

Turkish UAVs and European Union political solidarity at stake: An analysis of Turkish military expenditures 2009 - 2024

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Abstract

For the first time, NATO's European allies in 2024 will spend 2% of their collective GDP on defense. Among the European member countries, falls also Turkey. Despite Turkey's nonachievement to meet NATO's obligation, i.e spend 2% of its GDP on defense for the last 15 years, as regards Alliance's other obligation, Ankara managed to spend more than 20% of its defense budget on major equipment, research and development. Crucial role played Ankara's decision to invest on the production of UAVs. Moreover, Turkey through the coproduction of Turkish UAVs with other counties increased its overall arms exports. The purchases of Turkish UAVs from certain EU member states raises the question whether there is a violation of mutual political solidarity among member states, which constitutes one of the cornerstones of the principle of EU solidarity. The purpose of this article is to indicate the Turkish military expenditures from 2009 - 2024 in the context of its NATO obligations based on quantitative data. Also, the article highlights Turkey's volition to become a worldwide UAV manufacturer. Finally, the article analyses the challenges for mutual political solidarity among EU member states due to the purchases of Turkish UAVs by certain EU member states.

Keywords: NATO, EU, Turkey, military expenditures, EU political solidarity.

Introduction

On 14 February 2024, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Jens Stoltenberg released Alliance's latest defense spending figures. Specifically, there was a real increase of 11% in defense spending in 2023, showing an unprecedented increase across European Allies and Canada (NATO, 2024a), as specified by Jens Stoltenberg during his press conference in Brussels.

During the aforementioned press conference, Alliance's top international civil servant remarked that for the first time since its creation, NATO's European allies in 2024 will spend 2% of their collective Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense (Babb, 2024). Hence, by the end of 2024 European allies and Canada will have added more than 600 billion USD for defense since the endorsement of the Defense Investment Pledge in 2014 (NATO, 2024b). It should be mentioned that in 2024 twenty-three out of thirty-two NATO member countries will spend 2% of their GDP on defense compare to nine in 2020 (US Democratic Party Platform, 2024, p. 78). Among the European member countries, falls also Turkey, which for the first time since 2009 will spend 2% of its GDP on defense pursuant to the aforementioned NATO data.

Thus, Turkey in an attempt to adapt to the Alliance's new defense spending concept that of invest more than 2% of GDP on defense as well as 20% of defense budgets on major equipment including research and development, aspires to follow NATO's policy on defense expenditures. However, Ankara's political games regarding NATO's enlargement caused a stir. In fact, Turkey's initial veto on Finland's and Sweden's membership on one hand jeopardized their sovereignty, territorial integrity and security (Marias G, 2024, p. 21) and on the other hand dredged up member countries' antagonisms as regards Alliance's strategic concepts.

In addition, according to an analysis of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Ankara's veto to Finland and Sweden worked among others as a political campaign "tool" ahead of Erdogan's reelection and as a means of "pressure" to Washington regarding the acquisition of new F-16 fighters and modernization kits, due to Turkey's kicked out from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, aftereffects of country's purchase of S-400 missile system (Levin, 2023). However, the former US Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy David Trachtenberg have stated that the US-Turkish strategic relationship remains unchanged and extends well beyond the F-35 partnership and that USA-Turkey will continue their cooperation across the entire spectrum of their security relationship (Garamone, 2019). Thus, Ankara pursuing to revive its partnership with Washington, proposed not to activate its S-400 missile system and on return rejoin the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program (EurAsia Daily, 2024).

Despite Turkey's nonachievement to meet NATO's 2% obligation for the last 15 years, as regards Alliance's 20% obligation, Ankara managed to spend a significant part of its military expenditure on major equipment, research and development. Crucial role to Turkey's increased military expenditure on major equipment played Ankara's decision to invest on the production of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). Hence, primarily due to the exports of Turkish UAVs worldwide, the country's arms and aviation industry made exports of 5,5 billion USD in 2023, an increase of 25% from 2022 (Yaylali, 2024). In particular, Bayrak became Turkey's leading arm company representing more than 30% of country's arms industry exports for 2023 with 1,76 billion USD (Daily Sabah, 2023). Moreover, Turkish UAVs exports are expected to increase more the country's arms and aviation industry revenues for 2024 as a result of the Bayrak Company - Saudi Arabia deal of 1 billion USD (Tavsan, 2023).

The purpose of this article is to indicate the Turkish military expenditures from 2009 - 2024 in the context of its NATO obligations based on quantitative data. Also, the article highlights Turkey's volition to become a worldwide UAV manufacturer. Finally, the article analyses the challenges for mutual political solidarity among European Union (EU) member states consisting one of the cornerstones of the principle of EU solidarity as a result of purchases of Turkish UAVs by certain EU member states.

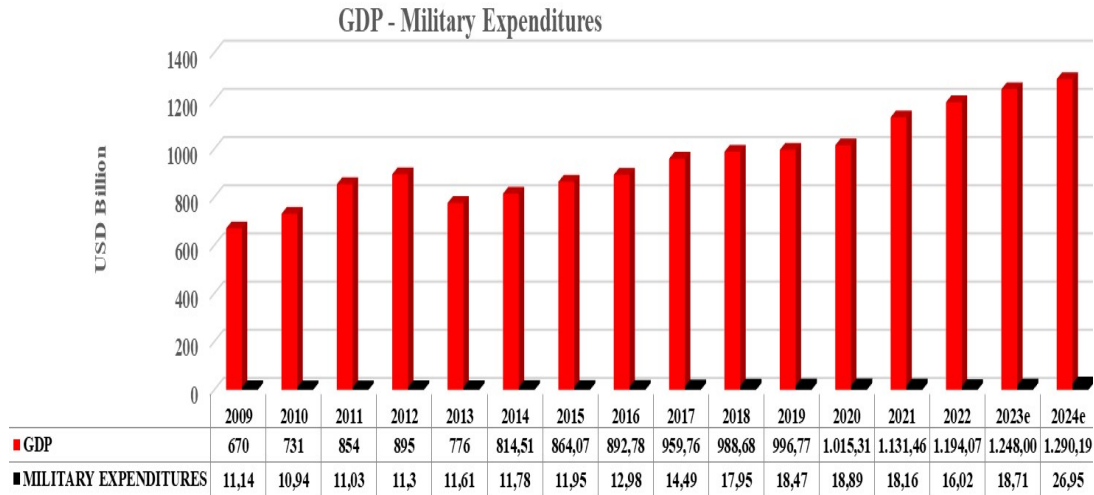
Methodology

The article proceeds in an in-depth analysis of Turkey's military expenditures from 2009 to 2024. Moreover, the article notes Ankara's achievement to meet NATO's 20% obligations, i.e. invest at least 20% of its defense budgets on major equipment including research and development, stating the crucial role of Turkish made UAVs. Article's research methodology is based primarily on a wide range of NATO quantitative data and press releases, EU Treaties, EU secondary legislation, Decisions of EU Institutions, press releases, the United Nations (UN) Charter and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as well as scientific papers, policy papers, studies and newspapers articles.

Turkish military expenditures 2009 - 2024

From 2009 - 2022, the Turkish GDP was increased by 524 billion USD. Moreover, the country's GDP is estimated to increase another 96,1 billion USD in 2024. However, despite the increased GDP, Turkey's military expenditures were not high according to **Figure (1)**. That explains the reason why Turkey from 2010 to 2022 was among those NATO member countries which had not achieved the Alliance's obligation, i.e. invest 2% of its GDP on defense.

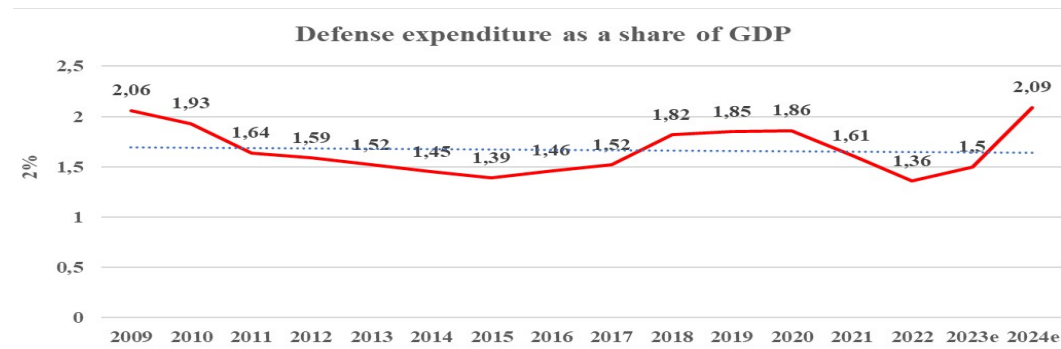
Figure 1



Source: Author's own compilation based on: Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries (2009 - 2016), (2011 - 2018), (2013 - 2020), (2014 - 2024) NATO.

Except for 2009, Turkey's military expenditures as a percentage of GDP were permanently below 2%, following a downward trend especially during 2010 - 2015. Hence, Ankara was not meeting one of the two NATO obligations as derived from Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Nevertheless, from 2016 there was an increase of 24,9%, reaching 1,86% in 2020, falling again at its lowest level ever reached at 1,36% in 2022 as it is indicated in the relevant **Figure (2)**.

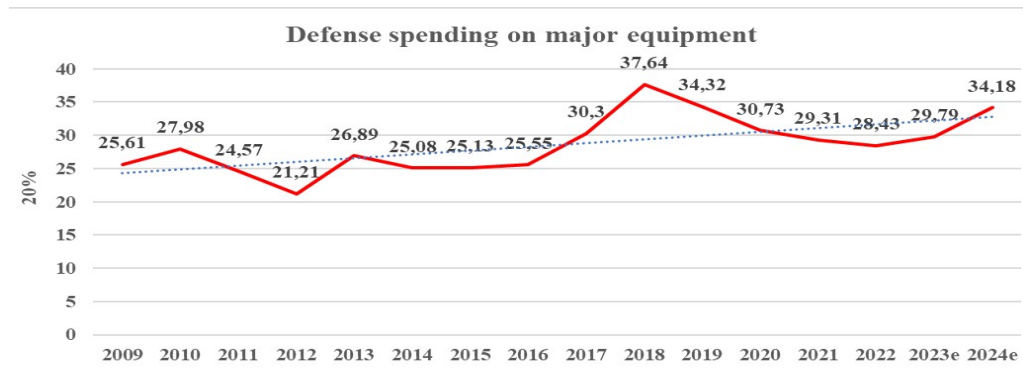
Figure 2



Source: Author's own compilation based on Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries (2009 - 2016), (2011 - 2018), (2013 - 2020), (2014 - 2024), NATO.

In relation to NATO's other obligation, i.e. invest 20% of defense budgets on major equipment including research and development, Turkey never fell below this threshold. In 2018, Turkey reached the highest percentage of its military spending on major equipment. However, from 2019 to 2022 there has been a constant slight decrease of the percentage spend on major equipment as it is indicated in the relevant **Figure (3)**.

Figure 3



Source: Author’s own compilation based on Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries (2009 - 2016), (2011 - 2018), (2013 - 2020), (2014 - 2024), NATO.

Finally, in **Figure (4)** it is indicated the ratio between the amount spent from Turkey on major defense equipment in relation to its military expenditures and GDP. Hence, the following conclusions are drawn:

Firstly, Turkey managed to ensure its military armor on a constant basis.

Secondly, Turkey paid emphasis in investing significant resources in order to build a home-based arms industry both state and private. Thus, Ankara preferred to invest in the production of arms “made in Turkey” instead of purchasing arms from third countries.

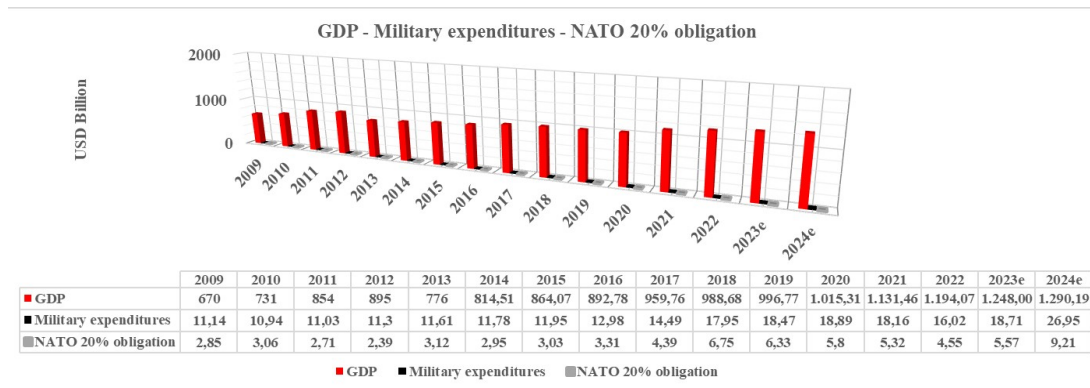
Thirdly, Turkey’s military expenditures operated as a springboard for the promotion of Turkish revisionist policy both in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East.

Fourthly, Turkey purchased advanced technological equipment, i.e. the S-400 missile system from Russia. In addition, Turkey constructed in collaboration with the state-owned Spanish shipbuilding company Navantia its amphibious assault ship TCG Anadolu which will also carry UAVs (Ozberk, 2022). In fact, Turkey's ability to manufacture its own UAVs has provided her in this field with a significant advantage over Greece in the Aegean Sea and Eastern Mediterranean. For this reason, the need for a more effective Greek defense policy adapted to modern challenges consists of a necessity (Marias G., 2022).

Fifthly, Turkey through coproduction programs in particular with countries such as Italy and Spain managed to upgrade its geopolitical and military presence both in the Mediterranean region and the Aegean Sea.

Finally, Turkey between 2015 and 2018, increased its military expenditures by 59.7% (SIPRI, 2021), a time which the aforementioned TCG Anadolu was under construction costing more than 1 billion USD (Topcu, 2018). The significant growth of the Turkish economy lied mostly in the Quantitative Easing (QE) program launched by the European Central Bank (ECB) in January 2015, as extensive capital flows from European banks and companies were directed to certain developing countries, among them Turkey, due to excess liquidity and expected increased profitability (Marias E, 2020).

Figure 4



Source: Author's own compilation based on: Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries (2009 - 2016), (2011 - 2018), (2013 - 2020), (2014 - 2024) NATO.

Turkey's volition to become a worldwide UAV manufacturer

Turkey has left its imprint as a UAV exporter during the war in Ukraine. Kyiv with the outbreak of the war became a significant importer of Turkish UAVs as a means to counterbalance the Russian strikes. However, apart from an important exporter to Ukraine, Turkey has managed to infiltrate into the Ukrainian economy. More specifically, Bayrak company has started building a plant close to Kyiv which will manufacture Turkish TB2 or TB3 UAVs (Magid, 2024). In addition, Bayrak's partnership with the Ukrainian state enterprise Ivchenko-Progress led to the coproduction of the Turkish UAV Kızılelma, also known as the "Turkish bird with the Ukrainian heart" (Dost, 2024). In the same context, the participation of various Ukrainian companies in the development of Turkish fighter KAAAN may lead to another coproduction with an option to purchase, according to the Ukrainian Ambassador to Turkey Vasyl Bodnar (UBN, 2024). Hence, Ankara's decision to invest in Ukraine via private companies' coproduction or outsourcing, could benefit Turkey's economy in the long term. The same applies also for Ukraine. In particular, the Ukrainian company Motor Sich has signed a contract with Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) in order to produce and deliver by 2025 a number of engines for the Turkish attack helicopter ATAK-II (Militarnyi, 2023).

Nevertheless, Turkey's interests as a UAV manufacturer are not limited to Ukraine. Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a significant number of defense agreements. In this context, Bayrak company has proceeded to another coproduction with Emirati EDGE Group as regards the TB2 UAVs. Hereto, EDGE Group will integrate weapons and systems into TB2 UAVs (Helou, 2024), upgrading their attack missions. EDGE Group's Chairman of the Board of Directors Faisal Al Bannai characterized the partnership with Baykar as a "milestone", stating that EDGE is in cooperation with the Turkish company in order to purchase TB3 UAVs (Gosselin-Malo, 2024).

In 2023, Turkey and Saudi Arabia signed a series of memoranda of understanding (MoU) in the defense sector. Specifically, Bayrak company signed an agreement with the Ministry of Defense regarding the production of Turkish UAVs. The deal foresaw that 70% of the purchased Turkish UAVs Bayraktar Akıncı will be produced in Saudi Arabia (Janes, 2023). Thus, Ankara and Riyadh signed a highly profitable deal which on one hand benefited their local arms companies financially and on the other hand contributed to the further development of both the Turkish and the Saudi economy.

Moreover, Turkey signed an agreement for UAV coproduction both with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. As far as Kazakhstan is concerned, Ankara and Astana decided to deepen their defense cooperation. Hereto, TAI and Kazakhstan Engineering signed a deal to coproduce Anka UAV (Bekdil, 2022) making Kazakhstan the first foreign country to launch production of Anka UAVs (Ministry of Industry and Construction of Kazakhstan, 2022). As regards its long-standing ally Azerbaijan, the Bayrak company and the Azeri Ministry of Defense signed an agreement for the coproduction of UAVs (Bayrak, 2023) without specifying though the type of the UAV.

Ankara's plan to become a worldwide UAV manufacturer through coproduction contributed to the increase of Turkish overall arms and aviation industry exports. Moreover, via the promotion of economies of scale, the Turkish arms companies achieved to decrease their costs and increase their scale of production. Hence, Turkish UAV cost per unit has become much cheaper, around 5 million USD (Stein, 2022) compared to an American one, costing around 20 million USD (International Crisis Group, 2023). Thus, Turkey capitalizing its companies' economic advantages has the possibility to sign more defense agreements and export more UAVs around the world.

Turkey's volition to become a worldwide UAV manufacturer is also demonstrated by its "client map". According to 2022 data, 18 countries have purchased different types of Turkish UAVs, the majority of which are African countries (Oryxspioenkop, 2022) showing Turkey's special interest concerning Africa's defense sector. More specifically, as regards:

- a) North Africa, Turkey is the 4th biggest UAV exporter with 69 UAVs behind China with 218 UAVs, Israel with 181 UAVs and USA with 169 UAVs,
- b) West Africa, Turkey is the 1st UAV exporter with 89 UAVs followed by China with 86 UAVs, Israel with 34 and USA with 20 UAVs,
- c) East Africa, Turkey is the 4th biggest UAV exporter with 28 UAVs behind China with 72 UAVs, Israel with 57 UAVs and USA with 38 UAVs,
- d) Southern Africa, Turkey is the 3rd biggest exporter with 4 UAVs behind Israel with 37 UAVs and China with 25 UAVs (Military Africa Report, 2024, pp. 34 - 37).

Pursuant to Turkey's Technology Minister Mehmet Kacir, almost 40 countries possess Turkish UAVs stating that Turkish arms industry's localization rate has increased from 20% to over 80% (Ozdemir, 2024). Besides those countries which have already purchased UAVs from Turkey, there is a list of countries that wait for their first delivery of Turkish UAVs (International Crisis Group, 2023) especially in Southeast Asia, showing Ankara's interest as regards the Indo-Pacific region. However, EU member states' purchase or interest in Turkish UAVs comes as a surprise putting actually at stake mutual political solidarity among EU member states as a genuine expression of EU political solidarity.

Embargo on the sale of EU weapons to Turkey

In 2008, the European Union through Common Position 2008/944/CFSP set the common rules regarding the governing control of exports of military technology and equipment in a way to prevent arms export in order to curb international aggression or regional instability. Based on the relevant Council's Common Position, EU implemented certain arms embargos as a means to preserve peace and stability.

Clarifying the EU state of affairs as regards arms embargo, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell stated in his answer to a written parliamentary question that "the control on the export and transit of arms by EU member states is subject to national legislation, the Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and the

Arms Trade Treaty" (European Parliament, 2021). Furthermore, he noted that any obligations arising from this legal framework are legally binding for the EU member states. Also, according to Josep Borrell "the final decision whether to authorize or deny an individual export or transit of military equipment is to be adopted, in accordance with the abovementioned legal framework, by the competent authorities of EU Member States. It is up to national institutions to assess export license applications against the criteria of the Common Position, including respect for human rights and international humanitarian law by the country of final destination" (European Parliament, 2021).

As regards Turkey, in 2019 Germany halted arms exports on Ankara following the Turkish invasion in Syria as a means to protect the Kurdish population. It should be noted that the German government banned arms exports to Turkey simply on the assumption that the weapons were going to be used against Kurds in northern Syria (DW, 2019). Accordingly, on 19 October 2019 Germany imposed a partial arms export ban on Turkey on weapons that were going to be used in the Syrian war (Duvar English, 2021).

A few days later, on 14 October 2019, the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU decided *inter alia* the following as regards the ban of arms sales to Turkey:

"5. In this context, and taking into account the fact that Turkey's military action with its dramatic consequences is still ongoing, the EU recalls the decision taken by some Member States to immediately halt arms exports licensing to Turkey. Member States commit to strong national positions regarding their arms export policy to Turkey on the basis of the provision of the Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on arms export control, including the strict application of criteria 4 on regional stability. The relevant Council working group will meet later this week to coordinate and review the Member states' positions on this matter". (Council of the European Union, 2019, p. 4).

On 18 October 2019, the European Council endorsed the above Council conclusions of 14 October 2019 on North East Syria and stated that: "Following the Council conclusions of 14 October 2019, it recalls that Member States have decided to halt arms export licensing to Turkey" (European Council, 2019).

Nevertheless, as revealed by Josep Borrell in his answer to the aforementioned parliamentary question "EU Member States committed in October 2019 to strong national positions regarding their arms export policy to Turkey on the basis of the provisions of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP but have not decided to impose arms embargo. Such a decision can be taken only by the Council and would require a unanimity. The Working Party on Conventional Arms Export (COARM) remains seized of the matter of arms exports to Turkey. Several Member States have decided not to issue new export licenses for arms exports to Turkey. Information on arms exports from EU Member States is publicly available on the European External Action Service website" (European Parliament, 2021).

Arms bans can also take the form of "an informal arms embargo" as revealed by the former Turkish Defense Minister Holusi Akar who condemned Germany for imposing in 2020 an informal arms embargo on Turkey (Duvar English, 2021).

In 2020, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution "On arms export: implementation of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP". In paragraph 17 of the Resolution, the European Parliament called on the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to introduce an initiative in the Council for all member states to halt arms export licensing to Turkey in accordance with the Common Position 2008/944/CFSP for as long as Turkey continued its illegal, unilateral actions running counter to Greece's and Cyprus' sovereignty (European Parliament, 2020). Thus, the European Parliament motivated by the spirit of EU political solidarity, tried to set the ground for the creation of a stricter framework within the

EU institutions towards Turkish acts which could jeopardize EU members states' territorial integrity as well as regional security.

The means placed on the table to achieve this goal included *inter alia* a potential embargo of EU arms selling to Turkey, which was never imposed, since as early as in December 2020, the former German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass rejected Greece's call for an arms embargo against Turkey (ekathimerini, 2020), as German submarines were giving Turkey an edge over Greece (Economist, 2021). Athens urged Germany to halt sale of submarines to Turkey arguing that it "risks shifting the balance of power" in favor of Turkey in Eastern Mediterranean (ekathimerini, 2022). In any case, Ankara in order to vanquish its dependence on German arms, plans to start manufacturing its first submarine called MILDEN in 2025 (TurDef, 2024).

The Political and Security Committee of the EU Council "snobs" Turkish UAVs

In February 2024, in the framework of the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the European Union, France, Greece and Cyprus vetoed the financing of Turkish UAVs as a means of support for Ukraine. In particular, France, vetoed the financing of Bayraktar TB2 explaining that European money should be spend more wisely and should be spend for Europeans (Lagneau, 2024), whereas Greece vetoed the financing stating that from a position of principle, Athens is in favor of an autonomous European defense and of a policy that will emphasize the development of the European defense industry (Ioannidis, 2024). However, apart from the aforementioned explanation, France vetoed the financing of Turkish made UAVs because Paris regards Ankara as one of its main UAV competitors in Africa. Specifically, in West Africa, a region of special interest for France, Turkey is the 1st exporter of UAVs with 89 UAVs, whereas France is 5th with only 8 UAVs (Military Africa Report, 2024, p. 35). Also, in North Africa, another region of special interest for France, Turkey ranks 4th with 69 UAVs whereas France seems to have exported no UAVs (Military Africa Report, 2024, p. 35). Hence, for geostrategic reasons, Paris could not permit European money to be spend for the purchase of Turkish UAVs financing in this way the Turkish arms industry.

The Greek and Cypriot veto as regards the European financing for the purchasing of Turkish UAVs for Ukraine was due to the fact that both countries do not wish to strengthen the domestic Turkish arms industry, especially with European resources, as Turkey is encroaching on the national sovereignty of Greece and has occupied 37% of the Cypriot territory. For this reason, as already mentioned above, Athens and Nicosia sought, thought unsuccessfully, the imposition of an arms embargo against Turkey after 2020, since they regarded that it constitutes a violation of the principle of European solidarity to equip with European weapons systems the Turkish army that is potentially ready for attack on Greece and Cyprus. In this context, Greece and Cyprus also sought the imposition of economic sanctions against Turkey.

Turkish UAVs and mutual political solidarity of EU member States at stake

The question that also arises is whether the purchase by certain EU member states of Turkish weapons, such as UAVs, violates the mutual political solidarity among EU member states, which constitutes one of the cornerstones of the principle of EU solidarity. According to this argument, the purchases of Turkish UAVs finance directly the Turkish arms industry and consequently the Turkish army itself, resulting in the reversal of the military balance of power between Greece and Turkey. In this context, one could claim that the purchasing of Turkish arms by certain EU member States could lead to a violation of the principle of political solidarity among EU member states, which constitutes the hard core of the EU solidarity itself.

Solidarity between the member states and between the peoples of the European Community constitutes a living aim which should be pursued and expanded continually (Marias E, 1994, p. 87). According to Pierre Pescatore, the principle of solidarity was expressed via mutual assistance and via Community preference (Pescatore, 1972, pp. 347 - 351). Moreover, Member states would be obliged not to enter into actions with non-member countries which might endanger the security of another member state (Marias E, 1994, p. 88).

In 2021, Poland signed a deal with Bayrak Company for the purchase of 24 Bayraktar TB2. The deliveries of Turkish made UAVs begun in 2022 and ended up in 2024. Hence, Poland became the first EU member state which acquires Turkish UAVs. Apart from Poland, in 2022 Lithuania also signed a deal for the purchase of a Turkish UAV. At first, the initiative for the purchase of a Bayraktar B2B came by a Lithuanian journalist (Jakucionis, 2022) as a means of support to Ukraine, but finally the aforementioned UAV has been gifted by the manufacturer to Vilnius (Ministry of National Defense of Lithuania, 2022).

As already noted above, it comes as a surprise the fact that certain EU member countries have expressed their intentions to purchase Turkish UAVs. Hence, Latvia expressed its volition to purchase Turkish UAVs from Baykar Company during the visit of the Latvian former Deputy Prime Minister in Turkey in June 2021 (Bayrak, 2021). Following Lithuania's initiative, an equivalent fundraising was organized in Latvia for the purchase of a Turkish B2B as a means of support to Ukraine (Militaryni, 2022). However, due to the fact that the amount raised was almost 1 million EUR, the organizers of the fundraising decided to purchase local made UAVs from a Latvian company called Atlas Aerospace (Defense Mirror, 2022) and send them to Kyiv.

In the same context, Turkey's close EU member state ally Hungary expressed its intension to purchase Turkish made UAVs. In order to deepen their defense cooperation, Budapest has expressed its willingness for closer collaboration with Turkish arms industries including the UAV companies as noted by the Hungarian former Minister of Technology and Industry during his official visit in Ankara (Daily Sabah, 2022). Following Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria have also expressed their intension to purchase Turkish UAVs. In particular, Sofia has been interested to buy 6 Bayraktar TB2 (Nikolov, 2021).

Poland's purchase of 24 Turkish made UAVs puts at stake mutual political solidarity among EU member States which constitutes one of the most vital expressions of EU political solidarity

Turkey's revisionist policy towards Greece and Cyprus consists of a matter of utmost importance for the EU. More specifically, Turkey has been constantly challenging Greece's sovereignty over the Aegean Sea. In this context, Turkish fighters, frigates, sub-marines, UAVs etc permanently violate Greece's air space as well as Greek territorial waters. Moreover, Turkey violates UNCLOS, which foresees Greece's sovereign right to expand its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles (Article 3, UNCLOS). Thus, pursuant to a resolution of the Turkish National Assembly from 1995, in case that Greece exercises its sovereign right to expand its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, this would be regarded by Turkey as a *casus belli*. However, the Turkish *casus belli* constitute a violation of the UN Charter which prohibits the threat or use of force (Article 2(4), UN Charter). In addition, Turkey challenges Greek islands' exclusive economic zone (EEZ), obstructing Greece to exploit its hydrocarbon reserves worth of up to 250 billion EUR (Herema, n.d.).

As far as Cyprus is concerned, Turkey does not recognize the country as a sovereign state. Secondly, Turkey after its two-phase invasion in Cyprus in 1974, continues to occupy illegally the 37% of the Cypriot territory, thus violating accordingly the UN Charter. Thirdly, the illegal settle of Turkish occupation troops violates a big number of UN resolutions. Moreover,

Ankara's violations as regards the Cypriot EEZ, is against the provisions of UNCLOS and those of the International Law.

Therefore, Poland's purchases of Turkish UAVs which amounts to a significant financial injection of the Turkish arms industry raise serious issues inside the EU. Firstly, Poland's UAVs purchases contradict with the principle of mutual political solidarity among EU member states which constitutes one of the cornerstones of the principles of EU solidarity enshrined in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

Secondly, Poland's purchases undermine the seniority of Article 3(3c) TEU which foresees that "EU shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among member states" (Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

Thirdly, Poland's stance challenges EU Member States mutual trust which constitutes a fundamental expression of EU solidarity and a principle of EU Law.

Fourthly, Poland's acquisition of Turkish UAVs undermines the importance of Article 3(5) TEU which states that "In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall...contribute to peace, security...solidarity and mutual respect among peoples..." (Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

Fifthly, Poland's stance contradicts with Article 24(2) TEU stating that "...the Union shall conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy based on the development of mutual political solidarity among Member States..." (Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

Finally, Poland's purchases of UAVs contradict with the EU's policy which condemns the Turkish challenges asking from Ankara to respect EU member states' sovereignty.

As regards the aforementioned member states' intention to purchase UAVs from Turkey, including Finland which has also expressed its interest to acquire Turkish UAVs (Venckunas, 2022), they do not violate yet, neither the EU Treaties nor the EU Law. However, their stance puts at stake political solidarity among EU member states, since it shows a self-centered attitude among member states which conflicts with the principle of mutual trust. Moreover, such member states' attitude undermines the EU's common good, as the role of solidarity in the EU reveals itself through its connection to the European common good (Saracino, 2024, p. 14). In addition, in case other member states decided to purchase Turkish made UAVs, that would constitute a much deeper challenge of EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy goals enshrined in article 24(2) TEU.

It is obvious that European Solidarity has a broad scope and affects member states' acts. Poland's stance consists of a serious challenge both of EU political solidarity and of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. In the same context, falls the aforementioned member states' intentions. Member states must comply with the spirit and the commitments that derive from the EU Treaties as a means of respect of EU political solidarity and the principal of mutual trust.

Conclusions

NATO's European allies in 2024 are expected to spend 2% of their collective GDP on defense as well as 20% of their defense budgets on major equipment including research and development. For the first time, twenty-three out of thirty-two NATO will meet their obligations among them Turkey. As already mentioned, Turkey since 2010 was not spending 2% of its GDP on defense. On the contrary, Turkey was constantly spending more than 20% of its defense budget on major equipment.

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine played a major role for Turkey to leave its imprint as a UAV exporter. Furthermore, apart from a UAV exporter, Turkey tried to become a worldwide UAV manufacturer. In order to succeed its volition, Ankara decided to coproduce Turkish UAVs with a number of countries. Hence, via the promotion of economies of scale, the Turkish arms industries achieved to decrease their costs and increase their scale of production contributing to country's economic development.

However, the purchase of Turkish made UAVs from certain EU member states puts on one hand at stake the mutual political solidarity among EU member states consisting one of the cornerstones of the principle of EU solidarity and on the other hand challenges the principle of mutual trust and EU Law.

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