

« Reinventing multilateralism and global cooperation for a more inclusive and green post-Covid world as a leverage for strengthening Turkey - France - EU relationship »

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In addition to continuous concerns among French and European policymakers regarding the current state of democracy, civil liberties, and the rule of law in Turkey, 2020 was marked by a particular deterioration of Franco-Turkish relations. On the foreign policy front, both countries' interests have confronted each other with respect to Libya, Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh, but most prominently in the East Mediterranean, in which France has taken an active role supporting Cyprus and Greece against what is classified as illegal aggressive behavior by Ankara. Ties were put under additional strain following a dispute over France's introduction of measures against Islamic separatism, which resulted in a Turkish-championed boycott of French products and personal attacks between the heads of both states.

Simultaneously, the global Covid-19 pandemic disrupted social and economic life in Turkey, France and the EU with parallels in human casualties, economic regression and prevailing uncertainty over the future. Extreme flooding, first in Southern France and more recently in Northwestern Turkey, showed that consequences of changes in climate are affecting both countries equally. At times in which political views were strikingly diverging, both crises underline that the public needs of both countries, and the world at large, are more than ever converging, and a multilateral response has therefore never been more necessary. Multilateral frameworks at both global and regional levels are the key to a successful inclusive and green recovery and can also act as catalysts for re-invigorating the Turkey-France-EU relationship.

### **Multilateral Cooperation Is Necessary & Mutually Beneficial**

Turkey and the EU, including France, are distinct in that Turkey is among the few countries which has not yet ratified its commitment to the Paris Agreement, while the EU has recently set out an ambitious pathway towards carbon-neutrality by mid-century. At the same time, both economies share significant similarities in their energy landscape: both are heavily reliant on external energy supply notably regarding oil and gas, both are home to integral energy-intensive industries, and both heavily rely on coal consumption at regional levels.

France has established itself as a leader in climate diplomacy and, together with the EU at large, is promoting itself as the pioneer of sustainable energy and the green recovery. Yet, accounting for only 1% (France) or 10%(EU) respectively of global emissions, policy makers in Paris and Brussels are aware that only multilateral cooperation on a global scale enables useful climate action. Therefore, there exists a clear interest in multilateral cooperation regarding sustainable development, especially with major economies in its

immediate neighborhood such as Turkey with whom it shares significant trade flows, common geographies, and infrastructures. As it is reliant on the EU for trade and strategic-sector-partnerships, especially in finance and technology, Turkey has primarily economic incentives to foster collaboration on climate issues. In addition, domestic environmental and public health concerns, notably due to severe levels of air pollution, provide motivation for a partnership on a sustainable transition. For Turkey and France as part of the EU, cooperation on a green recovery within a multilateral framework therefore constitutes a unique chance to reinforce existing commercial ties through cooperatively green supply chains, as well as to utilize synergies to create a mutual pathway towards an inclusive, sustainable recovery while simultaneously enhancing energy security.

### **Working within G20 Towards a Sustainable Global Economy**

Given its representation of 85% of the global economy and around 80% of global emissions, the G20 format should be at the center of a coordinated global green recovery. Representing the most important industrialized and emerging economies alike, it hosts both Turkey and France alongside other European partners and therefore constitutes a prime tool for the EU and Turkey to collaborate within a multilateral framework. While its record on climate ambitions has been ambivalent given the heterogeneity of the economies, recent Chinese pledges on carbon neutrality and renewed commitments by the U.S. to both multilateralism and climate action, provide for a suitable opportunity to level up the game. Under the slogan *People, Planet, Prosperity*, Italy's presidency of the G20 in 2021 should champion an ambitious cooperation agenda in the areas of sustainable investments, green standards, and R&D cooperation, to ultimately foster the global adoption of low-carbon technologies and green global trade. Together with other participants, France and Turkey should adopt a long-term framework, including in particular:

- Collaborating on the adoption of global energy efficiency standards and a hydrogen taxonomy to push global improvements and kick-start an international low-carbon hydrogen market
- Upscaling investments on the renewable and expansion of electricity grids and transnational interconnections so as to support a global electrification across all energy sectors
- Enhancing access to funds to support a sustainable recovery plan of LICs and LMIC's like Turkey by expanding the Clean Technology Fund and Strategic Climate Fund
- Establishing an umbrella for joint-research initiatives on a cost/benefits-sharing basis

Turkey's commitment to the Paris Agreement will be vital for the legitimacy of the G20 in climate diplomacy and for Turkey's position within the group, to escape its isolation as the only G20 country not yet a party to the accord

### **Re-invigorating UfM through a Regional Green Infrastructure Cooperation Agenda**

For a successful energy transition, Turkey and the EU must make their supply chains in both energy and industry greener and more flexible. An enhanced regional integration across the Mediterranean that encompasses intra-regional investments in green energy infrastructures and sustainable industrial supply chains will play a pivotal role in ensuring this. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) constitutes a vital

multilateral framework to foster this regional cooperation between the EU, Turkey, and North Africa within a green recovery context. Under the leadership of France, which championed the establishment of the regional intergovernmental body in 2008 and is its major driving force, the UfM should significantly expand its activities within the *Energy & Climate Action Plan* beyond ministerial conferences and its *SEMed Private Renewables Energy Framework*. As Europe's Green Deal requires a significant supply increase in renewable energies and low-carbon hydrogen, notably through import, a comprehensive energy partnership within the UfM centering on sustainable production of energy as well as its flexible exchange is necessary. Together with other UfM members, the EU and Turkey should increase the existing intra-regional energy infrastructure and cooperate on the production of sustainable energy. To stimulate economic activity, especially in more vulnerable member countries, while universally benefitting from energy security among member states as well as enhancing intra-regional green trade, the framework should include:

- Complete synchronization of the electricity grids of UfM members and the expansion of intra-regional grid-interconnectors towards the completion MedRing, the Mediterranean Electricity Ring
- Creation of an investment-framework and guarantees for private investment in renewable energy and hydrogen production projects aided through EU & national funds as well as institutional lenders such EIB, EBRD and the prospective AIB
- Commitment to a peaceful resolution of energy conflicts within the Mediterranean and collaboration on exploration of resources in connection with CCS

#### **Creating a Sustainable Enlargement Framework - EU Cooperation with Accession Candidates**

As the EU's Green Deal will be an integral part of the bloc's political and economic agenda in a post-Covid era, there exists a clear interest for the EU and its accession candidates Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey to form a platform for special consultation and cooperation regarding sustainable development. This will support an inclusive sustainable economic recovery on shared terms to ultimately assure that the post-pandemic recovery strengthens rather than weakens any accession procedures, regardless of their current status. This multilateral framework should be formed around 3 main pillars: Energy Policy Consultations, EU-led Climate Financing, and Institutional Support.

#### Energy Policy Consultation

As multilateral cooperation in climate action is necessary to be successful, it is essential for the EU and its accession candidates to engage in frequent multilateral consultations to raise awareness for each other's energy policy agendas. This would allow them to more easily find windows of common political engagement and would provide for a shared business environment between the EU and its accession candidates - marked by distinctively high trade-, finance- and technology-flows - with the necessary clarity. To avoid frictions caused by unilateral decision-making and to provide an image of opportunity rather than risk, future policy steps of the EU Green Deal, notably the implementation of a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, should be addressed in consultations with all accession candidates, including Turkey, before their final implementation.

### Climate Financing

To reduce rising emissions of greenhouse gases and the structural reliance on coal-based electricity production in accession candidate countries, the EU financing branches should scale up their financial support for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects and thereby establish themselves as sustainable alternatives to external fossil-fuel focused energy investors, notably China. Within its sustainable financing plan, the EIB aims to achieve half of its operations to be in the areas of climate action and environmental sustainability by 2025. Here, a focus should be put on accession candidate countries whose slow progress in renewables and energy efficiency stems in part from high costs of capital. With greater engagement of Europe's institutional lenders EIB and EBRD, additional financing from private banks and energy companies could be leveraged, making the sustainable energy sector in accession candidate countries like Turkey a competitive and growing actor in the post-Covid recovery.

### Institutional Support

Besides increased financial commitments for sustainable recovery projects, the EU should further its institutional cooperation on climate action with its accession candidates based on existing synergies. Areas with significant collaboration potential include enhanced research and development partnerships, structural development initiatives, and energy policy recommendations. It should therefore consider:

- Advancing the admission of accession candidates such as Turkey to the EU's scientific research initiative Horizon Europe to foster academic cooperation on energy research and innovation
- Sharing the EU's unique experience on the establishment of internal carbon markets to accession countries, as similarly provided for China, to follow up on the IEA's recommendation to adopt carbon pricing mechanisms
- Extending the EU Just Transition Platform to accession candidates, to collaborate on a framework which incentivizes the acceleration of an inclusive transition of EU, Balkan, and Turkish coal regions • Guiding the nuclear ambitions of accession candidates such as Turkey with expertise on nuclear energy plans and regional nuclear safety through the integration into Euratom

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