

# The European Crisis and Turkey's Unpredictable Role in the Balkans

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**ABSTRACT** *This paper discusses Turkey's role in the Balkans as part of the broader narrative of European integration. 'Europeanization' in the early 2000s was a political platform that was instrumental in allowing Turkey to forge a peace between the country's established elite and moderate political Islam. In the context of Turkey's alienation from the project of European integration, the relationship between Europe and Turkey is becoming narrowly transactional and there is no longer a 'community building' dynamic. Instead, the region emerges as a canvas of competing influences and mutually exclusive choices between Ankara and Brussels that ultimately contribute to 'Balkanization.'*

Europe remains a normative superpower,<sup>1</sup> setting standards and shaping political norms well beyond its member states. Even amid an undeniable crisis of the project of European integration, both within member states and in the regions around the EU, the functionalist premise still appears valid. Integration in one policy area creates a spill-over effect causing member states and associated partners to coordinate policy in another, paving the way for an ever-closer union. Association Agreements, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs), and a Customs Union area create a space of free trade around Europe that has a profound effect in

Europe, well beyond the EU. However, as the Brexit process suggests, functional interdependence does not determine political cohesion, especially in an increasingly multipolar world order. While Turkey is in many respects a European economy, the fact that Ankara's prospects for EU membership are dimming –along with those of the Western Balkan states– changes the frame of political engagement, providing scope for colliding or even zero-sum encounters.

For more than a decade, there has been a Turkish 'post-Ottoman' vision of the Balkans that was not in conflict with Europeanization per se. Turkey's ambition in the region to stand out

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as a protector of Muslim minorities and renew its political and economic bonds with the region could be enveloped into a greater narrative of regional integration. However, when signaled out as a 'European other,' Turkey is often driven to make the Balkans the testing ground of a more zero-sum framing of diplomatic relations with Brussels. This article makes the constructivist argument that Turkey's perception of 'national interests' in the Balkans makes part of a 'mutually constitutive' dynamic between Europe and Turkey. As far as Turkey is not part of the community-building process, it may be seen as part of an alternative cluster of bilateral relationships that undermines the narrative of functional interdependence.

### What Europeanization?

One should not confuse functional linkage with structurally enduring relations. A policy-by-policy process of integration does not tell the whole story of European integration.

Enlargement does not merely 'assimilate' states in a rule-based political order but also causes the EU to reflect on its role, its mission, and its institutional apparatus. With the British, Irish, and Danish accessions, the EU moved to create a European Regional Fund and to reform the common agricultural policy. The arrival of Greece in 1981 and of Spain and Portugal in 1986 led to initiatives for a substantial cohesion policy, as a precondition of realizing the Single Market and guaranteeing democracy. But faced with the biggest wave of enlargement in 2004 –the so-called big bang expansion– Europeanization became a reform project.

Fifteen years following the big bang enlargement, the EU has successfully addressed the fear that consensus-driven bureaucratic processes might become dysfunctional. As newcomers came into the EU, political stakeholders were quickly assimilated. Parties found their place in the European Parliament, in the Council of Ministers member-states joined time-tested alliances, and the Commissioners empowered by adequate technocratic support rose to the challenge. Where concerns persist and have in fact intensified, is the ability of EU institutions to effectively monitor the process of member-state-building on a micro-governance level, where concerns are raised about corruption, rule of law structures, tax evasion, and the like.<sup>2</sup>

Given that failure, the promise of EU membership has lost much of its credibility both for Turkey and

other Balkans states. Recently, the chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia, Ivan Krastev, made a useful distinction between ‘pessimists’ and ‘optimists’ on the subject of EU membership: “optimists believe Turkey will join during the Albanian EU presidency, while pessimists believe Albania will join during the Turkish EU presidency.”<sup>3</sup> In the current context, to suggest that the EU suffers from “enlargement fatigue” is an understatement. In the EU-Western Balkans Summit of May 2018, in Sofia, Chancellor Angela Merkel offered assurances that Balkan countries retain their entitlement to EU membership, as promised in the Thessaloniki Council of June 2013. However, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, was careful not to overstate the “unrealistic” perspective of fast track membership.<sup>4</sup> In June 2018, France and the Netherlands blocked the opening of EU accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania, calling for more reforms that would bolster the rule of law and transparency.<sup>5</sup>

The jury is still out on whether it is Turkey and the Balkans that are failing to reform, or the EU that lacks the political resolve to drive the transitional process. What is clear from cases such as the Dutch referendum against Ukraine’s Association Agreement<sup>6</sup> and the UK’s 2016 Leave campaign is that enlargement has become a heated debate often framed by anti-immigration rhetoric. The EU’s consensus-driven policy framework undermines the credibility of the enlargement process, a weakness that

was already identified since the signature and ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

As the European sovereign debt crisis was unfolding in 2009, President Sarkozy underlined the need for the union to act as a single international actor, by extending the principle of unanimity in the Council to qualified majority voting, increasing the scope for co-decision between the European Council and the European Parliament, reducing the number of Commissioners, creating the post of the President of the European Council and creating a single and empowered office of an EU foreign minister. The underlying theme was that consensus was a fragile foundation for an ever-growing union and there was increasing demand for majority-driven decision making. He referred explicitly to enlargement: “No Lisbon Treaty, no enlargement... I would find it very strange for a Europe of 27 that has trouble agreeing on workable institutions to agree on adding a 28<sup>th</sup>, a 29<sup>th</sup>, a 30<sup>th</sup>, a 31<sup>st</sup>, which would definitely make things worse.”<sup>7</sup>

After a decade of economic crisis across the EU, the term ‘enlargement fatigue’ often goes hand-in-hand with the admission that Europe has lost confidence in the combined dynamic of an ever-encompassing and ever-closer union. In the Sofia Summit of 2018, EU leaders narrowed the discussion to a transactional agenda. There was a focus on the need to ensure that ISIS fighters returning from Syria do not go on to pursue terrorist activity in Europe. There was great



Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu (C), EU Neighborhood Policy Minister Hahn (R), High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mogherini (L) hold a joint press conference within "Turkey-EU High-Level Political Dialogue Meeting" in Ankara, on November 22, 2018. CEM ÖZDEL / AA Photo

interest in ensuring that Turkey and Balkan states continue to disrupt the flow of migration into Western Europe. There were extensive discussions on how Balkan states would be assisted for their cooperation. However, there was little appetite to discuss enlargement.

"I don't want a Balkans that turns toward Turkey or Russia; but I don't want a Europe that is functioning with difficulty as 28 and tomorrow as 27, would decide that we can continue to gallop off, to be tomorrow 30 or 32, with the same rules," French President Emmanuel Macron told the European Parliament in April 2018. "I do not think 2025 is a realistic date for the EU enlargement; more important is the progress that has been achieved by the candidates," said Chancellor Angela Merkel on May 17, in Sofia.<sup>8</sup> In parallel, Washington's commitment to the Euro-Atlantic "community" is waning.

Addressing the World Economic Forum in January 2019, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made clear that pre-existing alliances and institutions must serve national interests. "Nations matter," Pompeo professed, making clear that the United States stands critically against globalization.<sup>9</sup> That statement was consistent with a long-standing skepticism expressed by Washington both vis-à-vis the United Nations and NATO. At times, this criticism against international organizations is focused on issues, such as member state defense expenditure, in which Turkey stands out as one of the five to eight countries that consistently meet the two percent of GDP threshold set by allies. But, this does not mean that Turkey sees eye to eye with Washington.

Washington objects to Turkey's S-400 deal with Russia while Ankara vehemently condemns Washington's strategic alliance with the PKK's Syrian

affiliate (People's Protection Units, YPG).<sup>10</sup> But perhaps, the most bitter standoff between the two NATO allies is over Turkish demands for the extradition of Fetullah Gülen, which Ankara linked to the release of the Pastor Andrew Brunson.<sup>11</sup> In August 2018, President Erdoğan went as far as to threaten that Turkey may look beyond NATO for partners.<sup>12</sup> That is not the first time this threat has been put on the table. In August 2016, President Erdoğan wondered “what kind of strategic partners are we” while in a much-cited interview with *Hürriyet*, retired Rear Admiral Cem Gürdeniz suggested that there was a strong movement in the Armed Forces that views Turkish interests as more aligned to “Eurasia.”<sup>13</sup> Setting a strictly national foreign policy trajectory that prioritizes national defense capability, Turkey appears willing to challenge NATO at the “molecular level” of military interoperability.<sup>14</sup> The aftermath of the coup attempt has also seen European Parliament insistence on freezing the process of enlargement with Turkey. On April 26, 2017, members of the European Parliament called on the European Union's Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn to seek alternatives to Turkey's accession. Opening the debate, European Parliament President Antonio Tajani insisted that “Europe is not an Islamophobic continent and is not closing the door on the Turkish people,” but he insisted that Turkey must respond to human rights criticism. The leader of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group, Syed Kamall, called for “a more difficult relation-

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ship” with Turkey where cooperation would continue but “the distant goal of EU membership” would not be on the table. In October 2018, the European Parliament voted to withhold €70 million in pre-accession funding even as member states and the European Commission are trying to normalize relations with Turkey.

### **Turkey as a ‘European Other’**

It is not accurate to suggest that Euro-Turkish relations have had a difficult two years. Indeed, the question of Turkish EU-membership has been central to a broader discussion about the nature of the union. Today it is hard to believe that it was Britain which historically championed enlargement, especially the Turkish candidacy. In 1991, Prime Minister John Major made the case for a Community to “open to all the democratic countries of Europe.”<sup>15</sup> The ‘wider,

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not deeper' mantra was consistent with the idea that enlargement focused minds on the single market. "We shall put in place the last measures needed to complete the single market—a single market that will extend way beyond the borders of the Twelve, even before the new member states join," Major told the House of Commons in 1991.

Fifteen years later, the *Economist* argued that EU enlargement towards Turkey but also the Balkans and even Ukraine was "a natural drive" that no one had the political capital to delay.<sup>16</sup> Given a long British tradition of spearheading the drive for Turkish EU membership, it is ironic that the 2016 Leave campaign raised the specter of imminent Turkish membership to the EU to heighten the fear of "the floodgates of immigration,"<sup>17</sup> while pointing to the exit.<sup>18</sup> On the other side of the argument, the British prime minister was warning public opinion that Turkish imminent EU membership was an idle threat, that is, a lie that people should not take

seriously. "I really feel strongly about this, as people are getting through their letter boxes leaflets from Leave saying 'Turkey's going to join the EU' – not true," said David Cameron.<sup>19</sup>

Anti-enlargement and anti-immigration rhetoric have always gone hand-in-hand. President Nicolas Sarkozy often blended anti-Turkish with anti-enlargement rhetoric,<sup>20</sup> presumably to shield the French centre-right from its continuous leakage of voters to the Front National. "I want to say that Europe must give itself borders, that not all countries have a vocation to become members of Europe, beginning with Turkey which has no place inside the European Union," Sarkozy said during the 2007 Presidential campaign.<sup>21</sup> That Turkey's membership of the EU is "unthinkable" has been a consistent feature of his political message. Chancellor Merkel too did not shy away from questioning Turkey's entitlement to an EU membership during her first term.<sup>22</sup>

Part of this language of Europe's essential incompatibility with Turkey has its roots in a long tradition of colonial and post-colonial discourse. A moment of clarity emerged in 2004, when the U.S. President George W. Bush stated that Turkey belongs in the EU and that Europe is "not the exclusive club of a single religion." A day later, he received the answer from President Jacques Chirac, which went as follows:

If President Bush really said that in the way that I read, then not only did he

go too far, but he went into territory that isn't his (...) It is not his purpose and his goal to give any advice to the EU, and in this area it was a bit as if I were to tell Americans how they should handle their relationship with Mexico.<sup>23</sup>

Chirac's allusion to Turkey as the Mexico of Europe brings light to another media frame that informs European public opinion. A few decades of constructivist literature amply demonstrate that opinion poll respondents address questions in a manner consistent to their emotionally significant reference-group, which is often the nation. In this context, it is anticipated that migrants are conceived by Western European constituencies as a threat to collective national goods, such as education, jobs, and welfare.

While the 'taking our jobs' cliché was extremely relevant for public opinion in the countdown and the aftermath of the 2004 big bang enlargement towards Eastern Europe, the prospect of welcoming Turkish citizens seems to evoke unique resistance. Turks are seen as particularly threatening to in-group symbols and myths –religion, culture, and way of life– especially in countries that have experienced large migration waves in the 1960s. For example, the least negative public opinion attitude towards Turkish EU accession is observed in Spain, while the largest opposition is observed in Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands.<sup>24</sup> Europe's crisis heightens anti-Turkish prejudice, just as sovereigntist, anti-immigration, and

anti-Islam parties gain political influence. In sum, the question of Turkey is not only polarizing but also a rallying flag for Europe's sovereigntist right.

### Turkey as a 'European Insider'

To reduce the effect of Europeanization in Turkey to the prospect of imminent EU membership is naïve and perhaps shallow. For Turkey, being part of Europe has been an iconoclastic movement as old as the Republic itself. The status of the army as the guardian of the constitution and guarantor of the Republic's western trajectory is not merely symbolic. Turkey has a long history of military interventions in politics –1960, 1971, 1980-1983, 1997– which, rather than resulting in long-term direct military rule, were usually short periods of institutional reform followed by a dictated transition to civilian government. This institutional veto power was imbued with a sense of cultural significance as it was almost always recognized in the name of preserving the course of a certain kind of Turkey.

Prior to the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the Turkish Republic, the very term 'Turk' was a diminutive adjective referring to the Muslim and largely illiterate peasants of Anatolia.<sup>25</sup> Turkish nationalism essentially invested this term with racial and national significance. But, the dual significance of the term was persevered, haunting modern Turkish society. However, in the late 1990s, and early 2000s

the interchangeable use of the term ‘Europeanization’ with ‘modernization’ in Turkey provided a window of opportunity with domestic political resonance. By engaging with the EU, there were hopes that the dual significance of the term ‘Turk’ could achieve a viable synthesis.

Ankara implemented a series of political reforms<sup>26</sup> paving the way for the Customs Union in December 1995.<sup>27</sup> But when the Turkish military dictated the resignation of the Islamic government in 1997, the process of EU negotiations came to a standstill and moderate political Islam realized that Europe was not merely a project that should be of interest to the ‘other half of Turkey.’ Gaining the status of an EU member state in the early 2000s provided the moderate Islamic AK Party movement with a legitimating platform for the modernization or ‘Europeanization’ of civil-military relations.

The AK Party government more than welcomed EU demands for civilian control over the military, the diminution and reform of the National Security Council, the reform of the judiciary, and the reform of the office of the President. Erdoğan’s first government set out to align Turkey with European rule of law standards, with Islam but not against modernity, and perhaps for Europe, but not against Turkey. AK Party portrayed itself as an Islamic version of European Christian-Democracy, as a champion of individual rights, the rule of law, and traditional values.<sup>28</sup> How powerful resource the process of EU nego-

tiations was for the AK Party movement was amply demonstrated in April 28, 2007, when rumors started of an imminent military intervention and tanks made their presence in the streets of İstanbul. The army stood down because it was made clear that another intervention would be the end of the road for Turkey’s European project. Europeanization in Turkey appeared to be valued as a process rather than merely as a means to an end.

And there were broader implications for the ‘West’ and democratization from Turkey’s ‘success story.’ As the Arab spring saw the collapse of dictatorial regimes across the Middle East, an article in *El Pais* hailed Turkey rather than the EU as the model for democratic development in the Islamic world.<sup>29</sup> After all, Turkey was able to guarantee not only upward social mobility and economic development, but also substantial individual rights. Having transcended the contradiction between Islam and modernity, Turkey had quadrupled the size of its economy, reduced its public debt from 75 percent to 40 percent of GDP, tripled per capita income, and saw its risk premium fall to levels that were envied by most EU member states of the southern periphery at the time. Perhaps more significantly, Turkey was bridging the gap between Anatolia and coastal Turkey, while Europe’s divide between East and West was widening.

Of course, there were also more ‘traditional’ narratives about Turkey, which reduced the success of Turkey



to a case of ‘moral evolution,’ referred to as ‘Islamic Calvinism.’<sup>30</sup> But the emerging consensus was that Turkey had carved for itself not only a place in Europe, but also a role in Europe.

### Turkey as a ‘Free Radical’ in the Balkans

Across this historical period, Turkey’s role in the Balkans was seen in Europe as part of the broader relationship with the project of European integration. In the context of the Turkish economic and political miracle of the 2000s, Ankara’s role in the Balkans was rooted in tradition but held the promise of modernization. In sum, the synthesis between a ‘Turk’ in the sense of the devout Muslim of Anatolia, and a ‘Turk’ in the sense of a modern European citizen were achieving their Balkan synthesis.

For decades, Turkey has hosted Muslim refugees from the Balkans, who were viewed as Turks in Bulgaria, Bosnia, or Greece by virtue of their religion if not of their language. Between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 1920s, four million Tatars, Turks, and Circassians moved to the Ottoman heartland that is today Turkey; about one million Anatolian Turks were forced to move from the Balkans to Turkey, even prior to the formal exchange of populations with Greece in 1923; in excess of 800,000 Muslims moved between 1945 and 1989 to Turkey from Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia. In sum, Turkey is a regional demographic hub in a region where the terms ‘Mus-

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lim’ and ‘Turk’ have often been used interchangeably.<sup>31</sup>

But, economic growth broadened the scope for Turkish protection of these populations in the Balkans. In the 2000s, Turkey emerged as a major power in Official Development Assistance, despite being a middle income country. TİKA (Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency) has offices in Albania, Serbia, and Bosnia, disbursing aid that protects and promotes the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans, and socially empowers Muslim minority populations.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Turkey has become a major source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), creating industrial, financial, logistical, and telecommunications value chains across Southeastern Europe.<sup>33</sup>

Passing the \$2 trillion milestone in 2015, Turkey is the region’s powerhouse. Turkish trade with Southeastern Europe surged from €364 million in 2002 to €3 billion in 2016.<sup>34</sup> And, Turkish companies in the region were more prone to so-called ‘greenfield investment,’ which came hand-in-hand with employment,

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and therefore; political leverage.<sup>35</sup> Turkish Foreign Direct Investment in the Western Balkans has continued to soar from \$3.6 billion in 2002 to \$16.2 billion in 2016, focusing on strategic sectors such as highways, energy, telecommunications, airlines, and banking.<sup>36</sup>

Turkish influence was not necessarily perceived as a threat to the process of Europeanization. Often, it was quite the contrary. In April 2010, President Abdullah Gül persuaded Serbia's President, Boris Tadic, and the Bosniak member of Bosnia and Herzegovina's tripartite presidency, Haris Silajdzic, to sign the so-called Istanbul Declaration, reaffirming a shared "commitment to take all necessary steps to ensure regional peace, stability and prosperity." Tadic, empowered by the Serbian Parliament's formal recognition of the Srebrenica genocide (March 30, 2010), visited the city on July 11 to mark its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary; in turn, Silajdzic agreed to make his first trip to Belgrade since

1992. In sum, Turkey appeared as a champion of regional stability.

However, it would be naïve to believe that Turkish influence was devoid of controversy. The visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu in October 2009 to Bosnia became an opportunity to express a nostalgic vision for the resurgence of an idealized *Pax Ottomanica* in the Balkans, with common political values, economic interdependence, cooperation, and cultural harmony. That vision was received with some degree of skepticism,<sup>37</sup> but was also seen as a promise of "zero problems and maximum cooperation with neighbors." After all, the ethnic minority parties Turkey supports in North Macedonia, and Bulgaria have often played a constructive role, advancing minority rights without undermining political stability or indeed the region's European trajectory. However, overt political influence in the Balkans often triggers skepticism, and, at times, a nationalist backlash.<sup>38</sup>

Since the attempted coup in July 2016 in Turkey, the occasional backlash has evolved into a zero-sum confrontation between Brussels and Ankara across the Balkans. The EU does not share the view that the network of the U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen was behind the movement to overthrow the legally elected government.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, Turkey has taken the view that EU member states refused to extend solidarity and perhaps even welcomed the prospect of regime change. Over the course of the last three years, there has been an



atmosphere of “with us or against us,” often forcing Balkan states to make mutually exclusive choices.

In March 2018, six Turks residing in Kosovo were “rendered” to Turkey for being members of the so-called Fetullah Gülen Terror Organization (FETÖ). The Turkish intelligence agency MİT and its counterpart in Kosovo organized the transfer, reportedly without the knowledge of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj.<sup>40</sup> The EU condemned the “deportation.”<sup>41</sup> That was not an isolated event. In May 2018, President Erdoğan announced a political rally in Sarajevo, which came after the prohibition of similar rallies in EU member states. Once again, Sarajevo was placed in a difficult spot, having to tolerate a symbolic act of Turkish defiance of the EU in Bosnia.<sup>42</sup> And pressure of this kind is mounting, as Bosnia and Herzegovina is home to private schools founded by the Gülen movement which Ankara has demanded to be closed.<sup>43</sup>

In July 2018, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan held a swearing-in ceremony in Ankara, following the approval of Turkey’s new system. With the exception of Bulgaria, EU leaders largely snubbed the occasion, as the Venice Commission warned about the erosion of checks and balances. However, leaders from North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia were present, recognizing Turkey’s special gravity in the region, political and economic.

Perhaps more significantly, the confrontation between Turkey and Brussels in the Balkans is gradually taking a more ‘systemic turn.’ To the extent that Turkey no longer considers itself a stakeholder in the project of European integration, its relationship with Greece is increasingly framed in a more ‘geopolitical’ language, recently culminating in the public comparison of military capability in terms of troops, tanks, fighter-jets, and submarines between NATO allies. This

The 38<sup>th</sup> EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee was held in Brussels in April 2019 to work on issues such as the latest situation on EU-Turkey relations, the Customs Union, and visa dialogue.  
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## The fear of 'contagion' binds Turkey systemically to Europe, but does not inspire a sense of solidarity that resonates with the feeling of a community

confrontational dynamic is no longer tamed by an understanding of membership in a common Euro-Atlantic 'community,' or indeed the prospect of EU membership.

### Interdependence versus Community Building

Turkey no longer appears to invest in the project of European integration either as a process or as an end. Euro-Turkish relations are more frequently framed as a transaction, especially in the current context of a Turkish economic crisis. According to the Bank of International Settlements, Turkish banks have foreign-denominated loans to the tune of \$148 billion and €100 billion.<sup>44</sup> Much of that debt was issued by European lenders. Spanish banks hold more than \$80 billion of Turkish debt, French banks \$40 billion, and Italian banks about \$20 billion. To put things in perspective, this exposure is comparable to Greek sovereign debt exposure in 2009.<sup>45</sup>

To a certain extent, Turkey's crisis is also a European crisis and a Balkan crisis, as industrial investment

and Turkish Official Development Assistance is called into question.<sup>46</sup> The fear of 'contagion' binds Turkey systemically to Europe, but does not inspire a sense of solidarity that resonates with the feeling of a community. Gone are the references to Islamic Calvinism, as the relationship between Brussels, Ankara, and Washington appear more confrontational. The image of Turkey has backtracked into that of the European other, in cultural, political, geographic, and of course, religious terms. In Turkey too, the prospect of Europeanization has been disowned by the ruling AK Party movement, but also the nationalist MHP, as a project wholly foreign to Turkish national interests.

The implication for Balkan states, often seen as devoid of political agency, and forced to choose between 'sponsors' is often a mutually exclusive choice between Europe and Turkey. Rather than a regional powerhouse, Turkey is now framed as a factor of Balkanization, that is, political and potentially economic fragmentation that runs contrary to the grand narrative of normative regional alignment. Far from being a European neighborhood, the part of Southeastern Europe that is not assimilated by the EU is treated as a region in which Turkey asserts its claim to a near abroad, as a great power, often in opposition to Brussels. The difference with the 1990s is that Europeanization no longer appears as a community-building narrative within and around Europe, inclusive of Turkey. Instead, there is a movement towards a more flexible, sovereigntist future for the region

founded on a cluster of bilateral, limited in scope, and often transactional relations. As countries that traditionally spearheaded the expansion of the single market in the Balkans, such as the UK and the U.S. retreat from the vision of Euro-Atlantic enlargement, countries of the weight and significance of Turkey appear not only as a challenge, but indeed as an alternative. ■

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