarkably high number of transformations within the European continent. By using soft policy instruments it transformed enmities to friendship and hence laid the ground for the emergence of an economic and security community.

The literature on Europeanisation has evolved through time. Ever since the beginning of European integration there has been an academic curiosity to explain how the Westphalian nation-states came to accept the sharing of their sovereignty. Hence, first group of Europeanisation studies looked into how the member states came to accept the idea of integration. From functionalism to neo-functionalism, from inter-governmentalism to multi-level governance and constructivism, different approaches have been developed to explain the phenomenon of integration. In the second phase, the impact of Europeanisation on domestic politics has been studied in different realms ranging from agriculture to environment, from economics to human rights policies not only in the member states but also in the candidate countries. In a later stage, new works emerged on the impact of the Union on candidate states' foreign policies. This study is limited to studying Europeanisation's influence on Turkey's Balkan policies within a larger framework of its impact on Turkey's foreign policy in general. There has already been an important literature on the influence of the accession process on Turkey's internal politics, especially its democratisation reforms.

Before proceeding further, a short description of the concept of Europeanisation would be useful. According to Börzel '... Europeanization is understood as the emergence of new rules, norms, practices, and structures of meaning to which member states are exposed and which they have to incorporate into their domestic structures.'⁵ According to Wong, '... the central focus of the concept, ... is the penetration of the EU into the politics, institutions, and policy making of member states.'⁶ Inspired by these definitions of Europeanisation, it is possible to explain the Europeanisation of foreign policy as the impact of formal and informal structures, norms, values, principles and patterns of behaviour of the EU on members, candidates or other countries as well as the impact of the nation states on the shaping and making of EU foreign policy.

According to Wong, Europeanisation of foreign policy can mainly be through three ways:⁷ projection of national policies to the EU level; national adaptation and convergence of policies; and the reconstruction of identities or internalisation of the European identity in national structures. National projection, also called uploading, represents the impact of states on EU foreign policy formulation. On the other hand, national adaptation that may be called downloading refers to the convergence of foreign policy behavior and norms of states with those of the EU. The third way corresponds to the social constructivist approach according to which elites might be socialized via EU rules through time and come to behave according to the European norms and values simply because of their belief that it is right and legitimate to follow the European path.

This article would mainly address the second and third way of Europeanization of foreign policy, that is national adaptation and possible elite socialization. In doing so, it will

mainly concentrate on formal and informal ways of the transmission of EU rules and values to Turkey. The next section will provide an analysis of how this process has taken place in Turkey's foreign and security policy.

Turkish foreign policy and Europeanisation: Discourses, institutions and actions

For any kind of Europeanisation to occur in member states, candidate countries or beyond, two elements are essential: misfit and EU credibility. The first represents any kind of misfit between the Union and the target states that might lead to diffusion of the impact of the Union. The second element, on the other hand, refers to the reliability and persuasiveness of the EU's conditions. Based on the experience in the enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe as well as Southeast Europe, it is possible to state that the more credible the offer of full EU membership is, the greater the extent of Europeanisation takes place in target countries.

In the Turkish case there was a clear misfit with the Union's understanding of foreign policy. Before proceeding further, it would be useful to explain the main components of the EU's foreign policy understanding. Although foreign policy is still an intergovernmental issue and to a great extent decided in each capital city of the member states, throughout the European integration process some traditions and principles came to be associated with the Union. Based on the traumatic experiences of the world wars the Union's foreign policy is based on a civilian approach. It is not only the fact that its foreign policy has been decided by civilians, but also their ways of solving problems are civilian. Interrelated with its civilian perspective, the EU deals with many international issues in a desecuritized manner, i.e. without showing them as existential problems and not giving reference to the vitality of emergency, i.e. militarised measures.⁸

Another important concept of the EU foreign policy approach has been regional cooperation, mainly in the EU's neighboring regions. Emphasis on economic dimensions constitutes another core area in which the EU fosters cooperation. Stemming from the spillover effect of the neo-functional theory there is a widely shared belief that economic cooperation would not only yield more economic growth, but tame political problems as well. The EU is also proud of the fact that it provides the biggest development assistance on the global scale. In the 2003 European Security Strategy document, but the solutions to the security problems the EU aspires to are mostly of civilian nature though it also refers to the importance of military measures.

After providing a brief view about the main features of the Union's approach towards foreign and security policy, the Turkish case study will be looked at more closely. How can we understand whether Turkey's international policies have been transformed through the processes of Europeanisation?

As stated above there was a clear misfit in EU and Turkish foreign policy decision making processes. In addition, the credibility of the Union has played a substantial role on Turkey's reforms. However, as the EU's attitude towards the idea of Turkish accession cooled, Turkish reforms have been stalled as a result.

Aydın and Açıkmeşe put forward three mechanisms of conditionality in the Turkish case to give a meaning to the formal Europeanisation: Political criteria, *de facto* political criteria and harmonization with CFSP *acquis*.⁹ The first type of conditionality, political criteria, represents requirements in the political arena that should be fulfilled in order for

Turkey to start membership negotiations. In the Turkish case, the main requirement was about changing the structure and status of the National Security Council (NSC). Being an integral part of national foreign and security policy since the 1961 Constitution, Turkish governments were required to give priority to the NSC's decisions which in practice meant that they were implemented by Turkish governments. The fact that the majority of the Council and its secretary general came from the Turkish military demonstrated the important status that the armed forces exercised not only on Turkey's security understanding and but also on its implementations. As a result of the EU reform package passed in the Turkish Parliament in 2003 substantial changes were implemented with regard to the NSC. First of all, the number of civilians was increased in the Council and it was also downgraded to an advisory institution as is the case in EU member countries.¹⁰

De facto political criteria, on the other hand, represented the EU requirements elaborated in the Accession Partnership documents and the regular reports that Turkey had to fulfill to proceed further towards its membership negotiations. They are mainly focused on solution of Turkey's problems with the neighbours, especially those with Greece and Cyprus. In fact, de-securitisation of Ankara's attitude towards Cyprus could have been impossible without the EU anchor.¹¹

The Cyprus issue has for long been regarded in Turkey as a national cause (*milli dava*) and no government in Turkish history until the JDP could carry out any fundamental change.¹² The JDP government started contributing to the solution of the Cyprus issue on the basis of the Annan Plan. Erdoğan also accepted during a speech at the University of Oxford that the main dynamics behind Turkish-Greek rapprochement was the EU. Erdoğan stated the following:

'If Turco-Greek rapprochement is possible today, it is because we have a common ground through which mutual perceptions are formed most accurately. That common ground is the EU... I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Turkey's own policies and suggestions to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus based on the Annan Plan have been in parallel to the EU.'¹³

This discourse shows how much an impact the European Union had on breaking Turkish taboos with regards to the Cyprus issue.

Though the Cyprus issue has become one of the first highmarks of the EU-led desecuritisation trend, it did not remain the only one. In fact, Davutoğlu's discourse of 'zero problem with neighbours' is an essential component of this transformation. The case of Northern Iraq was also reevaluated in a non-traditional way. Since the first Gulf War in 1991, Ankara's approach towards Northern Iraq has been full of ups and downs. But in the 2000s Turkey came to accept the federal structure of Iraq and developed a strategic relationship with Northern Iraqi leaders without perceiving it within the perspective of securitisation perspective.

Besides desecuritisation of formerly 'national causes', another impact of the Europeanisation process has been seen on Turkish discourse of economic interdependence and regional integration. Especially with neighboring regions Foreign Minister Davutoğlu advocated stepping up economic relations. This was in fact an extension of Turgut Özal's approach in the 1980's.

What the JDP has tried to do in its foreign policy has remarkable similarities with Özal's approach, especially in its heavy emphasis on economic links. As argued by Kirişçi Turkey has been increasingly becoming a 'trading state'.¹⁴ As Davutoğlu explained in his book

Stratejik Derinlik and repeatedly emphasised in many of his speeches, Turkey tried to create close economic ties, mainly with the neighbouring regions, an important part of which was part of the Ottoman Empire. It was argued that close economic relations would lead to closer political links. The Turkish ‘regional integration’ discourse has close parallels with the EU’s approach.

The next section will mainly deal with the main dynamics of Ankara’s approach towards the Western Balkan countries and looks at the impact of Europeanisation on this process.

Turkey and its Balkan neighbours: New roles, new issues, new actors

A new discourse, new issues and role conceptions appeared in Turkey’s Balkan relations started from the early 1990s but consolidated in the 2000s. During the Cold War, hegemonic relations on the global scale heavily affected the relations between Ankara and its Balkan neighbours, themselves divided among eastern, western and non-aligned lines. However, following the end of the bipolar world politics, Turkey found greater manoeuvrability in its foreign policy and could launch important diplomatic initiatives. Among these, Turkey developed proposals for the resolution of the Bosnian War, tried to become a bridge between the Bosniaks and the international community, negotiated with Milosevic to prevent the Kosovo War. This resulted in Turkey having greater weight in international affairs as a result of which international actors, like the US and the EU, contacted Turkish officials frequently during the Yugoslav succession wars, especially when the Bosnian War was continuing. Considering the *Zeitgeist* of the Balkans in the turbulent 1990s, Turkey’s foreign policy focused mainly on political and security issues as it tried to play an active role for the solution of the Yugoslavian crises. In the aftermath of the wars it contributed to the establishment of a new regional order by sending soldiers to the peacekeeping missions. When the JDP came to power, it did not just capitalise on the active diplomatic initiatives of the 1990s but also added new elements to it through the increasing interaction with the EU at various levels.

Davutoğlu, as the main architect of Turkish foreign policy from the very beginning of JDP government, first as chief advisor to the Prime Minister, then as the Foreign Minister, has written extensively on the Balkans. But as regards to his publications on the region one should draw a thin line between those published before his political career and those during his posts during the reign of JDP. In his pioneer book *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth) he argued that Turkey should base its Balkans policy on the two important Muslim peoples of the region: Bosniaks and Albanians. He argued that if Turkey wants to establish a sphere of influence in the Balkans, it can only be through cultivating close relations with these communities, because of the fact that Turkey has historical and heartfelt closeness to these communities (‘tarihi ve kalbi yakınlık’).¹⁵ After becoming foreign minister, however, he tried to develop Turkey’s relations not only with Muslim communities, but with countries like Macedonia and Serbia that consist of Christian majorities.

His major work on the Balkans during his foreign ministry has been published by the Center for Strategic Research of the Turkish Foreign Ministry with the title of ‘A Forward Looking Vision for the Balkans’.¹⁶ According to it, fundamental policy principles of Turkey’s regional policy have been summarised by the key concepts of regional ownership and inclusiveness, regional integration, European integration and establishment of a common stance in regional and international organisations. In fact, these concepts, in general, have relevance to the EU’s policies. It is one of the basic principles of EU conditionality towards

the Western Balkans that in order to complete the full membership process, first of all countries should try to establish a regional cooperation scheme. Turkey's emphasis on European integration stems from its belief that as the regional countries are integrated into the Euro-Atlantic structures, they would achieve a more stable and peaceful order. Davutoğlu's discourse implies that in developing regional cooperation schemes Turkey benefits from the EU example:

In order to normalize the region to conform to the spirit of the time, policy makers should have the determination to turn the 21st century into a century of re-integration in the Balkan region. Instead of micro-level division, we need to bolster macro-level integration. On this level, having political dialogue is of paramount importance. There should be bilateral and multilateral high-level political dialogue mechanisms that meet on a regular basis, *similar to the European Union's mechanisms*.¹⁷

This is an example of how Turkey takes the EU mechanisms as an example in developing new instruments for its policies. This article argues that JDP's Balkans policy is based on new role conceptualizations, new issues and instruments as well as new actors, all three of them relevant to the Europeanisation. The following section will provide an outlook to the new role conceptualisations.

JDP government and new role conceptualisations: *Historia, geographia and 'Primus Inter Pares'*¹⁸

Turkish decision makers' perception of geopolitics has been an integral component of foreign policy decision making process since the Republic's establishment. The experience of the wars that the country had experienced in its founding phases contributed to the emergence of geopolitical determinism in which Turkey's geography has been presented by the decision makers as so important in global affairs that hegemonic powers continuously wanted to interfere and intervene. The Cold War years increased the perception of geographical determinism even more due to the proximity to the neighbouring Soviet Union. In the 1990s different discussions on Turkish identity emerged, each having its own geopolitical understanding. The JDP, on the other hand, had a clear and new geopolitical understanding accompanied by a 'strong exceptionality narrative',¹⁹ based on the claim of uniqueness of Turkish geography according to which being part of multiple regions and ruling over the Straits could be a great advantage for Turkey but only if it employs right policies. This geographical determinism has been followed by historical determinism according to which Ottoman past leads to new responsibilities on the Turkish side. This understanding has clear implications for Turkey's Balkans policies since it puts forward a leadership role in the region. Davutoğlu explicitly stated this perception in his controversial speech in Sarajevo in 2009:

Our history is the same, our fate is the same, and our future is the same. *Similar to how the Ottoman Balkans has risen to the center of world politics in the 16th century, we will make Balkans, Caucasus and Middle East, together with Turkey, the center of world politics.* This is the aim of Turkish foreign policy and we will achieve this. In order to provide regional and global peace, *we will reintegrate with the Balkan region, Middle East and Caucasus, not only for ourselves, but also for the whole humanity.*²⁰

This discourse is an important indication of how the JDP tries to construct Turkey as *primus inter pares* without reflecting on how this would be seen by other Balkan communities. The development of this discourse is fed by Turkey's rather consolidated relations with the

Euro-Atlantic structures. As an example Turkey, together with Greece, has been among the oldest NATO members and gave its utmost support to the membership of the regional countries to it with the belief that this would contribute to regional peace and stability. In addition, Turkey has an association agreement with the Union since 1963 and because of the Customs Union since 1996 its economic integration with the EU is well advanced than many countries. The fact that Turkey could to a great extent bypass the 2008 economic crisis that struck many European economies has been due to the reforms it implemented since 2001. That shows us that the leadership role that Turkey tries to cultivate in the Balkans partly stems from its economic successes and institutional partnership with the European institutions. Without the European anchor Turkish leaders would not be in a position to promote Turkey as an example and call on other neighbouring countries to rally around it to play a greater role in global affairs. Thanks to the democratisation process Turkish leaders at various global fora could recommend the neighbouring countries to follow the path of democratisation and secularism.²¹

Although Turkish decision makers highlighted the regional importance of EU membership, as the continent's economic crisis deepened and the EU's enlargement fatigue increased, Turkey's political elite brought forward discussions as to the future of the Balkans in European and in global structures. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated that although all the regional countries aspire to be part of the EU, nothing is sure for the future due to its problems. Hence, he recommended that regional countries begin discussing what to do if the crisis spreads in the EU further. Considering different regional constellations, like North or Central Europe, Davutoğlu argued that Balkan countries could manage to establish a different basin in order not to be marginalised within the EU.²² This is an important narrative of Turkey's aspirations for a leadership role among the Balkan countries even if they all became full EU members in the future. This new leadership narrative was strengthened by the new issues and instruments that Turkish foreign policy acquired throughout its Europeanisation process. The next section will elaborate on how the decision makers changed the agenda of foreign policy and what kind of new instruments they started using in the neighbouring area.

New issues and instruments: Impact of adaptation or socialisation?

As stated above, the 1990s led to a political-security nexus in Turkey's policies towards the Balkans. However, as the conflicts ended through international interventions and the Western Balkan states embarked on the thorny road of state-building (or re-building) while becoming outwardly western-oriented, Turkey also faced new prospects in its Europeanisation process. In this new period, both Turkey and its Balkan neighbours came to share a common Western foreign policy vision for the first time in the region's modern history.

Benefitting from its Europeanisation process, decision makers in Ankara started to place more emphasis on cultural, religious and economic ties and the focus of the foreign policy started to focus on the region's human capital of the region. When the political-security nexus dominated relations, state-to-state diplomacy and Westphalian relations dominated regional interactions. However, beginning from the 2000s, the JDP started to invest more in human relations and developed Turkey's soft power credentials. An important indicator how EU policies were emulated is the initiative that Turkey to establish a visa-free area in the neighbouring regions including Western Balkans to create a Turkish style Schengen

area. As Davutoğlu himself stated Turkey started to employ European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in the neighbourhood²³ and tried to achieve maximum cooperation with all regional countries.²⁴ Furthermore, Turkish decision makers used the EU discourse of good neighbourly relations to try to create an area of peace and stability around Turkey.²⁵ Turkey's regional activism should be understood within the framework of the power vacuum existing in the Balkans, mainly because the US and the EU did not pay great attention to solving the regional problems since they had different priorities in recent years.²⁶ Benefitting from the multi-dimensional Western examples of foreign policy implementation, Ankara's efforts have been concentrated on the following fields: economy, language, religion, and education.

As Turkey's economic structures became compatible with Western standards, Turkish foreign policy makers started using economic tools reminiscent of the Özal era. During Özal's incumbency, first as prime minister and then as president, businessmen started to be along on foreign visits. Though that practice was suspended after Özal, the JDP relaunched it. As Kemal Kirişçi stated it, Turkey started acting as a 'trading state'.²⁷ In initiating the practice of economic diplomacy, Turkey tried to establish regional integration schemes as Davutoğlu repeatedly stated. This idea of creating close regional cooperation with the neighbouring regions is very similar to the ENP. During the JDP's rule Turkey's trade relationship with the Balkans increased six times from 2,9 billion USD in 2000 to 17,5 USD in 2012, though still constituting only a very small portion of country's total trade volume.²⁸

Until recently the cultural component of foreign policy was neglected by the Turkish political elite, especially the issue of language. The Yunus Emre Cultural Center was established in 2007 with 12 of its cultural centers in six Balkan countries so far. As it has 34 cultural centers in total, it can be seen that about a third of its cultural centers have been established in the Balkan region. According to Davutoğlu, Turkish diplomacy can not be regarded as being based on one dimension, one geography, one region; on the contrary, it should proceed towards all geographies that Turkish geographic depth allows it, towards all nations that the country's historical depth reaches.²⁹ The foreign minister regards all former Ottoman geographies as 'geographies of heart' ('gönül coğrafyası'), hence establishing an emotional link between Turkey and these territories. The fact that Davutoğlu likens these initiatives for cultural diplomacy as a kind of Turkish Renaissance is an important indicator of how the Western effect has been felt on Turkey's recent focus on cultural policies.³⁰

It is important to note that there is no other country in the region that focuses on cultural diplomacy to the degree that Turkey does. The mushrooming of Yunus Emre cultural centres throughout has led to the emergence of the Turkish language as *lingua franca* in the Balkans,³¹ as well as Turkish culture as *cultura franca*. Yunus Emre centers, like their Western counterparts are not just places where Turkish language has been taught, but they are also hosting events for seminars of prominent Turkish authors. Turkish art courses like ebru are offered and some centers have been promoting the use of Turkish by offering it as foreign language elective courses at secondary schools. As a prime example, during the academic year of 2012-2013, 5,332 Bosnian students reportedly took Turkish as a foreign language course in the cantons of Zenica-Doboj, Hersek-Neretva and Bosansko-Posavinski.³² Thus, inspired by other EU member states, Turkey increasingly began using westernised foreign policy tools during the accession process.

Another dimension of Turkey's investment in the human capacity of the Balkans is the Project of Turkey scholarships organized by the newly established Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities. Although Ankara started offering scholarships in the

early 1990s, during those years these scholarships were restricted mainly to the students of the Turkic origin from the newly independent Caucasian and Central Asian countries following the Soviet Union's dissolution. Considering that in 2011, 721 students from the Balkan countries received a scholarship to pursue their university degrees at Turkish universities, this is the most comprehensive regional scholarship program. The human dimension of Turkish diplomacy already bore fruit as graduates from Turkey rose to higher positions in their home countries.³³ As Davutoğlu stated, students graduating from Turkish universities are seen as Turkey's honorary envoys.³⁴

TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) has been another institution that has increased its activities in the region in the recent years. Established in 1992 with the basic aim of providing aid to the Turkic countries of the ex-Soviet geography, it has then then extended its activities to other regions. The number of its program coordination offices has increased from 12 in 2002 to 33 in 2012. In the Balkans it has mainly been instrumental in the restoration of Ottoman buildings, providing various kinds of help to educational and health institutions, giving support to building various infrastructures, like transmitting drinking water. It also supports various conferences especially with regard to the Ottoman legacy. It has been allocating about 18,5 per cent of its aid to the Balkans. Three of the most aid recipient countries are the regional countries, namely Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia. As it has been declared in the official report of TİKA, it helps to consolidate Turkey to implement its responsibilities with regards to international issues in accordance with its historical character and virtuous position.³⁵ Hence, TİKA's activities in the region ranging from restoration of schools and museums to providing technical equipment to hospitals help to increase not only sphere of influence of Turkey, but also contribute to Ankara's visibility by the local populations and distinguish it from other regional countries that could not afford such an extensive aid program. As an institution working under the authority of the Prime Ministry it is one of those foreign policy instruments dependent on the Prime Minister.

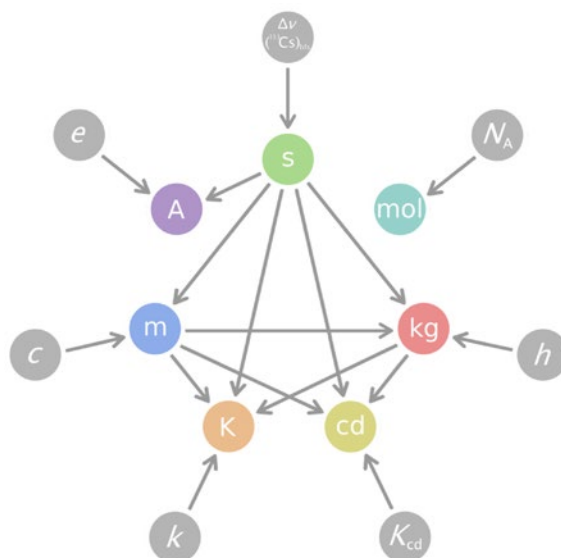
As Turkish foreign policy decision makers started to make more references to Ottoman history and Islam, the role of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) increased in Turkish foreign policy. In addition to the continuation of regular meetings of the Eurasian Islamic Summit (Şura) comprising of Islamic leaders from Eurasia, including the Balkans, the Diyanet started to organize the (annual) Summit of Balkan Muslim Leaders since 2007. It seems that the Diyanet has been influential in spreading the Turkish version of Islam to former Ottoman territories. According to Öktem it can be considered to be the biggest and most centralised Islamic organisation in the world, comparable to the Vatican.³⁶ The statement by former state minister for the Diyanet Mehmet Aydın's following statement is an important indication of how the Diyanet took on an increasingly global role: '...the Diyanet's international responsibility is no less important (and difficult) than its responsibility in Turkey.'³⁷

Another element of non-traditional foreign policy has been media. The opening of TRT-Avaz that regularly broadcasts in languages of Turkey's near geography as well as the establishment of the Sarajevo Office of Turkey's official Anatolian news agency signal Ankara's quest for more dialogue via media. These media contacts have been cultivated by mayors of cities or towns hosting an important number of Balkan immigrants which the following section will address as well as looking at the role of other non-state actors.

Table 1. Antibacterial, antifungal (disk diffusion assay), and anti-*Artemia* (toxicity assay) activities of compound **7** and crude extract from the endophytic fungus *F. proliferatum* 749A7b.

	Organism	Crude coloured fraction	Compound 7
Bacteria	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	20	11
	<i>Bacillus subtilis</i>	11	0
	<i>Escherichia coli</i>	12	0
Micro fungi	<i>Candida albicans</i>	11	0
	<i>Mucor miehei</i>	11	0
Micro green algae	<i>Chlorella vulgaris</i>	0	0
	<i>Chlorella sorokiniana</i>	0	0
	<i>Scenedesmus subspicatus</i>	0	0
Plant pathogen fungi	<i>Pythium ultimum</i>	20	0
	<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i>	16	11
	<i>Aphanomyces cochlioides</i>	14	10
Brine shrimp	<i>Artemia salina</i>	0	0

Notes: Disk diffusion assay: inhibition zone diameter given in mm; assay carried out at 400 µg/paper disk for crude extract and 40 µg/paper disk for isolated compound (Compound **7**); inhibition zone diameter ≥ 20 mm: high activity sample; paper disk diameter 9 mm. Toxicity assay: mortality given in %; assay carried out at 100 µg/mL for crude extract and 10 µg/mL for isolated compound; 100% mortality: high activity sample.

**Figure 1.** Dimensional constants in SI units. © User: Olegaas/Wikimedia Commons/CC-BY-SA-2.0.

New actors in Turkey's Balkan ties: Increasing role of non-state actors

Kirişçi has provided important examples showing how Turkey's foreign policy has been increasingly transnationalising in the recent years through the increasing role of non-state actors.³⁸ Municipalities, business communities, non-governmental organisations, soap operas as well as individuals, have become important actors in Turkey's Balkan ties.

Municipalities that are home to an important number of Balkan origin Turkish citizens are increasingly active in building or expanding ties with Balkanic neighbours as witnessed in recent years. Sister city projects, Ramadan cultural activities, media dialogues, academic

conferences, and frequent mutual visits all show how Turkey's official foreign policy towards the Balkans has been reflected at the municipality level.

The JDP, relaunching Özal's practice of taking businesspeople to the plane of politicians, has encouraged the Turkish business community to increase trade relationships and foreign investments. Thus, trade with as well as investment in Balkan countries witnessed an important rise as shown above.³⁹

The increasing role of non-state actors corresponds to Turkey's official 'EU-isation' after the Helsinki Summit. As it is the common practice of European countries to take the attitudes of different actors into consideration in formulating foreign policy, Turkey has also created the necessary environment for the interplay of different actors.

Limitations and issues in Turkey's 'Europeanised' Balkans policy in its de-europeanised national context

Though a certain level of Europeanisation of Turkish foreign policy has been clear as explained above, it can be argued that it mainly corresponds to the downloading of European instruments and practices and not elite socialisation. Turkey's promotion of itself as *primus inter pares*⁴⁰ based on its geography and history rather than on democratic credentials or human development levels, is a problematic conception of its role in the neighbouring regions since it has the tendency to overlook the different perceptions of the regional actors. There are four substantial limitations of Turkey's Balkan policies: too much emphasis on religion and history, overlooking the perceptions and misconceptions of regional actors, exaggeration of its own power, and its own de-europeanising tendencies in domestic politics. It is worth explaining each of these issues briefly.

First of all, as thoroughly explained in his book *Strategic Depth*, Davutoğlu's foreign policy is based on the understanding of uniqueness of the Turkey's geography and history which led to resuming the neo-Ottomanisation tendency of the Özal era. This understanding does not conform to the understanding of European foreign policy. There are circumstances in which the EU tools have been instrumentalised for some member countries to further their relations with their former colonies but the discourse of 'reintegrating' those regions does not have a precedent in the EU.

In a similar way, Turkish foreign policy makers did not take into consideration how their rhetoric and attitudes have been perceived or misperceived by other regional actors. This varied greatly from one country to another. For instance, although it has cultivated friendly ties with the Bosniaks, its relationship with the *Republika Srpska* followed a totally different pattern.

Another issue is Turkey's self-exaggeration of its own power potential in neighbouring regions. The suggestion that chaos would have reigned if Turkey had not started mediation initiatives between Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia does not correspond to reality.⁴¹

Last, but not the least, the period since 2011 has witnessed increasing authoritarian tendencies of the JDP government. The increasing number of arrest of journalists, limitations to freedom of assembly and expression, interference in private lives of individuals, otherisation of those of different opinion than the ruling elite, the creation of a prejudiced version of 'Westernism' by reproducing conspiracy theories have all been symptoms of Turkey's path from procedural democracy to de-democratisation. The main challenge for Turkey is whether it can move from procedural democracy to substantive democracy, as

its ability to become an influential regional power depends on whether it can manage to institutionalise its democratic structures.⁴²

Interestingly enough, when the JDP's elites faced corruption charges one after another in late 2013 and early 2014, the support coming from the Balkans was used to justify their authority in the national context. As the Prime Minister Erdoğan and several ministers faced increasing number of corruption charges, they got various kinds of support from different levels from the region. Political leaders, leaders of the Islamic community, Muslim communities and Turkish communities living in different Balkan countries extended their support to the Turkish government. As the member of the Bosnia Herzegovina presidency Bakir Izetbegovic called Erdoğan to state that he was supporting Turkish government and 'brother Turkish nation', the leader of the Montenegro Islamic Community Rifat Feyzic claimed that Erdoğan was not only the prime minister of Turkish people, he was also the leader of whole Islamic world.⁴³ In a reaction to the judicial process initiated against the political leaders of the JDP; in all mosques of Montenegro and Sandzak as well as Gazi Hüsrev Begova mosque in Sarajevo there were prayers on Friday in support of Erdoğan government.⁴⁴ This regional support has been utilised by Erdoğan at various platforms as exemplified by his sentence that 'prayers of Bosnia would be enough for us.'⁴⁵ It is also noteworthy that just before his balcony speech after his electoral victory at the local elections he contacted the rallying masses in Skopje and gave them the message that 'I would like to thank my brothers in Skopje for sharing this excitement in reaction to the politics of lie, slander, blackmail and montage.' His reference and thanks to the supporting groups in various Balkan countries, like Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo at the balcony speech has been another symbol of how his external support has been used in order to legitimise his authority at the domestic level.

Conclusion

Turkey's EU accession process contributed to changing its foreign policy tools as it started using economic and cultural soft power instruments to a greater extent. In addition, the fact that Turkey has been among the most Europeanised among other southeastern European states contributed to its promotion of *primus inter pares*. In other words, Ankara tried to use its European credentials as a means of legitimising of its own policies.⁴⁶ But the fact that Turkey could carry out 'shallow Europeanisation'⁴⁷ showed its impact on its foreign policy. This article showed that the logic of consequences has driven the path of Turkey's Balkan ties, as seen in its overlooking different perceptions in the region both of the Ottoman past and contemporary Turkey itself. Terzi stated:

Turkey has been speaking the European language so well as to become irritating at times. But for sure this is a language well learned by now, even though it may not be used to serve the same interests as defined by the EU countries.⁴⁸

This article argued that there are four main limitations of Turkey's Balkan policies: too much focus on religion and history, ignoring perceptions and misperceptions of regional actors; exaggeration of its own power and its own de-Europeanising tendencies in national politics. It is also shown that regional actors whose Europeanisation path is not smooth may benefit from the instrumentalisation of EU tools and discourses, but they can benefit from it for their own interests. It also showed how ties with the Balkans were used in internal Turkish politics by the policy-makers.

Disclosure statement

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Notes

1. 'Dik Dur Eğilme Mamuşa Seninle' [Stand upright, Do not Shift, Mamuşa is with You], *Radikal*, 1 April 2014.
2. 'Erdoğan'ın 3. Balkon Konuşmasının Tam Metni: 74 Milyonun Hükümeti Olacağız' [Full Text of Balcony Speech of Erdoğan: We will be the Government of 74 million], <http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdoganin-3-balkon-konusmasinin-tam-metni-74-milyonun-hukumeti-olacagiz,150677> (accessed 25 May 2014).
3. The concept of 'Brusselisation' has been borrowed from R. Wong, 'The Europeanization of Foreign Policy', in C. Hill and M. Smith (eds), *International Relations and European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, p. 160.
4. T. A. Börzel and T. Risse, 'When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change', *European Integration Online Papers*, 4 (15), 2000, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/pdf/2000-015.pdf> (accessed 26 May 2014).
5. T. A. Börzel, 'Comparative Regionalism: European Integration and Beyond', in W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B. A. Simmons (eds), *Handbook of International Relations*, 2nd Edition, Sage, London, 2013, p. 520.
6. Wong, op. cit, p. 151.
7. Wong, op. cit, p. 157.
8. There have been exceptions to the desecuritized understanding of security within the EU circles. One predominant and long-lasting exception is the case of migration. Migration, especially since the early 1990's has been a highly securitized issue and the results of the elections for the European Parliament in May 2014 are a clear reflection of how the mainstream politicians in the member countries and at the EU level instrumentalised immigration as a possible threat to the European political and economic structures. On that issue see B. Demirtaş-Coşkun, 'Migration and Europe: Toward a More Securitized Policy?', *Insight Turkey*, 8(3), 2006, pp. 5-15.
9. M. Aydın and S. A. Açıkmüşe, 'Europeanization through EU Conditionality: Understanding the New Era in Turkish Foreign Policy', *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 9(3), 2007, pp. 263-274.
10. M. M. Baç, 'Turkey's Political Reforms and the Impact of the European Union', *South European Society and Politics*, 10(1), 2005, p. 26. It is worth noting that the political demilitarisation attempts of the JDP has not been accompanied by societal demilitarisation. On this issue see A. Kadioğlu, 'Limits of Conservative Change: Reform Choreography of the Justice and Development Party' in K. Öktem, A. Kadioğlu, M. Karlı (eds), *Another Empire? A Decade of Foreign Policy under the Justice and Development Party*, İstanbul Bilgi University Press, İstanbul, 2012, p. 54.
11. For a comprehensive analysis of desecuritisation process of Turkey's Cyprus policies see A. Kaliber, 'Securing the Ground Through Securitized 'Foreign' Policy: The Cyprus Case', *Security Dialogue*, 36(3), 2005, pp. 319-337.
12. Birgül Demirtaş-Coşkun (ed.), *Türkiye-Yunanistan: Eski Sorunlar, Yeni Arayışlar*, Ankara, ASAM, 2002.
13. Speech by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Why the EU Needs Turkey', University of Oxford, 28 May 2004, <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/docs/Erdogan1.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2014).
14. K. Kirişci, 'The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 40, 2009, pp. 29-56.
15. A. Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth, Turkey's International Position], Küre, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 316-317.
16. Ahmet Davutoğlu, *A Forward Looking Vision for the Balkans*, Center for Strategic Research, Turkish Foreign Ministry, October 2011, <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/>

- vision_paper_en1.pdf (accessed on 16 May 2014). It should be noted that this is the first vision paper written by Davutoğlu. It has been translated into four Balkan languages as well.
17. Ibid., p. 7. Emphasis is added by the author.
 18. A. Güney and N. Mandacı, 'The Meta-Geography of the Middle East and North Africa in Turkey's New Geopolitical Imagination', *Security Dialogue*, 44(5-6), 2013, p. 439.
 19. M. Yeşiltaş, 'The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy', *Turkish Studies*, 14(4), 2013, p. 671.
 20. Davutoğlu's address at the Conference on 'Ottoman Legacy and Muslim Communities in the Balkans Today', Sarajevo, 16 October 2009, [http://cns.ba/docs/osmansko%20naslijede%20i%20muslimanske%20zajednice%20Balkana%20danas%20\(zbornik%20radova\).pdf](http://cns.ba/docs/osmansko%20naslijede%20i%20muslimanske%20zajednice%20Balkana%20danas%20(zbornik%20radova).pdf) (Emphasis is added by the author.) (accessed on 21 February 2012).
 21. See Erdoğan's speech in Egypt and Gül's speech at the Islamic Cooperation Organization. 'Erdoğan'a Laiklik Tepkisi' [Secularist Reaction to Erdoğan], 15 September 2011, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25250456> (accessed on 13 January 2014); 'Tahran'da Demokrasi Mesajı Veren Gül' [Gül Giving Democracy Message in Tehran], *Zaman*, 29 May 2003.
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 25. Ö. Terzi, *The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2010, p. 136.
 26. O. Anastasakis, 'Turkey's Assertive Presence in Southeast Europe: Between Identity Politics and Elite Pragmatism' in Öktem, Kadioğlu, Karlı (eds), op. cit., p. 202; R. H. Linden and Y. İrepoğlu, 'Turkey and the Balkans: New Forms of Political Community', *Turkish Studies*, 14 (2), 2013, p. 238. For an analysis of how the suspension of EU's enlargement policy affected Turkish international relations see B. Rumelili, 'Turkey: Identity, Foreign Policy, and Socialization in a Post-Enlargement Europe', *European Integration*, 33(2), 2011, p. 246.
 27. Kirişçi, 'The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy', op. cit.
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 30. Ibid., p. 14.

31. K. Öktem, 'Between Emigration, De-Islamization and the Nation-State: Muslim Communities in the Balkans', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 11(2), 2011, pp. 151-169.
32. Sarajevo Yunus Emre Cultural Center website, <http://yee.org.tr/bh-saraybosna/tr/yetem/secmeli-yabanci-dil-10>, <http://yee.org.tr/bh-saraybosna/tr/yetem/secmeli-yabanci-dil-10> (accessed on 1 June 2014).
33. As recent examples, Former Foreign Minister of Albania, Aldo Bumci, Vice Prime Minister of Kosovo Hajredin Kuci, and Head of Constitutional Court of Kosovo Enver Hasani have been graduates from Turkish universities.
34. Davutoğlu's speech at the Ambassador's Conference, 2014.
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37. M. Aydın, 'Diyabet's Global Vision', *The Muslim World*, 2008, p. 168.
38. K. Kirişçi, 'Turkey's Engagement with Its Neighborhood: A 'Synthetic' and Multidimensional Look at Turkey's Foreign Policy Transformation', *Turkish Studies*, 13 (3), 2012, pp. 1-23.
39. There are academic studies arguing that Turkey's economic diplomacy can not be called a full-scale achievement because all its potential has not been used and current increase can be explained by global and regional trends, rather than JDP's successful instrumentalisation of economic diplomacy. Kutlay, op cit.; Karlı, op. cit.
40. Güney and Mandacı, op. cit., p. 439.
41. Davutoğlu's speech at the TGNA, http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak_sd.birlesim_baslangic?P4=20715&P5=B&web_user_id=12489061&PAGE1=91&PAGE2=92, 23. Term, 4. Legislative Year, 129. Session, 6 July 2010. (accessed on 4 May 2014).
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43. 'İzzetbegović'ten Erdoğan'a destek' [Support from İzzetbegović to Erdoğan], <http://yenisafak.com.tr/politika-haber/izzetbegovicten-erdogana-destek-7.1.2014-602541>; 'Bosna, Sancak, Karadağ'dan Erdoğan'a destek' [Support from Bosnia, Sandjak and Montenegro to Erdoğan], <http://www.habercim19.com/gundem/bosna-sancak-karadagdan-erdogana-destek-h9378.html> (accessed on 5 May 2014).
44. Ibid.
45. Erdoğan continued his speech by referring to some other ex-Ottoman cities with Muslim majorities: 'Prayers of Damascus would be enough for us as well as prayers of Cairo and Baghdad.' See <http://yenisafak.com.tr/video-galeri/bize-bosnanin-kahirenin-dualari-yeter/12351> (accessed on 7 May 2014).
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Notes to contributors

Birgül Demirtaş is an associate professor of International Relations, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara, Turkey. She is the deputy editor of the Journal of Perceptions and serves as assistant editor for the Journal of Uluslararası İlişkiler (International Relations).