

## **Short presentation “Turkey between E and V”**

The main purpose of this research project is to analyze the new direction of the Republic of Turkey, referring to the current vision of President Recep Erdogan. This research direction fully examines whether the progress made by the Turkish Republic in the geo-strategic context over the last 10 years is in line with European development directions and whether there may be obvious overlaps and impediments that can be overcome through diplomatic means, economic support and regional geo-strategic collaboration.

As a secondary goal, reference is made to the measures taken by President Recep Erdogan and to the possible increase in the level of regional security, given the tensions in northern Syria and the growing problem of migrants. The analysis of the relationship between the influence of the political vision of a leader - Recep Erdogan - on the complex processes of integration of a state - the Republic of Turkey - is also noticeable.

Through the “case study” method, the complex and detailed analysis of the main socio-cultural defining elements of the Turkish Republic was highlighted, as well as the geo-political and geo-strategic context in which it takes place. Thus, a causal link was made between state policies and Turkey's development opportunities. At the same time, the achievement of research objectives can be established using the four characteristics described by Bent Flyvbjerg: optimizing the relationship between identifying the research topic and delimiting them beyond the research method, the property of the case study to include an overview superior to methods quantitative by the degree of complexity of the analyzed elements, the longitudinal analysis of the research problem in different contexts and on different levels and the contextualization of the studied case in a broad context, correlated with external elements that at first sight do not seem to be interconnected. From the point of view of this method there are three typologies of case studies: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.

As a research paradigm, the thesis chosen from the Hermeneutic (interpretive) perspective as a form of constructivism was approached. Therefore, the aim was to identify the meanings and ways of understanding and interpreting the actions and interactions between the main actors of the Republic of Turkey.

This doctoral research project aims to present a clearer perspective on the development potential of the Republic of Turkey, starting from the new vision and political strategy of President Recep Erdogan, identifying the socio-economic and cultural peculiarities that may be favorable

factors for the development of the process of integration of this state in a wider Western context as a partner of NATO and possibly a member state of the European Union.

Following the application of research techniques and analysis based on the hermeneutic-constructivist paradigm, three clear lines of action were found likely, for the Republic of Turkey, in each of which the current state policy plays an important role: the possibility for the Turkish state to develop a a broader polarization policy, the directive mode of administration of Turkey which can be seen as a slip from the Western liberal democratic directions and indicators leading to the possibility of strengthening regional security and a possible rapprochement of Turkey with the EU along with the sharp redefinition of economic and strategic partnerships.

Following the research process, we can consider that there are three possible directions for Turkey, in each of which Erdogan has a significant role. It could continue its policy of polarization, in which case Turkey will be rooted in a permanent state of regional crisis management, accompanied by deep social division. Alternatively, he could be seen as an authoritarian leader, imposing exclusively his vision on how to govern. Lastly, there is the possibility of strengthening regional security, followed by Turkey's rapprochement with Europe and the strengthening of economic and military partnerships.

Starting from the undoubted reality and without pretensions of completeness, the research objective of this doctoral research project is to identify if the new direction of the Turkish Republic, through the current vision of President Recep Erdogan, can be a favorable factor for the integration of this state in the European Union or, on the contrary, may be an impediment to this process.

During the reign of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey continued to be an interventionist regional power, rooted in Islamic nationalist values, which raised tensions in its ties with traditional allies and Russia, but the current Turkish president has managed to combines traditional values with democratic-European approaches, through major changes that strengthen the rule of law and fundamental human rights.

The in-depth analysis of political and economic factors, together with the relationship with traditional allies, is useful in determining the overall picture of Turkey's position in the international arena. Therefore, reference is made to the history of Turkey in terms of social values, armed conflicts and its cultural heritage. Consequently, through the historical sources, dating from the 13th century, the creation of the Turkish state is mentioned. Between the 14th and early 20th centuries, much of southeastern Europe, West Asia, and North Africa were dominated by the Ottoman Empire. The height of the power of the Ottoman Empire was reached during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. Due to the conquest of Constantinople, which later became the capital, and the

possibility of controlling the countries around the Mediterranean basin, the Ottoman Empire was at the center of interactions between the Eastern and Western worlds for six centuries. Following severe military defeats, the Ottoman state initiated a comprehensive process of reform and modernization known as the "Tanzimat", thus becoming much stronger and better organized.

With the Second Constitutional Era and the Young Turkish Revolution, the fall of the Ottoman Empire began. The Ottoman Constitution of 1876 was reintroduced, which offered citizens the opportunity to modernize state institutions and dissolve inter-communal tensions. The political structure of the Empire was modified by the Young Turkish Revolution, giving rise to political pluralism, specific to democracy.

The empire underwent major changes in its own structure, this period eventually marking its decline. Following the defeat of the Empire in World War I, the territories of the Middle East were divided or even lost. The Turkish War of Independence against the occupying allies led to the emergence of the Republic of Turkey and led to the abolition of the Ottoman monarchy. Turkey's Grand National Assembly has officially dissolved the Ottoman sultanate.

The new state was created from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. It wanted to create a modern society, where the bourgeoisie would replace the conservative bureaucracy and the peasantry. Marshal Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first President of the Republic of Turkey, established the Parliament of Turkey. Ten years later, the leader called for the founding of the Liberal Party, which was soon dissolved. Therefore, until 1945 there was no democratic exercise. Other parties were then set up, with other leaders coming to power.

A new Constitution was validated in 1961, which provided for a bicameral Parliament, and legislative power was formed from the House of Representatives and the Senate, while executive power was entrusted to the President and the Council of Ministers. The Constitution also provided for the existence of a Constitutional Court, adopting the principles of a democratic state. Following the military coup of 1980, the Constitution was annulled and all parties abolished. A new Constitution was drafted in 1982, bringing as a major change a unicameral parliamentary system. Executive power has been restored, but new, more precise restrictions on fundamental rights and freedoms have been introduced. It is still in force, but various amendments have been made to it.

The importance of the rule of law is found in the Constitution, according to which the governmental system of Turkey is based on the model of separation of powers in the state. The constitutional reforms adopted by the National Assembly on January 21, 2017 and approved by referendum on April 16, 2017 have transformed Turkey from a parliamentary regime to a

presidential one. Turkey of 2020 is a definite interlocutor, the way of governing the current presidency being one of mixing bold initiatives.

The refugee situation is the problem facing European Union leaders; they unanimously approved an agreement with Turkey on the immigrant crisis, which allowed Ankara leaders to call for additional financial assistance, speed up negotiations for rapprochement with the EU and lift visas for Turkish citizens. On the other hand, the realization of global and regional ambitions depends on Russia's cooperation with Turkey.

From a historical point of view, the external relations of the Ottoman Empire and later of Turkey, balanced the regional and global powers, forming alliances that protected with priority the interests of the current regime. Turkey's economy has grown rapidly, and the country's influence in the Middle East has grown on the basis of an in-depth strategic doctrine called neo-Ottomanism.

In the nineteenth century, Christianity was considered one of the defining characteristics of Europe. Through this line of reasoning it can be concluded that as long as the Turks remain muslims, they will not be able to change and develop. In the run-up to the Crimean War, Sir Earl Gray rejected the idea that Ottoman reforms could succeed. The desire to limit religion to the private sphere would become one of the hallmarks of the Kemalist attitude towards religion, their reforms including many acts aimed at eliminating the influence of Islam in Turkish society. One of the most significant attempts of Kemalism in this regard was the translation of the Qur'an into turkish. Mustafa Kemal encouraged the adoption of a European way of life.

With the end of the Cold War, identity issues entered the political arena, triggering the rise of the Islamist movement in Turkey. Subsequently, the 1997 postmodern coup against the Islamist government of Turkey led to a learning process among the reformist faction of Islamists that rejected radical views and embraced liberal values and Turkey's accession to the EU. Islamists realized that the only option would be to reduce EU influence.

With the rise of Erdogan and the AKP, Turkey has set out to become a regional power, projecting its influence in its neighborhood and even globally. The country has joined Western institutions such as the OECD, and has applied to become a member of the EU. Ankara, as the seat of Turkish foreign policy, embodied Turkey's new foreign policy, but during the 20th century, Turkey's world had become much more Eurocentric. From 2002 to 2014, the Turkish economy grew almost threefold and thus disappeared the old Turkey, a poor country begging to join the EU and replaced by a new, confident and booming Turkey.

Ankara's foreign policy vision wanted to go beyond Europe; the strategic depth prompted Turkish diplomats to build their influence in the Middle East, Africa and Muslim-majority

countries. Turkey was looking for a seat at every table and a membership card at every club, with Turkey's foreign policy elites convinced that Turkey's role in shaping world affairs extends beyond borders. Finally, Turkey realized that its strategic value to the Middle East has its roots in the fact that it is a Muslim power with strong ties to the United States and access to NATO resources. This achievement was the catalyst for Ankara's foreign policy change. Neo-Ottomanism is becoming the political goal through which many Turks view world politics, and the real challenge for Turkey has been and is to prove its accreditation as a liberal democracy. The elaboration of its first civil constitution was a particularly important point. Turkey's experience under the AKP government may not be so easy for Arab societies to take over.

Turkey's strategic position, the strength of its army, as well as its enhanced cooperation with the West, give it the position of a geo-strategic player on the world political scene. In the period 1923-2018, Turkey's policy was governed by a representative parliamentary democracy. In 2017, a referendum was held approving the presidential system, entering into force in 2018 after the presidential election. It gives the president full control over the executive, including issuing decrees, appointing the cabinet, setting the budget, dissolving Parliament and appointing to the courts. Officially, the judiciary is independent, but the constitutional changes that came into force as a result of direct consultation of Turkish citizens by vote in 2007, 2010 and 2017 have given presidents and the ruling party greater powers to appoint or change prosecutors and judges. The decision on the conformity of laws and decrees by relating them to the provisions of the Constitution rests with the Constitutional Court. It may also prohibit the operation or financing of a political party if it is considered anti-secular or separatist. The involvement of religion in legislation, education and public life has generated opposing views, on the one hand being supporters of Ataturk's reforms, called Kemalists, and Islamists on the other. Ataturk's supporters prefer a Westernized approach and support the involvement of state powers in education, public services and especially in the economy. The Islamist movement believes that religion has an important role to play in governing the country. The country under President Erdogan and his party has been portrayed as more authoritarian. Within NATO, along with the other member states, the Turkish armed forces ranks second.

Turkey's main foreign policy objectives are centered in two main directions, firstly the relations between it and Russia, due to the complex strategic partnership between the two states and secondly with the United States of America, due to its membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. At the same time, EU member states remain important to Turkey, both economically and in terms of the prospect of joining the Alliance.

The relationship between Turkey and Russia is characterised by an elite-led process, modelled mainly between Erdogan and Putin, which means it is not institutionalised, where both actors first prioritise their interests. Turkish-Russian strategic relations have been strengthened in four distinct ways: in response to disagreements between Turkey and the EU, NATO and the US, especially since the failed coup attempt; on the basis of defence cooperation between Ankara and Moscow, which calls into question the traditional NATO-centred geo-strategic orientation; on economic parameters, given that Turkey is Russia's second largest natural gas market after the EU; Moscow's vision of its Kurdish region, with continued emphasis on respect for existing political borders and the sovereignty of host states in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.

The Turkey-Russia-EU energy triangle is a relationship of interdependence and strategic compromise. Turkey has supported and will continue to argue its position and relevance in a strategic energy relationship with the EU vis-à-vis the West.

Russia and Turkey have also set up a common fund to strengthen their economic relations. Russia's interest in strengthening its partnership with Turkey is on the rise, given the intensification of the conflict between it and the West, but also the position of Turkey's current president towards the Western world, and especially in its relations with the US, NATO and the EU.

Turkey is positioned in S - E Europe and S - E Asia. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Marmara Sea and the Black Sea, and borders Greece and Bulgaria to the northwest; Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the northeast; Iran to the east and Iraq and Syria to the south. Turkey's control over the only strait that facilitates exit from the Black Sea has been a crucial factor in establishing its relations with other states. Turkey's political system is a presidential Republic, with its capital in Ankara. The predominant religion in Turkey is Islam, and the established language is Turkish. In terms of ethnicity, the population is mostly Turks, but the Kurds represent 18% of the population. In memory of a uplifting past, Turkey does not significantly change the flag from that of the Ottoman Empire.

With the quality of maritime waterways, the Turkish straits connect various seas along the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Middle East and Western Eurasia. Specifically, the straits allow maritime connections from the Black Sea to the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas, the Atlantic Ocean via Gibraltar and the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal, making them crucial on the international waterway map, especially for the passage of goods coming from Russia. The Turkish straits are made up of the following waterways: the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, which have played an important role as trade routes from the Black Sea to ports around the world. The Montreux Convention on the Straits Regime was convened in 1936 to determine both military and

regulatory policy on the transit of Turkish straits, where the governments of Australia, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, the Soviet Union, and Turkey, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia., were represented. Following the convention, Turkey was allowed to militarise and regulate maritime access through the straits. The treaty explicitly forbade the crossing of straits by ships belonging to any state connected to the Black Sea. Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin later proposed a joint Turkish-Soviet control of the straits. Tensions between the USSR and Turkey have risen as Turkey has allowed civilian crews in the Black Sea, including those in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, to cross the straits during World War II. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is currently developing an important project involving the construction of a waterway running through northern Istanbul to link the Marmara Sea to the Black Sea.

The straits became particularly important during the First World War as potential links between the eastern and western fronts of the Entente powers. The 1936 Montreux Convention on the Turkish Straits Crossing Regime, which is still in force, provides Turkey with control over the Turkish Straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits) and regulates the transit of naval warships.

In the historical context, the Montreux Convention was only one of a series of long-term agreements whose approach to the "strait question" was to determine who should control the vital link between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) demilitarized the Dardanelles and opened the strait to unrestricted civilian and military trafficking, under the supervision of the International Commission of the League of Nations. In April 1935, the Turkish government sent a diplomatic note to the signatories of the Lausanne Treaty proposing a conference on the agreement of a new strait regime and asking the League of Nations to authorize the reconstruction of the Dardanelles forts. Turkey was ready to negotiate in a liberal spirit, a constant development of trade navigation between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea in order to reach in the near future the conclusion of agreements regulating the security regime indispensable for the inviolability of Turkish territory. Turkey, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union each presented a set of proposals, which were mainly aimed at protecting their own interests.

The Axis' powers were thus severely limited from a naval point of view in their Black Sea campaigns, relying mainly on small ships that had been transported abroad by rail and naval networks. However, auxiliary ships and merchant ships were uncertain, and their transit through the straits led to conflicts between the Allies and Turkey. In January 1994, the Turkish government adopted new "Maritime Traffic Regulations for the Turkish Straits and the Marmara Region". They introduced new regulations to "ensure the safety of navigation, life and property and to protect the environment in the region", but without violating the Montreux principle of free passage. Also, the

security environment in the Black Sea region is constantly changing. In this sense, NATO has become an important pillar for Turkey in order to maintain a security environment in the Black Sea area, regardless of the rupture of Turkey by its Western partners. Starting with 2017, NATO defense ministers have resumed and supported an increased presence in the Black Sea region, by carrying out actions both by sea, air and land. Since 2015, Ankara has supported Georgia's accession to NATO and signed defence agreements with Ukraine. But in terms of partnerships in this region, Azerbaijan is the most important player, and the incumbent government enjoys the support of voters. Turkey is a nation that wants to become an energy hub, exerting influence on oil production and exports in Azerbaijan, as well as collaborating on various energy projects. In 2010, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed an agreement on a strategic partnership and mutual support, which includes obligations on mutual support by any means possible in the event of a military attack by a third country on any of them.

Turkey's strategic actions to strengthen its position and achieve its interests in the region without generating conflicts are due to the fact that it fully understands Russia's role as a dominant player in the Black Sea region. The conflict between Russia and Turkey has the potential to involve other international and regional actors, such as Iran and the United States. However, an attitude of cooperation in the Black Sea between Turkey and Russia will not be easy to achieve as long as it does not include other coastal countries.

After Turkey overcame a major economic and financial crisis at the end of 2002, in 2005, the European Council became actively involved in the negotiations for Turkey's accession to the European Union. Turkey has enjoyed significant recovery performance, with its vulnerabilities largely mitigated by attractive investment in foreign capital. There are advantages such as significant global economic and political relations and a dynamic economy. However, it also records losses. From an economic point of view, Turkey is on the verge of a medium level, but this scenario may be disrupted by its political evolution. During the talks on Turkey's accession, various impediments were encountered. Turkey considers that its accession to the EU would be an advantage for both parties.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Turkish government remains rhetorically engaged in the accession process. For its part, the EU, at least from an institutional point of view, remains engaged in the process, but places Turkey in an area of uncertainty from this point of view. Turkey believes that it can evolve on its own and no longer considers the EU as its main target, resulting in a stagnation of the accession process. EU negotiations with Turkey were blocked in 2010 due to several factors, the most important being the conflict in Cyprus.

Germany, in turn, plays an important role, thanks to the large Turkish diaspora. Turkey and Germany have seen growing cultural, economic and social ties over the 20th century. The German-Turkish relationship is an important one: by the end of 2012, about 3 million people of Turkish origin lived permanently in Germany, the latter becoming the largest export market for goods in Turkey.

The start of the Cypriot presidency of the EU Council of Ministers in July 2012 affects Cypriot-Turkish relations, with Turkey announcing the suspension of contacts with the EU presidency during Cyprus' six-month term.

The start of the Cypriot presidency of the EU Council of Ministers in July 2012 affects Cypriot-Turkish relations. Cypriot-Turkish relations have been further aggravated by escalating tensions over Cyprus' decision to start drilling offshore gas in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is a well-developed body of international law that regulates maritime borders and rights to underwater resources. The rules stipulate that (coastal) states are entitled to EEZs and a continental shelf of up to 200 nautical miles, provided there are no overlapping requests from other states. Where there are overlapping claims, as is clearly the case between Cyprus and Turkey, UNCLOS calls for a "fair solution". Turkey has concluded agreements on the continental shelf and the EEZ borders in the Black Sea with Bulgaria and Ukraine, as well as an agreement with the continental shelf with Northern Cyprus, which strengthens the relevance of UNCLOS for Turkey. Both the EU and the US have recognized the Cyprus EEZ. Turkey also claims a continental shelf, bounded on the west by Cyprus by a median line between Turkey and Egypt and partially overlapping with blocks 1, 4, 6 and 7 of the Cyprus EEZ, ignoring Cyprus on the grounds that it is an island.

Turkey has undergone major changes in many areas over the past three decades. Despite several economic crises and political instability, it has managed to grow over the years and is often cited as one of the best performing emerging economies in the world. From an economic and commercial perspective, the early 1980s can be considered a critical period. After a long period of import substitution and protectionist policies, Turkey switched to an export-led growth model in the early 1980s, which was followed by trade liberalisation. Since then, the volume of trade in the country has grown steadily. Especially after 2000, the export of goods was the main driver behind total exports. Turkey has managed to maintain and stabilise the opening of its economy, despite the global crises. Assessing competitiveness through export performance, Turkish exports have been on the rise over the last decade, with Turkey's manufacturing industry dealing more with the domestic market than with international markets. The EU has remained an important trading partner of Turkey.

The EU opened accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005, but is making slow progress. The AKP's rise to power in 2002 promoted EU membership and its democratic reform agenda to broaden its support base for the center. After the second electoral victory in 2007, the AKP became much stronger both in society and against the secular institution, and thus became less dependent on the EU and its democratisation agenda. Turkey has taken important steps to strengthen fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In the relationship between Turkey and the European Union, the most important aspect is its ascending and descending character from the very beginning and the determination of the parties to continue the relationship from the perspective of membership, regardless of the occasional crises. Turkey-EU relations, which remained static until 2015, have regained momentum as the human tragedy in Syria turns into a refugee crisis for the EU. The summits between Turkey and the EU resulted in important decisions, such as the revitalisation of accession negotiations, the strengthening of high-level dialogues in crucial areas, in particular political, economic and energy dialogues, cooperation in the fight against terrorism, division of labor in migration management, accelerating visas and dialogue on the liberalisation and modernisation of the customs union. The 2015 refugee crisis has had a major impact on relations between Turkey and the European Union.

Turkey continues to work for the EU process, despite all political obstacles. Turkey is an EU strategic partner in issues such as migration, security, counter-terrorism and the economy, but fails in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights. The General Affairs Council decided in June 2018 that accession negotiations with Turkey are effectively frozen. An EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan was agreed in October 2015 and activated a month later at a meeting between the two parties. The action plan aims to bring order to migratory flows and stop the influx of illegal migration. Refugee facilities have been implemented in Turkey.

The military mechanism that is the core of NATO continues to function smoothly - generating levels of interoperability, integrated operational planning and generating unparalleled forces - NATO's political cohesion is called into question by both internal divisions between members and external actors seeking to exploit these differences to their own advantage.

Perhaps the most pronounced case of this fractured political cohesion is the Turkey-NATO relationship, where internal challenges and pressure from external actors intersect uniquely. At present, there is a great deal of mutual mistrust, which leads some allies to question whether Turkey continues to share NATO's interests and values. However, fundamental factors remain valid: Turkey's geopolitical position at the crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, continues to provide NATO with the necessary political and operational coverage, and Turkey continues to

benefit from NATO's collective military power. The key to understanding the two is to focus on areas of mutual interest such as the Black Sea, stability in the Middle East. Certainly, repairing the lost confidence and bringing Turkey back to Western integration will be a struggle that requires sustained efforts.

The end of the Cold War led to fundamental changes in Turkey's foreign policy, influencing Turkey's diplomatic relations in the Middle East. Ankara began to exert influence in Central Asia, the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Balkans. The Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union also led Turkey to become a more assertive interlocutor in dealing with the problems. Although Turkey supported the coalition's powers in the 1991 Gulf crisis, it also tried to stop the war. Turkey's relations with the Middle East since the 1990s have been intertwined between security and coherence.

Turkey's active involvement in the Gulf War was a fundamental change in its traditional "balanced" foreign policy towards the Middle East, a change that continued after the war. Therefore, the Gulf War marked the beginning of a transformation of Turkey's regional policy on its southern and eastern borders.

Turkey's indirect involvement in the Gulf War has taken two forms. First, the Turkish government has given the US permission to use the common air bases in the southeast of the country, namely the Incirlik base. Secondly, Turkey played a key and extremely important role in the war, by linking a considerable proportion of the Iraqi army. The Gulf War has shown that Turkey is one of the key players in the Middle East. Turkey's discreet and prudent traditional approaches have been replaced by a confident new style. This change in Turkey's regional behaviour became distinctive when it began meeting with Syria and Iran. Overall, the legacy of the Gulf and Ozal war in Turkish foreign policy is still seen as a major force behind Turkey's active involvement in the Middle East. At the same time, the losses and gains resulting from the Gulf War have become a point of reference for Turkey's involvement in the region.

In December 1995, an Islamic-oriented party will win the election, with Turkey's foreign policy leaning toward the Middle East in particular, and Islamic countries in general becoming persistent. The party has managed to radically intensify Ankara's relations with strong Muslim countries.

Turkey's foreign policy has received considerable attention, in particular because of its transformations with the United States, Israel and the European Union were experiencing significant turbulence.

Turkish diplomacy before the Arab Spring developed different approaches with the countries of the Middle East, aiming to improve relations with both governments and the public. In this context, the Turkish approach to Tunisia and Egypt is noteworthy. Turkey has followed developments in the region and led indirectly in the direction of a democratic regime. Although he kept a low profile, he offered his support for the transformation process, arguing that Tunisian leaders should listen to the voice of their people. At the same time, Turkey maintained its support for democracy when the spirit of the revolution reached Egypt, taking a risky stance. After failing to prevent NATO intervention in Libya, Turkey reversed its position and joined the Alliance to participate in the decision-making process and fully supported the Libyan opposition, strengthening the development opportunity in the future.

Compared to other revolutions, Syria has been the most complicated and delicate for Turkish foreign policy. Turkish officials have recommended a national anti-corruption campaign and a reform of the Syrian state's intelligence and security services. First, Syria has responded positively to calls for reform and taken steps to improve people's freedoms, eased political restrictions and introduced a series of reforms to improve the country's economy. Second, Turkey had significant trade interests in Syria. Last but not least, their cooperation against the PKK, given that Syria hosted a significant proportion of the Kurdish population, and some of them joined the PKK. Turkey has tried to manage the situation in Syria through dialogue. The first signal of Turkey's policy change came from Foreign Minister Davutoglu, who said Ankara's support was based on the Syrian government's willingness to adopt radical reforms in the country. Before and immediately after the beginning of the Arab Spring, Turkey's popularity had grown in the Arab world. Turkey has shown that it can have a democratic approach aligned with the West, but also continue to oppose undemocratic Israeli policies. Turkey's position was strengthened after Erdogan's discussion with Israeli President Shimon Peres about the Israeli war in Gaza at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2009. Erdogan's widely acclaimed gesture on the Arab street exposed and undermined Arab leaders who they have complied with Israeli policies, having a significant political impact throughout the Arab world. Economic and political achievements have made Turkey a "model" to follow to replace despotic Arab regimes. Turkey has never presented itself as a model for the Arab world, but the Arab media, civil society and opposition groups in the Arab world have presented Turkey as such.

In recent years, Turkey has paid special attention to the Black Sea, where it is constantly developing an increasingly close relationship with another important country in the region, Ukraine. The Ukraine-Russia conflict and the subsequent escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Black Sea

have made Turkish-Ukrainian cooperation a priority for the two countries. Turkey has been cautious and has refused to impose sanctions on Russia for its actions, as have the United States and the European Union. But on the other hand, Ankara has clearly supported Ukraine's territorial integrity and refused to recognise Crimea as Russian territory, a position it maintains to date.

Significant developments in Turkish-Ukrainian relations over the past seven years show that, despite frequent reports of a Russia-Turkey rapprochement, which is absolutely certain, Turkey still considers Russia a serious threat, which must be managed with priority. Close cooperation with Ukraine demonstrates the common Turkey-NATO understanding of the Black Sea geopolitics. Turkey's flourishing relationship with Russia has not only generated debate in Washington and Western European capitals, but has also caused great discomfort in countries such as Georgia, which have been affected by Russian aggression. From Georgia's perspective, Turkey, which has strong ties to the West, is an ideal partner for Russian action.

Terrorism is the use of intentional violence for political or religious purposes. Legislation declaring terrorism a crime has been adopted in many states. For an action to be considered an act of terrorism, it must be violent or threaten to be violent. Turkey is a predominantly Sunni Muslim country and the only Muslim-majority country in NATO. In recent years, Islamist terrorist groups, including ISIS, have consolidated on Turkey's borders with Syria and Iraq. ISIS has become increasingly active in Turkey, with Ankara authorities holding the terrorist group responsible for numerous major domestic terrorist attacks. In addition to carrying out numerous terrorist attacks in Turkey, ISIS has used the country as a base for recruiting and promoting foreign fighters. Since 2015, Turkey has announced a major crackdown on terrorist organisations, including ISIS. At the same time, Turkey faces internal terrorist threats from groups such as ISIL and Al-Qaeda. However, Turkey maintains its firm stance against terrorism and is taking important steps to improve democratic standards and extend freedoms, including the adoption of new legal codes and other legislative and administrative measures. In order to fight terrorism, Turkey has requested technical assistance from the US Department of Homeland Security. President Erdogan later said that Turkey exercises its rights to fight terrorist attacks that allow countries to engage in self-defence against an armed attack.

The vision of the leader of the ISIS group was to start a civil war between sunnis and shiites, and to establish a caliphate; was carried out in 2014, when the terrorist group crossed northern Iraq and eastern Syria. Since 2014, the Islamic State has had a secret service called Emni, which was responsible for collecting information, both inside and outside the Islamic State, as well

as planning external attacks globally. Emni was the basic structure that gave birth to ISIS, both as a terrorist organisation and as a totalitarian state.

Ankara authorities have stepped up counter-terrorism efforts through strict surveillance of returnees, but many have remained undetected. The collapse of the ISIS "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq has affected its ability to inspire and mobilise, which has helped reduce ISIS attacks. Western and domestic critics, however, accuse Ankara of turning a blind eye to the movement of militants across the border. The collapse of ISIS's territorial "caliphate" in 2017 significantly weakened the group's ability to mobilise, but did not make global jihadism irrelevant.

Turkey continues to be a regional transit hub for the Islamic State group today, even though NATO ally has recently stepped up efforts to counter ISIS arms smuggling attempts in war-torn Syria. At the same time, Turkey faces a major threat, namely the increased terrorist activity of Kurdish separatists in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which was designated in 1997 by the United States and its allies as a terrorist organisation. Although relations between Turkey and the United States have been strained, there are negotiations between the two sides, amid the end of the Syrian civil war, on establishing a safe zone for Syrian Kurds.

Turkey has been criticised in recent years by Western allies for failing to stop the flow of foreign fighters into Syria, but Ankara has dealt more aggressively with ISIS within its borders. So, in the first month of 2021, Turkey continued its efforts to fight terrorism by giving a heavy blow to the ISIS network.

False news is now a major phenomenon in the world press and in political debates. According to experts, an untrue text becomes "fake news" when it is taken by tens of other sources and read by hundreds of thousands of people. Turkey has long been exposed to the vicious cycle of toxic discourse, misinformation and extreme polarisation in its digital information environment. Turkey's misinformation ecosystem is largely driven by the media and partisan actors who pursue internal political agendas, intimidation, political suppression and amplification of information that serves to fragment existing socio-political fragmentation. False claims, conspiracy theories and coordinated manipulation have also affected the Turkish information environment through Turkish-language networks, including online and offline platforms. The nature and characteristics of human knowledge are the main factors of effective misinformation.

Romania has given priority to maintaining on the agenda of the European Union, the interests of enlargement and integration of the states of the Western Balkans and Turkey, under the aegis of a geo-strategic investment for an economic, political and security growth of the European space. Turkey and Romania enjoy a bilateral strategic partnership aimed at strengthening regional

security with a focus on the Black Sea and the Eastern neighbourhood, as well as on cooperation within NATO. Turkey has permanently supported Romania's NATO candidacy. Cooperation between Turkey and Romania is strong, positively influencing both economic and diplomatic relations on both sides. The Romania-Turkey-Poland Trilateral Cooperation also plays an important role in this regard.

The current president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, gained political experience and founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2001. Hailing from an Islamist political context and describing himself as a conservative democrat, promotes socially conservative and populist policies during his administration.

Turkey has been ruled by parliamentary regimes since 1876, with the exception of the 1921 Constitution, which dates back to the Turkish War of Independence. Then, the 1961 Constitution was criticised for creating an "ungovernable political system" by giving excessive powers to bureaucratic and judicial agencies, creating a stronger executive to "govern." The constitutional amendments of 1971 and 1973, together with the reduction of certain civil liberties introduced by the 1961 constitution and the increase of the institutional autonomy of the military, strengthened the executive, allowing Parliament to grant it legal powers. The 1982 Constitution gave the president substantial powers that could not be in line with the idea of a symbolic presidency of parliamentary regimes. Also, the 2007 constitutional amendment, which was accepted by a national referendum, stated that the president would be elected by popular vote, which initiated a political crisis. As for the 1982 Constitution, it aimed to ensure the supremacy of the executive, provide the opportunity to form strong governments and ensure government stability. Thus, two unique parties were noted: the Motherland Party (ANAP) and the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which fulfilled the political system provided by the 1982 constitution.

As for the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, there is no doubt that he was the most influential political figure in 2002. After the AKP came to power in November 2002, relations between Turkey and Syria have grown rapidly. In 2010, Syria and Turkey signed a counter-terrorism agreement to launch a more effective campaign against the PKK, and Turkey became Syria's largest trading partner. During the AKP, Turkey diversified its foreign relations not only with the Middle East, but also with Asia and Africa, stressing that neither relationship is seen as an alternative to the other; Turkey wanted to play a key role, both in its immediate region and beyond. Moreover, Ankara's new diplomacy has significantly changed the Arab perception of Turkey. Turkey has managed to improve its relations with all its neighbours and has supported political integration as well as the free movement of goods and services in its neighbourhood. This

policy has achieved concrete results in the form of strong and diversified economic relations, increased diplomacy and political influence.

Under Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey escaped the 2008 global recession unscathed. With the rise of the AKP-backed AKP, Turkey has become from a predominantly poor country, a middle-income country with better infrastructure and services. However, the economy will be one of the vulnerabilities of Erdogan's policies. Erdogan's vision, similar to previous generations of Turkish leaders, was to turn Turkey into a strong Middle Eastern nation capable of competing with Europeans and other great powers.

Secularism was a hallmark of Ataturk's reforms and legacy in Turkey; Ataturk never eliminated religion, but campaigned for the separation of powers in the state, creating a secularist system that essentially controlled even marginalised citizens who defined their identity primarily through their faith. Ataturk and his followers, called Kemalists, after the Turkish leader's middle name, were extremely confident in the system they had built. Of course, Erdogan does not share Ataturk's values, only his methods. Just as Ataturk shaped Turkey after his own image after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Erdogan is shaping a new country, but one that stands out as Islamist in domestic and foreign policy - to make it a great power again. Erdogan wants to change Turkey according to his own vision as Ataturk did, and here is the crisis of modern Turkey: half of the country embraces Erdogan's political brand, and the other half vehemently opposes it.

The failed coup in July 2016, ironically, increased Erdogan's power, as the unfortunate attempt to create a junta, traumatised the entire Turkish nation; the events of July 2016 marked a monumental turning point in the political history of Turkey.

In July 2016, the actions taken during the alleged coup, raised serious questions about the capabilities of the Turkish National Intelligence Organisation (MIT). During that period, there were numerous tensions between the military and the Erdogan-led Justice and Development Party over its brand of political Islamism. The president of Turkey and the Turkish government accuse Fethullah Gulen, the leader of the Gulen Movement (a transnational Islamic organisation), for organising the coup. Most Turks agree. However, Fethullah Gulen condemned the coup and denied any involvement.

Turkey's "Spring" military operation launched on October 9, 2019 in northeastern Syria is the result of both internal and external dynamics created following the Syrian civil war (2011) and the failure of the military coup in Turkey (2016).

In 2016, Turkey found itself stuck between a strong rival - Russia - in the Syrian territories west of the Euphrates and an unrelated ally - the US - east of the Euphrates.

In 2018, when Turkey conducted a second major military operation in Syria, called “Olive Branch”, aimed at the Syrian Kurdish canton of Afrin, it became clear that ISIL forces had been considerably weakened. The US military withdrawal from Syria, announced by Trump in December 2018 after claiming that the Islamic State was "defeated", has created a new window of opportunity not only for Turkey, but also for its regional allies, Russia and Iran. So this was a further step towards a strategic detachment of Ankara from its Western allies, aided by the Trump administration's erroneous decisions and the EU's weak stance on Syria where, with the exception of British and French military forces, there are no EU troops in theatres of operations.

Erdogan's power declined in the summer of 2018 due to poor management of the economy, which led to a major recession. In the March 2019 local elections, Erdogan suffered an electoral defeat, prompting a wide range of opposition parties - including Islamists, nationalists, Social Democrats and left-wing liberals - to overcome ideological differences to join forces against him. He also gradually lost support among his party members.

Turkey remains officially a candidate for EU membership, with no expectations from either side of progress towards accession. At the same time, Turkish-American relations remain strained for several reasons.

In conclusion, I believe that there are three possible directions for Turkey, with Erdogan playing a significant role in each of them. It could continue its policy of polarisation, in which case Turkey will be rooted in a permanent state of regional crisis management, accompanied by deep social division. Alternatively, he could be seen as an authoritarian leader, imposing exclusively his vision on how to govern. In this regard, the President of the United States, Joseph Biden, although he argued that there are autocratic tendencies and that he is considering the possibility of supporting Erdogan's opposition, stressed that the Turkish Republic remains a democratic state. In the third and final scenario, there is the possibility of strengthening regional security, followed by Turkey's rapprochement with Europe and the strengthening of economic and military partnerships.

Erdogan's foreign policy vision may bring other challenges to Turkey. While Ataturk and the last Ottoman sultans imagined Turkey as predominantly dominated by European values, Erdogan pivoted the country to the Middle East and often practiced Islamist solidarity in foreign policy to make Turkey a major regional power. The President can continue to strengthen his power, acting as a decisive figure, thus exposing Turkey to deep risks and threats and further violence, in which case he may lose credibility in front of his electorate. Obviously, if this trajectory is achieved, its legacy will not be a positive one: about half of the electorate can vehemently oppose its platform and will

make efforts to undermine it. Added to this is the influence of other regional actors, including jihadists, and Turkey could develop a dangerous civil conflict.

At the same time, general reforms and effective policy targeting will be essential for Turkey, and efforts to reduce liquidity pressures should be completed with measures to strengthen the solvency and financial sustainability of firms and households. The main priorities include strengthening the macroeconomic policy framework by maintaining a real interest rate, positive policies, and implementing a credible medium-term economic program that encompasses all fiscal and quasi-fiscal activities. Support should focus on the most needy households and businesses. Structural reforms allow the flexible functioning of the formal labor market, fair conditions of competition, resilient functioning of the financial sector and foreseeable external trade conditions to help Turkish firms fully participate in global value chains, thus encouraging post-shock growth potential. With regard to health policy, the lifting of containment measures should be accompanied by the strict application of deterrence, in order to avoid widespread blockages if the pandemic continues. Intense testing efforts and follow-up should continue, and cases and deaths should be monitored in accordance with international standards of good practice.

Long-term and solvency-enhancing financial support, preferably through debt-free and solid debt instruments of all sizes, would enhance post-shock growth potential. Strengthening the transparency and credibility of fiscal, monetary and financial policies would help address key macroeconomic weaknesses and reduce Turkey's vulnerability to external shocks.

In this doctoral research project, I presented both the historical role that Turkey has played over time in structuring the factors of regional influence in the Middle East and the European space, and the current strategic importance that this state has in the balance of global power. Unlike other European state actors, which not long ago were either empires or an important constituent part of them, Turkey never gave up the meta-idea during the Ottoman period of being a superpower. From a historical perspective, the only thing that was different was the strategic approach to this idea. If Mustafa Atatürk tried to regain the glory of Turkey by secularising and Europeanising it, Recep Erdoğan is trying the opposite by promoting pro-Islamic ideological change.

From a psychological point of view, the Turkish people are now divided, amid the growing cultural schism between ideologies, religions and cultural identities, which in the past, although a social reality, did not generate so much dissension and conflict. The Turkish people today are in a position to choose between the security policy promoted by Erdoğan, which is currently leading to increased social division and deepening frozen inter-ethnic conflicts, and the insecurity that could come from the West, which would lead to the annulment of the archetypal idea of an independent,

autonomous Turkey with a large role in regional decision-making. One of the European leaders who understood the individual psychological strength of this state was Napoleon Bonaparte, who declared that "give me a Turkish army and I will conquer the world."

For the West, Turkey has always been a major opportunity for economic development and geo-political stability as well as a potential problem of instability, being a politically and ideologically volatile area. In this context, the agreement and development of the U.S. military base. from Incirlik, represented a pivotal point in the history of Turkish-Western relations. Although there is a tendency today for some Western leaders to portray Erdogan as an autocrat, pragmatism and realism are the de facto approach of Turkey, which is an allied and indispensable partner for the US, NATO and the EU. Turkey and the US must find a new way of operating between the old strategic partnership framework and current transactionalism. Doing so will avoid collisions that could have negative effects on both sides and, at the same time, eliminate any differences within NATO.

Generally speaking, Turkey's bilateral relationship with the United States must lead to a real commitment to the relationship between the two states.

Turkey is a unique country with a dynamic population, a vibrant economy and a rich culture. Traveling across the Asian and European continents, the country attracts different religious groups, ethnicities and cultures. With strong cooperation and leadership, Turkey, a member of NATO, the G-20, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Council, is a global game changer. Following the guidelines of the Maastricht and Copenhagen criteria, Turkey has made attempts at full accession. The Maastricht criteria took into account the economic position, while the Copenhagen criteria gave priority to political reforms: the EU acquires. Undoubtedly, Turkey's membership of the EU will change the dynamics of the bloc. Turkey must unequivocally engage in good neighbourly relations, international agreements and the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Strengthening the EU-Turkey relationship also means starting the process of modernising the Customs Union, revitalising dialogue and high-level summits, promoting visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens and improving cooperation in managing illegal migration and combating terrorism.

The paper highlights Turkey's deep-rooted relations with the United States, the alliance has stood the test of time and has helped shape the transatlantic political landscape. However, there are currently major disagreements, in particular regarding US cooperation with the PKK / PYD / YPG (Kurdish allied groups with the US in Syria), inaction against FETO (the Gulenist movement that the Turkish government calls terrorist) and the use of sanctions against Turkey.

I believe that identifying a way to resolve these major differences is an urgent need not only for bilateral relations, but also for the health and vitality of transatlantic cooperation.

Turkey is a prominent ally of NATO and contributes to the Alliance's core tasks, in particular collective defence, crisis management and security cooperation. It is one of the five largest contributors to the Alliance's missions and operations and the eighth largest contributor to NATO's joint budget.

In conclusion, we consider that we have achieved the two research objectives, demonstrating that, although the measures adopted by the Presidency of Recep Erdogan can be viewed with skepticism in terms of Western liberal values, in fact they are adapted to the geo-political and security context of present, being proportional to this climate. They will certainly lead to both increased stability in the Black Sea area and a regional balance of power, develop the bilateral Turkey-NATO relationship and allow for better cooperation between the EU and the Ankara executive.