

Destabilization of the Union's neighbourhood – with the conflict on Ukraine and expansion of the Islamic State – makes the building of strategic partnership between the EU and Turkey an imperative. Such a partnership in foreign policy would allow for coordinated action both in the Eastern and Southern peripheries of the European Union. Crucially, strategic alliance of UE and Turkey is in interest of both parties. The persistent destabilization of Ukraine and the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, expansion of the Islamic State), but also other negative processes in the common neighbourhood (Russia's expansionism, frozen conflicts in the Caucasus, destabilization in the Black Sea region, etc.), constitute a threat to security, as well as economic and political interests of both the EU and Turkey. A "new opening", that would permit close cooperation in the neighbourhood is all the more important, as the geopolitical perspectives of both partners have been recently drifting apart. This is confirmed by the fact that Turkey has been less willing to join EU common positions in the field of CFSP. Whereas between October 2006 and September 2007 Turkey joined 45 out of 46 declarations, in 2010-2011 – only 32 out of 67. In 2012-2013 Turkey decided to join less than 50% of declarations.

At the same time Turkey is still participating in the EU peace-keeping missions, which shows Ankara's readiness to engage in stabilization of the common neighbourhood, in coordination with the EU. Turkey is also co-initiator of a number of projects in the field of security policy, together with Western partners (one example is Global Forum on Counter Terrorism, where Turkey is co-presiding – together with the EU – the working group on the Horn of Africa).

Moreover, Turkey has both the potential and the will to play a greater role in the field of energy, where interests of EU and Turkey converge in many cases (diversification of suppliers, lower prices). Finally, there is room for cooperation when it comes to supporting modernization processes in third countries.

The main research question is the following: considering the differentiated integration within the EU and the stalled accession process of Turkey, in what ways the strategic and sustainable partnership between Brussels and Ankara could be built, so that it allows for coordinated and coherent policy towards the common neighbourhood?

The main thesis is the following: in the face of 1) fundamental changes in the model of European integration; 2) actual freezing of the Turkey's accession process; 3) dynamic changes in the common neighbourhood and the resulting challenge to define new policy towards the region both for the EU and Turkey, it is imperative to look for new formats of EU- Turkey partnership.

It seems that representatives of Turkish ruling elite no longer exclude (as it was the case in the past) alternatives to full membership, under the condition that they bring political, legal and economic advantages over the status quo. Moreover, destabilization in its neighbourhood might moderate Turkey's aspirations to build autonomous position at the international arena. Paradoxically, the above mentioned three major determinants could, assuming political will of both sides, lead towards establishing a strategic and long-term partnership between the EU and Turkey.

In this vein, the expected research result is elaboration of an original and novel concept of possible modules/forms of cooperation between EU and Turkey, while looking at the potential for cooperation in foreign policy and common challenges and threats in the neighbourhood.