

THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY AND TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN LIGHT OF THE ARAB UPRISINGS

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Abstract

The popularly referred Arab Spring has generated tremendous changes in the Middle East and North Africa and posed serious challenges to the foreign policies of external actors in the region. The EU and Turkey, among the most significant, reviewed their neighborhood policies in line with the regional developments and rearticulated their interests versus values relationship in their foreign policies. Thus, the EU and Turkey have converged on democracy promotion as the common regional objective and on conditionality as the way of achieving regional democratization. However, even the reviewed versions cannot guarantee success mostly because of the incompatibility between their value-based nature of reviewed policies and the interest-based regional realities.

Keywords: Turkish Foreign Policy, Zero Problems with Neighbors, European Neighborhood Policy, Arab Spring, Democracy Promotion

ARAP BAHARI GELİŞMELERİ İŞİĞİNDA AVRUPA KOMŞULUK POLİTİKASI VE TÜRK DİŞ POLİTİKASI

Özet

Çoğunlukla adlandırıldığı üzere “Arap Baharı” Orta Doğu’da ve Kuzey Afrika’da büyük değişiklikler meydana getirmiş ve bölge dışı aktörlerin dış politikalarında ciddi sorunlar ve zorluklar doğurmuştur. Söz konusu aktörlerin en önemlileri arasında yer alan Türkiye ve AB kendi komşuluk politikalarını bölgesel gelişmelere paralel olarak gözden geçirmişler ve dış politikalarındaki çıkarlar ve değerler ilişkisini yeniden tanımlamıştır. Böylece, AB ve Türkiye bölgesel aktörler olarak demokrasinin desteklenmesi-geliştirilmesi hedefi ve bölgesel demokrasinin sağlanmasının aracı olarak da koşulluluk ilkesi üzerinde birleşmiştir. Fakat, yeniden yorumlanan bu politikalar bile AB’nin ve Türkiye’nin değer-odaklı politikaları ile çıkar-odaklı bölgesel gerçekler arasındaki uyumsuzluktan dolayı başarıyı garanti edemez.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Dış Politikası, Komşularla Sıfır Sorun Politikası, Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası, Arap Baharı, Demokrasi Desteklenmesi-Geliştirilmesi

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Introduction

The unprecedented and unpredictable developments of 2011-12 in the Middle East and North Africa (popularly referred to as the “Arab Spring”) have generated debates over regional democratization. Along with the tremendous changes in the region, they have also posed serious challenges to the foreign policies of external actors. Amongst them, the European Union (EU) and Turkey stand out for their regional claims and have had to revise their traditional foreign policies formulated under general frameworks of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and strategic depth respectively. Both policies, as originally formulated, shared the same objectives to create an area of peace, stability, and security in the neighborhood and beyond. In time, they also included, directly and indirectly, democracy promotion aspirations.¹ However, the EU and Turkey were equipped with different instruments to pursue their objectives. The ENP (and its review) was, theoretically, based on the principle of conditionality, even if it was not consistently applied in practice, in view of competing EU interests and regional realities. Turkish Foreign Policy (TFP), instead, initially discarded the use of conditionality and put forward its Zero Problems With Neighbors (ZPWN) policy for developing close and friendly relations with neighboring regimes. Basing on-going economic interdependence and a flexible visa regime with the neighboring states, within the framework of implicit functionalism, Turkey preferred long-term transformation of the regimes through engagement facilitating democratic and peaceful change. However, regional developments in the southern Mediterranean exposed the limits of both the ENP and TFP in dealing with the regional challenges then underway. Therefore both the EU and Turkey have had to revise and readjust their initial policies in line with the emerging regional realities and have rearticulated the relationship between interests and values in their foreign policies.

¹The term *Democracy Promotion* has different meanings and implications in the EU’s and Turkey’s foreign policy. Since the Maastricht Treaty, the EU has declared the development and consolidation of democracy as a goal of its development cooperation and its Common Foreign and Security Policy. Turkey’s Democracy Promotion, on the other hand, has been said to present a roadmap or alternative model for other Muslim or Turkic societies undergoing regime transformation. For details please see Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, “EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: from Leverage to Governance?”, *Democratization*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 2011, pp. 885-909 and Şaban Kardaş, “Turkey and the Arab Spring: Coming to Terms with Democracy Promotion?”, *GMF Foreign Policy Program-Policy Brief*, October 2011, http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/mf/1321551462_magicfields_attachment__1_1.pdf (accessed 25 April 2012).

Referring to regional developments in the Arab world, this paper discusses the updated policies of the EU and Turkey from both their normative and empirical perspectives. While doing this, it evaluates the performances of the EU and Turkey concerning their democracy promotion role in their common neighborhood, i.e. the southern Mediterranean. Also, the paper explores why the successfully theorized regional policies of the EU and Turkey in the pre-Arab Spring period failed to support democratization in their Mediterranean neighbors and how they re-conceptualized such theorization in the post-Arab Spring context. The paper begins by reviewing the neighborhood policies of the EU and Turkey before the Arab Spring. It then explains the changes in the ENP and TFP in the post-Arab Spring context and discusses these changes with reference to their goal of democracy promotion. Following, it compares the ENP and TFP reviews to reveal their convergences and divergences in terms of their objectives, instruments, and results. Finally, the paper evaluates the performances of the EU and Turkey concerning their contribution to the democratic developments in the region. Based on this evaluation, the paper concludes by suggesting the persistent shortcomings in the EU and Turkish responses to the Arab spring could be partly rectified by exploring possible forms of co-operation between the two.

Neighborhood Policies of the EU and Turkey Before the Arab Spring

In order to evaluate the changes in the ENP and TFP after the Arab Spring, it is important to understand their original versions as formulated in the pre-Arab Spring period.

European Neighborhood Policy

The security and stability concerns of the EU in the post-Cold war and post-enlargement periods have forced the Union to formulate and implement a coherent and well-structured neighborhood policy. Based on two documents, *Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*² of 2003 and *ENP Strategy Paper*³ of 2004, the ENP is aimed at avoiding new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbors and creating a zone of security and stability through a ring of well-governed countries to the east of the EU and on its Mediterranean border.⁴ Considering the latter as the regional focus of this paper, it is important to note the ENP added an important bilateral dimension to the multilateral Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) framework, based on differentiation and

² European Commission, *Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM(2003) 104 final, 2003, Brussels.

³ European Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper*, COM(2004) 373 final, 2004, Brussels, p. 5, 8

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 5, 8.

conditional co-operation⁵ in order to induce the Mediterranean neighbors to democratize.

The ENP was originally formulated to address the challenges in the East. It was extended to the Mediterranean with the pressure of the southern EU members concerned about balancing the center of gravity of the Union. The neighboring countries in the southern Mediterranean had never expressed the ambition to join the EU appreciated this policy of the EU and its motto “everything but institutions”.⁶ According to this approach, the EU would bring its neighbors into various EU agencies and programs and give them a stake in the single market through the liberalization of the four freedoms (the free movement of persons, goods, capital, and services). Based on the method of enlargement, but with the scaling down of the carrot on offer, the EU’s proposed benefits were, at least theoretically, conditioned on the implementation of shared values and agreed-on priorities in the political, social, economic, and institutional domains of the partner countries.⁷ Conditionality strengthened the EU’s insistence on democracy and human rights in the individual partner countries compared to its predecessor policies towards the region. Accordingly, the ENP was meant to promote the values of the EU and pressure the autocratic regimes for more democracy.⁸

However, although strong determination and greater emphasis was put on democratization through conditionality, this could only be rhetorically approved. In practice, the principle of conditionality was sidelined in favor of partnership, while raising questions about the EU’s credibility. Political security, energy security, and migration concerns led the EU to maintain its engagement with the authoritarian regimes in the Mediterranean.⁹ Particularly, the southern members of the EU persisted in their privileged relations and pursued their bilateral relations in a pragmatic manner. Since the ENP was the product of the EU’s internal logic rather than the realities in the Mediterranean

⁵ Nathalie Tocci and Jean-Pierre Cassarino, “Rethinking the EU’s Mediterranean Policies Post-1/11”, *IAI Working Papers*, No. 11/06, March 2011, <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iaiw1106.pdf> (accessed 21 April 2012), p. 6.

⁶ Romano Prodi, “A Wider Europe-A Proximity Policy as the Key to Stability”, 6 December 2012, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/02/619&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (accessed 20 April 2012).

⁷ The conditions range from the adoption of the rules concerning access to the internal market, strengthening border controls and combating corruption, illegal migration and terrorism, to making progress on democracy, human rights and good governance reforms.

⁸ Charles Thépaut “Can the EU Pressure Dictators? Reforming ENP Conditionality after the ‘Arab Spring’”, *EU Diplomacy Papers*, No. 6, January 2011, p. 4, [http://aei.pitt.edu/33451/1/EDP_6_2011_Thepaut\[1\].pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/33451/1/EDP_6_2011_Thepaut[1].pdf) (accessed 21 April 2012)

⁹ Vera Knoops, “Euro-Mediterranean relations and the Arab Spring”, *EU Centre in Singapore Background Brief*, No. 6, October 2011, p. 13, <http://aei.pitt.edu/33653/1/BB006-ArabSpring-VKnoops.pdf> (accessed 20 April 2012).

countries, it did not address the socio-economic realities of the Mediterranean region and only focused on technical and economic issues rather than pursuing political reform, democracy, and human rights comprehensively in the region.¹⁰ Referring to a limited interpretation of democracy without touching on the need for radical and comprehensive changes¹¹, the EU chose stability and status quo mostly because of the securitization of its relations with the Mediterranean partners at the expense of democratization. In return, the regional regimes were encouraged to continue their “old-habit of authoritarian and repressive policies”.¹² Thus, the EU could not reverse the decade-long traditions of top-down façade reforms in its Mediterranean partners. The prioritization of interests over values, however, questioned the EU’s sincerity about democratic ideals and damaged its position in the eyes of the people in the region.¹³

Turkey’s Neighborhood Policy

The transformation of Turkey’s foreign policy started with the end of the Cold war when the neglected historical and geographic reality of the interconnectedness between Turkey and its environs resurfaced with new horizons and new problems. Despite some minor attempts in the immediate post-Cold war period, the breakthrough could only come with the rise of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) and its new foreign policy understanding formulated by the current Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Davutoğlu defined Turkey’s new foreign policy within the framework of “strategic depth”, which is mainly based on zero problems with neighbors as well as a pro-active and multi-regional foreign policy in the wider neighborhood.¹⁴

¹⁰ Charles Grant, “A New Neighbourhood Policy for the EU”, *Centre for European Reform Policy Brief*, March 2011, p. 4.

http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2011/pb_grant_neighbourhood_11march11-170.pdf (accessed 20 April 2012).

¹¹ Richard Youngs, “Idealism at Bay” in Richard Youngs (ed.), *The EU and Democracy Promotion-A Critical Global Assessment*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2010, pp. 12.

¹² Kemal Kirişçi, “Turkey’s ‘Demonstrative Effect’ and the Transformation of the Middle East”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 2, April-June 2011, pp. 33-35.

¹³ For more studies on the EU’s interest (securitization) versus value (democratization) dilemma please see Timo Behr, “The European Union’s Mediterranean Policies after the Arab Spring: Can the Leopard Change its Spots?”, *Amsterdam Law Forum*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Spring 2012, pp. 76-88; A. Raffaella del Sarto and Tobias Schumacher, “From Brussels with Love: Leverage, Benchmarking, and the Action Plans with Jordan and Tunisia in the EU’s Democratization Policy”, *Democratization*, Vol. 18, No. 4, August 2011, pp. 932-955;

Richard Youngs, “Democracy and Security in the Middle East”, *FRIDE Working Paper*, March 2006, <http://www.fride.org/publication/58/democracy-and-security-in-the-middle-east> (accessed 7 November 2012); Rosemary Hollis, “No friend of democratization: Europe’s role in the genesis of the Arab Spring”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 1, January 2012, pp. 81-94; Michelle Pace, “Paradoxes and Contradictions in EU Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: The Limits of EU Normative Power”, *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 1, February 2009, pp. 39-58..

¹⁴ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik - Türkiye’nin Uluslararası Konumu*, KüreYayımları,

The theoretical framework underpinning this approach, referred to as “Turkey’s grand strategy”¹⁵, aimed at making Turkey both a multi-regional and powerful international actor by using its geographic location, historical ties, and cultural affinities as the assets of its new foreign policy. In line with these premises, Turkish foreign policy has become more open to deeper and stronger engagements with its neighbors, more eager to resolve regional problems, and less securitized. With an all-inclusive and equidistance policy, Turkey would replace its regional isolation and alienation with an assertive regional and global influence and a pro-active foreign policy aimed at regional leadership. Thus Turkey’s new activism would deepen the interdependence between itself and its neighborhood and normalize its foreign relations with the countries in the region through deepened political, economic, and socio-cultural relations. Thus, Turkey would act on the basis of a more ambitious and self-confident foreign policy and reposition itself from the periphery of international relations to the center as an actor sitting at the intersection of multiple regions.¹⁶

Under the general framework of strategic depth, the regional/neighborhood aspect of the new foreign policy was shaped by the slogan ZPWN, which aimed at maximizing co-operation with the neighbors and minimizing problems in its surrounding regions.¹⁷ As the result of its regional activism, Turkey would become more connected to its environs as a powerful force for peace and regional development. In turn, Turkey itself would be more able and willing to benefit from the peaceful interactions in its neighborhood.¹⁸ Turkey’s leading role would also be used to promote regional co-operation as the most effective way of finding regional solutions to regional problems rather than waiting for other actors coming from outside and imposing their own solutions.¹⁹ Thus, Turkey, as a “native actor”²⁰ in its

İstanbul, 2001.

¹⁵ Joshua Walker, “Learning Strategic Depth: Implications of Turkey’s New Foreign Policy Doctrine”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2007, pp. 33.

¹⁶ Kemal Kirişçi, Nathalie Tocci and Joshua Walker, “A Neighbourhood Rediscovered - Turkey’s Transatlantic Value in the Middle East”, *Brussels Forum Paper Series*, March 2010, p.12, <http://www.gmfus.org/brusselsforum/2010/docs/BF2010-Paper-Kirisci-Tocci-Walker.pdf> (accessed 21 November 2012).

¹⁷ Ufuk Ulutaş, “Turkish Foreign Policy in 2009: A Year of Pro-activity”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2010, p. 1.

¹⁸ Kadri Kaan Renda, “Turkey’s Neighborhood Policy: An Emerging Complex Interdependence?”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, p. 101.

¹⁹ Scott MacLeod, “Strategic Thinking” (Interview with Ahmet Davutoğlu), *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, March 2012, <http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cairoreview/pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=143>, p. 20 (accessed 23 April 2012)

²⁰ Ahment O. Evin, “Turkish Foreign Policy: Limits of Engagement”, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 40, Spring 2009, p. 228.

conflict-ridden neighborhood, created a sense of “regional ownership” based on shared interests and common ideals.²¹ In this whole process, Turkey’s own democratic progress and the achievements of its liberal market economy were expected to spill over onto its neighbors assisting their own democratization attempts.

The restructuring of TFP in this period, along the lines of de-securitization, refers to the principles of democracy and universal values including human rights and freedoms as the core pillars of “Turkey’s soft power”.²² However, as opposed to the EU, considering its own “democracy in progress”²³, Turkey has not openly and clearly declared its democracy promotion goals in the neighboring countries and has not developed either an explicit democracy promotion agenda or specific tools to pursue such agenda in its relations with the neighbors.²⁴ By putting strategic goals and political stability ahead of the fate of people, Turkey preferred the regional status quo in the form of engagement with the existing undemocratic regimes at the expense of their people.²⁵ Based on the implicit functionalist assumption, Turkey acknowledged growing economic interdependence and a flexible visa regime would gradually deteriorate authoritarian regimes over time. In line with this policy, Turkey, initially, adopted a “conservative attitude”²⁶ towards pro-democracy popular protests in the region. However, the turn of the regional events made its position untenable.

This brief recounting of the ENP and TFP proves both the EU and Turkey resemble each other in terms of their neighborhood policies. More specifically, in practice, Turkey’s co-operation with its neighbors (specifically with the southern ones) reflects the EU’s own vision embodied in the ENP.²⁷

²¹ Scott MacLeod, “Strategic Thinking”, p. 20.

²² Scott MacLeod, “Strategic Thinking”, p. 39.

²³ Kirişçi, “Turkey’s ‘Demonstrative Effect’ and the Transformation of the Middle East”, pp. 40-42.

²⁴ Günter Verheugen, “Meeting the Geopolitical Challenges of the Arab Spring: A Call for a Joint EU-Turkish Agenda”, *TEPAV Turkey Policy Brief Series*, January 2012, p. 5, http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1336135457-8.Meeting_the_Geopolitical_Challenges_of_the_Arab_Spring_A_Call_for_a_joint_EU_Turkish_Agenda_by_Gunter_Verheugen.pdf (accessed 1 June 2012); Kemal Kirişçi, “The EU, Turkey and the Arab Spring: Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Integration”, *Global Turkey in Europe*, No. 1, 2012, p. 5, http://www.iai.it/pdf/GTE/GTE_WP_01.pdf (accessed 9 November 2012).

²⁵ Soner Çağaptay, “Turkey’s Future Role in the ‘Arab Spring’”, *Focus Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 2011, <http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2814/turkey-arab-spring> (accessed 17 May 2012).

²⁶ Kardaş, “Turkey and the Arab Spring”, p. 2.

²⁷ Senem Aydın Düzgüt and Nathalie Tocci, “Transforming Turkish Foreign Policy: The Quest for Regional Leadership and Europeanization”, *Centre for European Policy Studies-CEPS*, 13 November 2009, <http://www.ceps.eu/book/transforming-turkish-foreign-policy-quest-regional->

As a region of common concern, both the EU and Turkey shaped their policies towards the Mediterranean to guarantee regional security and stability, although their theoretical backgrounds differ. The ENP was theoretically value oriented towards the Mediterranean region. The EU set the objective of developing partnerships with the countries sharing EU norms and values, i.e. democracy, rule of law, protection of human rights, and good governance among many others. However, its “short-termism”²⁸ mostly as the result of securitization of its regional relations, prevented the EU from implementing the word and logic of its own policy. Rather, the EU continued its relations with the authoritarian governments and regimes in the name of security and stability concerns.

As opposed to the ENP, TFP towards the Mediterranean was initially more instrumental and interest-oriented focusing on economy (mutual gain, well-being and prosperity) and security/stability in the region. The ZPWN policy respected the principle of engagement with all regional countries within the framework of the principles of territorial integrity, mutual respect for sovereignty and non-intervention in domestic politics.²⁹ The need for security and stability has forced Turkey to pursue such a pragmatic and utility-based approach with the regional countries in the form of improved ties with specific leaders.³⁰

ENP and TFP After the Arab Spring

While the world was undergoing tumultuous changes, the regional revolts and democratization demands have exposed the weaknesses and inconsistencies in the EU’s and Turkey’s neighborhood policies towards the region. The pressure of the on-going developments forced them to review their initial policies with the objectives of overcoming previous shortcomings, developing suitable strategies and coping with the changes in the wider Mediterranean.

The ENP Review

The region-wide developments have revealed the EU’s failure in keeping its promises, i.e. trade liberalization, people-to-people contacts, and promoting democracy throughout the Mediterranean. The EU resisted opening its internal market to agricultural imports from the southern Mediterranean.

leadership-and-europeanisation, pp. 1-2 (accessed 23 April 2012); Sevilay Kahraman, “Turkey and the European Union in the Middle East: Reconciling or Competing with Each Other?”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, December 2011, p. 708.

²⁸ Ştefan Füle, “Speech on the recent events in North Africa”, Speech 11/130, 28 February 2011, p.2 <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/130> (accessed 20 April 2012).

²⁹ Tarık Oğuzlu, “Arap Baharı ve Türk Dış Politikasında Çıkarlar-Değerler İlişkisi” (Arab Spring and the Relationship between Interests versus Values in Turkish Foreign Policy, *Ortadoğu Analiz (Middle Eastern Analysis)*, Vol. 4, No. 38, February 2012, p. 10, 13.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 16.

Energy and energy-related products have constituted the bulk of the EU import from the region. This kind of trade structure, however, complicated the prospects of developing a more diversified and export-oriented industrial base for the regional countries and perpetuated the “rentier state” nature of the many Arab economies.³¹ Similar remarks are valid also concerning free movement of people, which failed mostly because of strict visa requirements. These facts prove the EU has developed an impressive and well-articulated neighborhood policy, but the results fall short of what the EU sets out to achieve. In time, the ENP has become a toolbox for the partner governments to selectively pick the areas of co-operation according to their needs, wishes, or capacities without necessarily touching on democratization. Therefore, the Arab Spring forced the EU to rethink its policy towards the region.

When the Arab Spring began to engulf the whole eastern and southern Mediterranean from early 2011, the EU could not respond immediately. The initial hesitancy of the member states opened the EU to criticism that emerged around the issue of the EU’s “credibility gap”.³² This questioning of the EU’s legitimacy made the review of its policies, underway since 2010, more pertinent and urgent. The EU High Representative Catherine Ashton’s calls “to jettison Europe’s old stability approach with a new one based on the promotion of ‘sustainable stability’ and ‘deep democracy’ in relation with its neighborhood”³³ accelerated the review process. Eventually, the ENP was reviewed with the objective of helping the regional countries in their transformation into democratic political systems and open-market economies integrated substantially with the EU. The review policy is assumed to be founded on a new level of commitment and ambition regarding stronger partnership with societies (not only with incumbent governments), greater differentiation, and a readiness to go further with the neighbors in implementing ambitious political and economic reforms.³⁴

³¹ Kirişçi, “The EU, Turkey and the Arab Spring”, p. 4.

³² Eduard Soler i Lecha, “The EU, Turkey and the Arab Spring: From Parallel Approaches to a Joint Strategy?” in Nathalie Tocci, Ömer Taşpınar, Henri J. Barkey, Eduard Soler i Lecha and Hassan Nafaa (eds.) “Turkey and the Arab Spring - Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy From a Transatlantic Perspective”, *GMF Mediterranean Paper Series*, 2011, pp. 25-34, http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files_mf/tocciatal_turkishmodel_nov11_final.pdf (accessed 21 November 2012).

³³ European Union, “Remarks by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the Senior Officials’ Meeting on Egypt and Tunisia”, 23 February 2011, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/119459.pdf (accessed 15 November 2011).

³⁴ Stefan Füle, “Turkey and the European Neighborhood Policy”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Summer 2011, p. 18.

As a first step, the joint communications of the European Commission and the EU's External Action Service were published in March 2011 under the name of *A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity* with three main objectives, i.e. democracy promotion/democratic transformation, people-to-people contacts, and urban and rural economic development.³⁵ Further areas of engagement include fundamental freedoms, constitutional reform, reform of judiciary, and the fight against corruption.³⁶ The instruments, devised to reach to those goals and overcome the deficiency of the previous focus on governmental co-operation, are presented as increased grants and loans, better access to the EU market, a stronger partnership with people, sustainable and inclusive growth, mobility partnerships, and visa facilitation, as well as a new Civil Society Facility. According to the joint communications, EU benefits and offers would be provided in line with the principle of "more for more" resembling the previous conditionality principle. The EU would offer greater support for those that go further and faster with reforms. The support would be allocated or refocused for those who stall or retrench on agreed reform plans.³⁷

The more for more principle was incorporated in the revised ENP - *A New Response to the Changing Neighbourhood*, which was published in May 2011 with the objective of sustaining a veritable process of change in the southern Mediterranean and adjusting the EU to the new regional realities³⁸. *New Response* is based on mutual accountability (implying the allocation of funds only if the beneficiary is truly making progress in its reforms) and a shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Recognizing the orderly transition of the region to democracy as the EU's best interest, the EU has shifted from its role of stability promoter to that of a democracy promoter.³⁹ This was a signal to end the EU's long-standing democratization versus stabilization dilemma in the region and allowed a realignment of European values and interests. Correspondingly, the EU aims at developing and consolidating healthy and sustainable democracies along with sustainable economic growth and cross-border links. In line with its more for more principle, the EU's offers would be conditioned according to

³⁵ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*, COM(2011) 200 final, 2011, Brussels, p. 3.

³⁶ Tobias Schumacher, "The EU and the Arab Spring: Between Spectatorship and Actorness", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2011, p. 109.

³⁷ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*, pp. 3-7.

³⁸ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood - A Review of European Neighbourhood Policy*, COM(2011), 303, 2011, Brussels.

³⁹ Behr, "The European Union's Mediterranean Policies after the Arab Spring", p. 77.

previously accepted benchmarks, i.e. the results achieved in the areas of free and fair elections, freedom of association, expression and assembly, free press and media, independence of the judiciary, fight against corruption, and democratic control of the armed and security forces.⁴⁰

TFP with the re-evaluation of the ZPWN

Turkey's neighborhood policy started moving from its "security-obsessed origins"⁴¹ even before the Arab Spring. In that sense, the ZPWN principle, which lies at the center of Turkey's neighborhood policy, initially, contributed to Turkey's constructive role in its wider neighborhood. It has improved Ankara's relationships with capitals across the region through constant diplomatic engagement, mutual trade, and open national borders. Thus, Turkey has become more and more economically integrated with its neighbors. By using the advantages of becoming a "trading state"⁴², whose foreign policy is shaped increasingly by economic considerations, Turkey has increased its trade level with the countries in the southern Mediterranean and diversified its economic interaction with them. Turkey also aimed integration through people-to-people contact by the help of its liberal visa policy that has become an influential tool in increasing number of entries from Turkey's immediate neighborhood.⁴³ However, despite those achievements, simultaneous changes in the regional political landscape have affected also TFP and its ZPWN principle had to be readjusted in line with emerging normative, political, and humanitarian considerations as the result of the Arab Spring.

Similar to the EU's experience, the regional popular protests revealed the limitations inherent in the ZPWN principle and led to harming Turkey's credibility. Under the newly emerging regional order representing not only a "window of opportunity" but also a "window of vulnerability"⁴⁴ for Turkey, the principle of ZPWN has become untenable due to the emerging struggle between peoples with democratic claims and regimes with authoritarian and repressive policies. Turkey's theoretical support for democracy thus started openly clashing with its close economic and political relations with the existing

⁴⁰ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood*, pp. 1-3.

⁴¹ Katinka Barysch, "The Arab Spring: A Missed Opportunity for Europe and Turkey", *Today's Zaman*, 1 April 2011, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-239751-the-arab-spring-a-missed-opportunity-for-europe-and-turkey-by-katinka-barysch.html> (accessed 23 November 2012).

⁴² Kirişçi, "Turkey's 'Demonstrative Effect' and the Transformation of the Middle East", pp. 36-39.

⁴³ The comparison between Turkey and the EU in terms of their trade relations with the southern Mediterranean countries and number of entries from those countries can be found in Kirişçi, "The EU, Turkey and the Arab Spring", pp. 4-6.

⁴⁴ Ivan Krastev "Arab Revolutions, Turkey's Dilemmas: Zero Chance for 'Zero Problems'", 24 March 2011, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/ivan-krastev/arab-revolutions-turkey%E2%80%99s-dilemmas-zero-chance-for-zero-problems> (accessed 23 April 2012).

regimes in some of the regional countries, i.e. Libya and Syria. Thus, Ankara and its “new foreign policy” have become subject to a severe and dramatic test in terms of its ethical or norm-based versus interest-driven foreign policy.⁴⁵ While an ethical approach demanded a single-minded commitment to democratic polity, this came into contradiction with stability and economic interests, at least from a short term to medium term perspective.⁴⁶

When it became obvious the incumbent regimes would not accommodate the democratic legitimate demands of their people, Turkey changed its early position to embrace “people’s power”⁴⁷, listening to their voices and supporting their quest for democracy and human rights. Turkey moved to a value-based foreign policy in the name of consistency and harmony with its domestic politics and of legitimacy in the eyes of the people of the region. Thus, with a recalibration of foreign policy tactics and goals, Turkey seemed to shift from supporting the governments to supporting the people. In other words, Turkey adopted a pro-democratic approach towards the regional neighbors with a radical decision to ditch a policy that prized stability above all else, which rested almost exclusively on contacts with regimes mostly through inter-governmental channels. It is this policy that made Turkey, a country aspiring to be a regional leader, appear like a friend to dictators.⁴⁸ Since then, Turkey has been acting with a new and completely different attitude by leading the world in dropping dictators in favor of pro-democracy movements in the whole region and in supporting the irreversible march towards democracy.⁴⁹ As the result of the re-evaluation and modification of the ZPWN principle, Turkey has accepted the integration of democratic standards into its foreign policy into its foreign policy.

Despite this improvement in its policy towards the region, Turkey, is emerging as a “maturing power player”⁵⁰ in the Middle East, also faces the risk of being dragged into sectarianism, the region’s most enduring and challenging

⁴⁵ Ziya Öniş, “Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2012, pp. 49-50.

⁴⁶ Öniş, “Turkey and the Arab Spring”, p. 61; Tarık Oğuzlu, “The ‘Arab Spring’ and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey’s ‘Zero Problems with Neighbours’ Policy”, *SAM Papers*, No. 1, February 2012, p. 11, http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/SAM_Paper_TarikOguzlu2.pdf (accessed 27 April 2012).

⁴⁷ Gallia Lindenstrauss, “Turkey and the Arab Spring: Embracing ‘People’s Power’”, *EuroMeSCO Papers-IEMed*, No. 14, March 2012, p. 7, <http://www.euromesco.net/images/papers/papersiemed14.pdf> (accessed 21 November 2012).

⁴⁸ Susanne Güsten, “Mandate for a New Turkish Era”, *New York Times*, 15 June 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/16/world/europe/16iht-M16-TURKEY-POLICY.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 25 April 2012).

⁴⁹ Çağaptay, “Turkey’s Future Role in the ‘Arab Spring’”.

⁵⁰ Joshua Walker, “Staying Above the Middle Eastern Fray: Turkey’s Sectarian Temptations”, *GMF On Turkey Analysis*, 30 March 2012, p. 1, http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files_mf/walker_middleeasternfray_mar12.pdf (accessed 27 April 2012)

division. The sectarian shadow cast by Turkey's support for the Sunni-led protest movements and revolts (as is the case in Syria) but its rebuff of the Shia-led revolts (as it is the case in Bahrain) has created an image of Turkey with sectarian overtones in its policy towards the regional developments. Turkey's sectarian priorities, however, has damaged its new policy of siding with people, rather than governments and raised questions about its neutrality towards all the region's people and about its perception as a promoter and supporter of international law, universal values, and core principles as the pillars of its foreign policy.

Comparison of the ENP and TFP Reviews

The ENP and TFP reviews provide us a suitable ground to compare the EU and Turkey in terms of their democracy promotion ideal towards the Mediterranean region and to evaluate their (in)compatibility. The ENP review includes four broad principles, namely the support for progress towards "deep democracy", the kind that lasts based on the principles of protection of rights and freedoms, functioning institutions, good governance, rule of law, checks and balances, the fight against corruption, effective law enforcement, and security sector reforms; the support for inclusive economic and social development; building of effective regional partnership within the ENP and a simplified and coherent policy and programming framework.⁵¹ On the other hand, Davutoğlu, in one of his recent articles, describes the guidelines for the principles of TFP after the Arab Spring as value-based with stronger emphasis on democracy, vision-oriented, autonomy, and a self-confident approach.⁵² Considering democracy promotion as the common and core pillar of both the EU's and Turkey's neighborhood policies, it is important to identify the convergence and divergence in terms of their theoretical and practical equipment as their tools to reach to their ideals. This comparison will be followed by the evaluation of the relatively more technical aspects of the ENP and TFP reviews.

Democracy Promotion

As their guiding principles, deep democracy of the ENP review is completely compatible with the TFP principle of balance between democracy and freedom that is kept in its review version after the Arab Spring. As Davutoğlu continuously argues "peace and stability can only be achieved by enjoying political legitimacy and respecting freedoms. If security is sacrificed for freedom it will lead to chaos, while if freedom is sacrificed for security, it

⁵¹ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood*, pp. 3-21.

⁵² Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Restructuring", *TEPAV Turkey Policy Brief Series*, No. 3, 2012, pp. 1-9, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/site_media/html/bakanmakale_tepev.pdf (accessed 25 April 2012)

will result in dictatorial regimes”.⁵³ The second case is what the societies throughout the southern Mediterranean have been experiencing these days.

The changing attitudes of both the EU and Turkey towards the southern Mediterranean developments (under the broader context of the Arab Spring) have narrowed the gap between their concerns and policies. They formulated their regional policies in the pre-Arab Spring period with the common objective of guaranteeing an area of peace, stability, and security in their neighborhood and beyond. With these same objectives in their mind, the EU and Turkey were, theoretically, equipped with different instruments, the ENP and its conditionality and the unconditional ZPWN, respectively. However, both of them, in practice, accepted an unconditional engagement with the existing regimes. The EU “could manage” this implicitly by replacing conditionality with co-operation in practice. Turkey instead, applied it explicitly through its ZPWN without any conditionality. Based on this reality, it is arguable both the ENP and ZPWN had some similarities in practical terms before the Arab Spring and have changed in a similar direction as the result of the post-2011 developments that have made the EU and Turkey realize their existing policies have been inadequate to meet regional challenges. As the result of their common failure, both decided to redefine their goals in line with the new circumstances and to meet their new objectives. Accordingly, they integrated democracy promotion, be it in a direct or indirect way, among their foreign policy objectives towards the region.

Their newly adopted instruments formulated on the grounds of conditionality, albeit in different forms, created another convergence between the two actors. The EU defined its conditionality in a more direct way within the framework of the relationship between its democratic expectations from and various kinds of offers to the region. Turkey, on the other hand, has not clearly defined such a direct correlation. However, Turkey’s future relations with the regional countries, be in the form of enhanced economic partnership and trade relations or political support and civil society collaboration, has become conditional on the democratic performances of the regional countries. This leads us to argue while Europeanizing its foreign policy in line with the EU accession process requirements, Turkey is applying what it has learned from the EU experience to its relations with the countries in its southern neighborhood. Therefore, Turkey’s regional foreign policy activism could be considered a manifestation of the Europeanization of its foreign policy. Only as long as committing to the EU conditions in the name of more credible,

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 6.

effective, consistent, and normative foreign policy could Turkey strengthen its role and be warmly embraced by the regional countries.⁵⁴

This assumption forces us to re-emphasize that the EU and Turkey have met on the same ground in the region. They converged on democracy promotion as a primary and fundamental pillar of their foreign policy and on conditionality as a key principle to guarantee regional democratization. As a way of achieving and strengthening democracy, the principles of both Turkey and the EU require interactions with the people rather than the governments and co-operation with civil society and non-governmental organizations as the key actors in the transformative regional waves of changes.⁵⁵ Those complementary principles of the EU and Turkey prove their commitments to the democratization of the regional countries and their decisions to pursue a value-based foreign policy towards them in the name of supporting and defending universal values.

Other Principles of ENP and TFP

The principle of sustainable economic and social support of the ENP review aims at promoting sustainable growth and improving social protection in the region. It also seeks to organize and increase direct investments in the target countries and provide offers for an immediate boost to partners' economies. The EU's "3 Ms motto" (money, mobility, and market) in its review neighborhood policy is assumed to contribute to its economic and social objectives. Concerning money, the EU has offered an additional €1.2bn for the neighborhood as a whole, on top of the €5.7bn already programmed for the period 2011-13.⁵⁶ Most importantly, in September 2011, the EU adopted a package of measures, including SPRING (Support to Partnership, Reform and

⁵⁴ For detail on the impact of Europeanization and transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy on Turkey's increasing and strengthening role in its region please see Mesut Özcan, *Turkey, the European Union and the Middle East*, Ashgate Publishing, Burlington and Hampshire, 2008; Tarık Oğuzlu, "Turkey and the European Union: Europeanization Without Membership", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, June 2012, pp. 229-243; Düzgit and Nathalie Tocci, "Transforming Turkish Foreign Policy"; Meltem Müftüler-Baç and Yaprak Gürsoy, "Is There a Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy? An Addendum to the Literature on EU Candidates", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3, September 2010, pp. 405-427.

⁵⁵ The EU pays attention to non-governmental actors through the Civil Society Facility which was launched in September 2011 with a budget of €26m in 2011 and €22m in 2012 to develop the capacity of civil society actors in monitoring elections and evaluating EU programmes and the Endowment for Democracy, expected to become operational by 2013 as the EU's new tool to support and foster deep and sustainable democracies, help building democratic institutions and supporting/strengthening civil society. For more detail please see Ruth Hanau Santini and Oz Hassan, "Transatlantic Democracy Promotion and the Arab Spring", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 47, No. 3, September 2012, p. 78.

⁵⁶ Nathalie Tocci, "A Trilateral EU-US-Turkey Strategy for the Neighbourhood: The Urgency of Now", IAI Working Papers, No. 12/08, March 2012, p. 11, <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iaiw1208.pdf> (accessed 3 June 2012).

Inclusive Growth) program as its centerpiece, to support the regional transitions is and to disburse €350m in assistance during 2011-2013 in accordance with the more for more principle.⁵⁷ Also, there are attempts to improve the procedures governing the ENP's financial instrument and make it more flexible for the financial period of 2014-20.

More benefits are not limited to aid. They include the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA)⁵⁸ that supposedly open the way for delivering the EU's unkept promise of a stake in the single market for its neighbors. The DCFTA basing the ground for the sustained economic growth in the partner countries also aims at closer market integration and regulatory convergences with them. However, this will ultimately require the support of the EU member states. Their unwillingness for the liberalization of agriculture and service sectors to the south seems to slow down the progress on this issue.

More benefits also include mobility partnership and visa liberalization under Partnership Dialogues on Migration, Mobility, and Security. Mobility Partnership is intended to allow for an easing of visa restrictions for certain professional group including students, researchers, and business people and a long-term perspective for visa liberalization, better access to legal migration channels and a boost to EU support and training for border control and migration management. At the same time partner countries have to accept EU legislation on various issues, including on return of irregular migration, admission agreements, and border controls.

The theoretical formulation and practical implications of the economic and social dimension of the ENP review might be considered as corresponding to the vision-oriented foreign policy of Turkey. Turkey's pledge to contribute to the economic and not only to the political transformation in the region is highlighted by its willingness to provide development assistance and enhance trade and investment relations with the countries of the region as a way of achieving an economic order based on justice and equality.⁵⁹ Thus, it is possible to suppose that both the ENP and TFP reviews still pay special attention to developmental issues, economic growth, and recovery on a regional scale.

As another principle of the ENP review, building of effective regional partnerships is closely related to the regional claims and objectives of the TFP review. As a regionally as well as globally ambitious actor, Turkey's vision-oriented foreign policy also assumes a regional order built on representative political systems reflecting the legitimate demands of the people where

⁵⁷ Behr, "The European Union's Mediterranean Policies after the Arab Spring", p. 83.

⁵⁸ In December 2011, the EU agreed to start trade negotiations with Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan.

⁵⁹ Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Restructuring", pp. 4-5.

regional states are fully integrated with each other around the core values of democracy.⁶⁰ Such an understanding is totally compatible with the reviewed ENP's regional partnerships as the way of fostering regional co-operation and developing regional synergies and responses to the specific regional challenges.⁶¹ This principle also reminds us of Davutoğlu's "regional ownership" developed for the transformation of the [common] neighborhood into a friendship and co-operation basin serving the interests of all.⁶²

ENP review's simplified and coherent policy and programming framework depends on the prioritization of political dialogue and co-operation among the EU's various mechanisms, instruments, and initiatives. With the aim of co-operation and coordination among the EU institutions and between the EU and other actors/organizations, the EU has appointed a special Representative for the southern Mediterranean and so far set up Task Forces⁶³ in Tunisia and Jordan. In the same way, the re-emphasis of the TFP review on using its soft power (in the form of trade, people-to-people contacts and cultural diplomacy) and setting up of a political order based on dialogue, mediation, and multilateralism through its crisis-management services and multi-dimensional diplomacy resembles the ENP review's focus on dialogue.⁶⁴ Moreover, simplified and coherent policy of the ENP review is also compatible with Turkey's attempts for new and major organizational restructuring and improvement.⁶⁵ Both the EU and Turkey have accepted such a reorganization to increase their capacity and flexibility in responding to the regional developments effectively and immediately.

Assessment of the ENP and TFP Reviews

On the basis of the comparison between the EU's and Turkey's reviews, the evaluation of their positions since the start of the Arab Spring shows both were equally criticized for their dilemma between democracy and stability before the Arab Spring. However, even the reviewed versions of their policies cannot guarantee success mostly because of the incompatibility between their value-based nature of reviewed policies and the interest-based regional realities.

The EU's relatively rapid and sudden re-evaluation of its neighborhood policy in the face of the regional developments proved its readiness to respond to new aspirations of the Mediterranean societies and its support for transition

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶¹ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood*, p. 12.

⁶² MacLeod, "Strategic Thinking", pp. 21-22.

⁶³ Task Forces are set up to bring together EU institutions, the EU Special Representation for the southern Mediterranean and International Financial Institutions.

⁶⁴ Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Restructuring", p. 5.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

to the systems based on democracy and human rights. Although the EU is assumed to react with a supposedly new approach, it was neither a completely new and original one nor could it escape from the weaknesses of the previous policy.⁶⁶ In many ways, the revision of conditionality seems to reflect an internal EU demand for a redefinition of “ethical” standards for engagement, following the exposure of EU contradictions in its relations with dictators.⁶⁷ This makes it highly possible the shortcomings of the previous conditionality principle of the ENP, i.e. little guidance, the lack of clear and predetermined criteria, vaguely defined benchmarks, and the relevant rewards, the lack of reliable measurement mechanism and a detailed and transparent time-table⁶⁸ would be transferred to the EU’s newly invented “more for more” principle formulated with an original name but the old logic. It is clear while the official documents were stressing the importance of democracy, good governance and human rights; the EU’s neighborhood policy was still a security-first approach with a focus on fighting terrorism, fundamentalism, and illegal migration.⁶⁹ While pursuing its interests in security, commercial, energy, migratory, and anti-terrorism domains, the EU provided the undemocratic regimes in the region with external rent and legitimacy.⁷⁰ The EU is not vocal enough in defending human rights and democratic forces in the region. Rather, political realism prevailed in the relations between the EU and the Mediterranean countries and confirmed Europe promotes democracy only if it would not challenge their interests in the region. However, EU’s double standard in dealing with human rights and fundamental freedom violations has seriously undermined its credibility as an international actor.

Moreover, the ENP review still reflects intra-EU differences (both at the governmental and societal levels) and the bureaucratic logic of the EU policies that weaken the possibility of a common voice among the member states on foreign policy issues. The divisions among the member states and the domination of the national impulses over the common European spirit, especially on important strategic issues, side line the EU institutions and prevent their functioning as a catalyst for a common policy.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Schumacher, “The EU and the Arab Spring”, p. 109.

⁶⁷ Rosa Balfour, “Changes and Continuities in EU-Mediterranean Relations after the Arab Spring”, in Sven Biscop, Rosa Balfour and Michael Emerson (eds.) *An Arab Springboard for EU Foreign Policy?*, *Egmont Paper*, Vol. 54, January 2012, pp. 33, <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/paperegm/ep54.pdf> (accessed 20 April 2012).

⁶⁸ Schumacher, “The EU and the Arab Spring”, p. 111-112.

⁶⁹ Barysch, “The Arab Spring”.

⁷⁰ Behr, “The European Union’s Mediterranean Policies after the Arab Spring”, p. 78

⁷¹ Only the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 introduced some innovations to better equip the EU in the name of its fully-fledged international actorness –with a stronger, more coherent and structured foreign policy, even if

As important as the above-mentioned complications are, the unwillingness of the regional countries to be bound with external prescriptions has a greater potential of undermining the EU's role. The regional countries might reject the adoption of the EU standards with the lack of political and economic incentives that would come with accession. Therefore, it is valid to question whether the regional countries and the emerging political forces would be ready to cooperate with the EU and take it as a model for political, economic, and legal reforms.

The above-mentioned arguments suggest although the post-2011 period has offered the EU a unique opportunity to improve its neighborhood policy with a new starting point and to restore its status and position in the eyes of the southern Mediterranean region, the EU seems unlikely to go beyond its past habits and behaviors. The early 2011 documents of the EU could only draw the theoretical framework for creating the ring of stable, prosperous, and democratic countries across the neighborhood of the EU, but without an automatic guarantee for its flawless and ideal implementation. Considering the valid conclusion of Timo Behr arguing the EU's commitment to regional democracies still appears to be side lined by its broader geo-political goals and there has been little real change in the EU's definition and operationalization of democracy promotion policies in its [southern] neighbors [since the outbreak of the Arab Spring]⁷², it is not possible to be hopeful in the near future at least. The EU's future performance will mostly depend on its ability to cooperate with internal and external actors. Among the latter, Turkey differentiates itself in terms of its deep involvement in the regional developments and long-lasting relationship with the EU.

The changes in regional power balance following the Arab Spring have pressed also on the new role of Turkey in the region. While the criticisms toward the EU have emerged from the contradictions between the theory and

the EU still differs from the nation states in terms of its capacity and ability to act as an independent

international actor. For detail on the improvements of the EU's foreign policy role please see Kateryna

Koehler, "European Foreign Policy after Lisbon: Strengthening the EU as an International Actor", *Caucasian*

Review of International Affairs, Vol. 4, No. 1, Winter 2010, pp. 57-72 and Paul Jonas," EU Foreign Policy

After Lisbon - Will the New High Representative and the External Action Service Make a Difference?",

Centre for Applied Policy Research - C.A.P Policy Analysis, Vol. 2,

http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2009/785/pdf/CAP_Policy_Analysis_2008_02.pdf

(accessed 21

November 2012).

⁷² Behr, "The European Union's Mediterranean Policies after the Arab Spring", pp. 87-88.

practice of conditionality, criticisms of TFP have emerged due to the inherent dilemmas in its ZPWN principle. Turkey tried to overcome its weaknesses and shortcomings with a new understanding depending on democracy in the domestic politics of the regional countries.

This new foreign policy understanding of Turkey within the framework of democracy promotion is fully compatible with the needs and aspirations of the societies demanding social legitimacy that has been ignored for long years by the authoritarian regimes of the region. In the reviewed version of TFP and especially under the re-evaluated ZPWN approach, Turkey has chosen to re-connect with the people of the region. A new interpretation, “zero problems with the people of our neighbors”, has become the driving force to avoid steps that would alienate Turkey from the hearts and minds of the people in the region for short-term political calculations.⁷³

The first signs of democracy promotion by Turkey were first put into words in Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s electoral victory speech in June 2011. There Erdoğan appreciated the democratic ambitions of the people across the region (of the Middle East, North Africa, and the southern Mediterranean) and confirmed Turkey’s role to call for rights, justice, the rule of law, and freedom and democracy in the entire region. This would enable Turkey to reach to the populaces rather than the establishment of the countries and support the regional transition processes to democracy. Implying Turkey would bypass governments if necessary and reach out to their citizens with support for democratic and economic reforms, Erdoğan’s speech marked the official start of a new era in TFP.⁷⁴

By taking sides with pro-democratic mass movements, Turkey proved its determination to develop closer ties to the people and support their democratic demands. With its new attitude, Turkey started casting itself as the champion of human rights and democracy in the region.⁷⁵ However, even though the Arab Spring provided the opportunity also for Turkey to update its ZPWN in a pro-democratic fashion, this does not mean it will be exempt from risks and challenges. On top, although Turkey has based its stance on supporting reforms for more transparency, legitimacy, and accountability and pursuing them through peaceful transitions,⁷⁶ its initial hesitation and following contradictions and delays in supporting pro-democratic forces undermined its credibility and raised questions regarding its commitment to democracy.

In principle, Turkey welcomed the profound challenges mounted against the authoritarian regimes. But in practice, major trade-offs emerged between the need to achieve stability in the short-run and the need to champion

⁷³ Davutoğlu, “Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Restructuring”, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Güsten, “Mandate for a New Turkish Era”.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ MacLeod, “Strategic Thinking”, p. 25.

the cause of democracy and regime change. Thus, Turkey could not establish a balance between the norm-based and interest-based approach and has, eventually, become trapped between real and moral politics.⁷⁷ Such inconsistent and incoherent policies and U-turns, however, led to severe criticism towards Turkey. Those criticisms have become more serious with the Libyan crisis. Until then, the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt did not pose serious challenges for Turkey due to the lack of well-established relations with the former and already existing regional competition with the latter. The uprisings in Libya posed more serious challenges due to Turkey's commercial links with the country and the Turkish people living there. Turkey tried to find a diplomatic solution and opposed the military intervention until the last moment. However, its decision to participate in NATO's military operation at the last stage was seriously criticized, inside and outside of the country, due to the U-turns and reversals in Turkey's Libya policy. Its initial rejection of the international intervention was interpreted in the light of Turkey's preeminent economic interests over normative concerns. Later, the decision to support such an intervention, only when its inevitability became clear, was evaluated as a pragmatic step to keep in step with the international coalition, but also a deviation from its initially adopted position.

Among all others, the most serious challenge for Turkey emerged with the Syrian crisis, which put Turkey's re-evaluated ZPWN to the test. Considering Syria as the example of Turkey's model neighbor relations, close relations with the incumbent government forced Turkey to take a cautious line at the beginning and use diplomatic means to convince the Assad regime to reform. It was only in the summer of 2011 when Turkey increased its level of criticism against the Syrian regime. With the recognition that its calls for reform and peaceful-orderly transition to democracy fell on deaf ears, Turkey shifted its policy to a "liberal, assertive and normative [lines]" and its policy has gradually become "more humanitarian"⁷⁸, when the regime rejected the international calls for abandoning violence against protestors. It should also be noted that with the spill-over effect of the Syrian domestic violence and conflicts into Turkey, the values and interests of the latter have dovetailed and, inevitably, forced it to stand against the use of violence by the government. Afterwards, Turkey became a leading force in the international effort against the Assad regime. In February 2012 Turkey supported the United Nations Security Council Draft Resolution backing the Arab League plan to isolate Assad's government and make way for a democratically elected unity government. In line with this policy, Davutoğlu argued "[Turkey] will continue

⁷⁷ Oğuzlu, "The 'Arab Spring' and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'Zero Problems with Neighbours' Policy", p. 11.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 7.

to strongly support the Syrian people's democracy struggles in various regional and international platforms".⁷⁹ Turkey participated in the first meeting of the Friends of Syria, the coalition of Arab and western countries set up to provide support for the Syrian opposition, and hosted the second one in Istanbul in April 2012. Turkey has also backed the Syrian National Council, the major and the most prominent civilian coalition based in exile, and allowed the leading personnel of the Free Syrian Army to operate from Turkey.

While evaluating Turkey's democracy promotion role, we should not overlook Turkey also faces the risk of being perceived as an "interventionist" actor⁸⁰ due to its democratic agenda towards the region. Such a perception, however, might easily weaken its role in the region. Therefore, Turkey has to persuade the regional countries in terms of its intentions towards the region. In addition, internal and external criticisms for a number of measures that have restricted democracy and human rights at home might also seriously undermine Turkey's role in the name of pro-democratic policies in the regional countries.

Conclusion

Aspiring to create a belt of peace, stability, security, and prosperity in their neighborhoods with the help of a ring of friendly and well-governed cooperative countries, both the EU and Turkey share the same ideals for their common neighborhood. With this objective, both of them are struggling to find a balance between their interests and shared values as the most effective means of guaranteeing democracy in the region. However, their individual attempts have been inadequate so far, both to meet the regional expectations and to gain their lost credibility in the eyes of the regions people. The weaknesses and contradictions in their specific policies towards the region have not created the required impetus to compel the regional leaders and regimes towards democratization. The issue at stake is both the EU's and Turkey's ability and capacity to be a force for democracy in their common neighborhood where both have a vested interest in stability, peace, democracy, and economic development. Therefore, the need for co-operation between the two is becoming more urgent to support regional countries that have entered a very difficult and long process of transition and consolidation. Sharing the same aims and values in the region, Turkey would benefit from the EU's financial and institutional capacity while the EU would benefit from Turkey's influence and network of commercial-diplomatic and cultural relationships with the region in view of its cultural background, religion, and geographical proximity. As a result of this co-operation, Turkey and the EU can multiply the effects of their actions to promote more a more secure, prosperous, and democratic region.

⁷⁹ Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Restructuring", pp. 7-8.

⁸⁰ Kardaş, "Turkey and the Arab Spring: Coming to Terms with Democracy Promotion?", p. 5.

However, there is little evidence of operational foreign policy co-operation so far. The EU's offer of foreign policy dialogue within the framework of "Strategic Dialogue" but outside the accession process has created suspicion in Turkish political circles. Turkey continuously rejects any kind of co-operation outside the accession process, which might set it on the path towards a privileged partnership, a step down from full membership. Turkey's own ambitions and claims of being a leading regional power and an independent international actor also reduce the possibility of its co-operation with any actor in the region including the EU. Despite the lack of any prospect between the two sides, they have to acknowledge the Arab Spring has proved the potential advantages of co-operation as well as the consequences of failing to achieve it. In that sense, the Positive Agenda accepted in May 2012 might be a starting point in the name of institutionalization of foreign and security policy dialogue. As important as institutionalization, the cooperation and coordination between the two sides should also be extended to the developments of a joint strategy with respect to the post-Arab Spring world.⁸¹ The revamping of the respective neighborhood policies would be an opportunity for Turkey and the EU to seriously re-think about their foreign policy coordination. Although the current blockage of Turkey-EU accession negotiations is likely to remain a major obstacle, at least in the short-term, for substantial co-operation between the two sides to materialize. Both sides would have to acknowledge the structural context that emerged with the Arab Spring involves a convergence of interests between Turkey and the EU and only interdependent and integrated neighborhood approaches could combine their respective strengths while offsetting their weaknesses, serving the interests of Turkey, the EU and the region alike. Rivalries, miscommunication and misunderstanding, on the other hand, could only undermine not only the effects of their neighborhood policies but also their bilateral relations.

⁸¹The rationale behind the mutual cooperation and possible mechanisms of foreign policy co-operation between the EU and Turkey are discussed in several studies including Heather Grabbe and Sinan Ülgen, "The High Price of Strategic Rivalry", 20 April 2011, <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/the-high-price-of-strategic-rivalry-/70871.aspx> (accessed 3 June 2012); Grant, "A New Neighbourhood Policy for the EU"; Soler i Lecha, "The EU, Turkey and the Arab Spring"; pp. 23-33; Tocci, "A Trilateral EU-US-Turkey Strategy for the Neighbourhood", pp. 16-20; Tocci and Cassarino, "Rethinking the EU's Mediterranean Policies Post-1/11".

