



THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Development of EU and Türkiye's Integrated Border Management Strategy due to increasing irregular migration after 2011, Future scenarios of Türkiye-EU relations

Master's Thesis

MUSTAFA AVCI

Department of Sociology

Master of Arts in Migration Studies

July 2025



THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Development of EU and Türkiye's Integrated Border Management Strategy due to increasing irregular migration after 2011, Future scenarios of Türkiye-EU relations.

Master's Thesis

MUSTAFA AVCI

Assist. Prof. Dr. Sakin ÖZİŞİK

Department of Sociology

Master of Arts in Migration Studies

July 2025

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my academic adviser, Assist. Prof. Dr. Sakin ÖZİŞİK, for his unwavering support, invaluable guidance, and insightful feedback throughout every stage of this thesis. His deep knowledge, wide perspective, and meticulous attention to detail have greatly enriched the quality of my work. More than a supervisor, he has been a mentor whose encouragement and trust empowered me to push the boundaries of my research. I am also grateful for his availability and patience, especially during challenging moments of the writing process. His support to academic excellence and his mentorship have had a profound impact on my academic journey and professional development. Without his continued support and encouragement, the completion of this thesis would not have been possible. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to my professors, Prof. Dr. Erman AKILLI and Asist.Prof.Dr. Gökberk DURMAZ, for their feedback on my thesis not only enriched my thesis but also helped it turn into a better thesis.

Moreover, I want to thank my dear colleagues Coşkun GÜL, Meltem ALICI and Ebru Sinem ARTUT for their awesome support during my stressfull time.

Mustafa AVCI
Ankara, Türkiye
2025

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	v
ÖZET.....	vii
1.INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	2
1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	3
1.4 Significance and Relevance of the Research	4
1.4.1 Academic Significance	4
1.4.2 Practical Relevance	6
1.5 Scope and Limitations	7
1.6 Structure of the Thesis	8
2.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS	10
2.1 Theories in International Relations Relevant to Border Management	11
2.1.1 Realism in International Relations.....	11
2.1.2 Neofunctionalism	13
2.1.3 Neoliberal Institutionalism.....	14
2.2 Migration Theories and Their Application.....	14
2.2.1 Migration Network Theory	15
2.2.2 Securitization Theory	15
2.3 Critical Border Studies: A Multidimensional Perspective	16
2.4 Theoretical Perspectives on Trade Wars and Economic Nationalism.....	17
3. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	18
3.1 Historical Context: Evolution of EU-Türkiye Relations	18
3.1.1 Pre-2011 Migration Patterns and Policies.....	18
3.1.2 Post-2011 Surge in Irregular Migration	19
3.1.3 Implications of the Trump Presidency on EU-Türkiye Relations	20
3.2 EU's Integrated Border Management: Policies and Mechanisms	21
3.2.1 FRONTEX and EUROSUR: Objectives and Impact.....	21
3.2.2 The Schengen Information System (SIS), Entry/Exit System (EES), and ETIAS ..	23
3.2.3 The Impact of U.S. Trade Wars and Tariff Policies on EU Border Economies	23
3.3 Türkiye's Border Management Evolution	25
3.3.1 Historical Development and Strategic Shifts	25
3.3.2 Impact of the Syrian and Afghan Refugee Crises.....	26

3.4 Gaps in the Literature	26
3.5 Contribution of the Thesis to Existing Research	28
4.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	29
4.1 Research Design: Qualitative Approach.....	29
4.2 Data Collection and Sources.....	29
4.2.1 Secondary Data: Academic Articles, Government Reports, and Legislation	30
4.3 Data Analysis Techniques	30
4.4 Challenges and Limitations of the Research	31
5. ANALYSIS OF EU AND TÜRKİYE'S INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	32
5.1 The Evolution of Türkiye's Border Management Post-2011	32
5.1.1 Strategic Adaptations in Response to Irregular Migration	34
5.1.2 The Role of International and Regional Agreements.....	38
5.2 EU's Border Management Framework.....	40
5.2.1 Frontex and other European Border Agencies.....	40
5.2.2 Technological Integration: EUROSUR and the SIS	43
5.3 EU-Türkiye Cooperation: A Strategic Necessity	45
5.3.1 Operational and Financial Cooperation	46
5.3.2 Challenges and Tensions in the Partnership	48
5.4 Impact of External Factors on Border Management Strategies.....	51
5.4.1 The Role of Geopolitical Shifts	51
5.4.2 Economic Dependency	52
5.4.3 Impact of Global Health Crises: COVID-19 Pandemic.....	53
5.4.4 Geopolitical Impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War on EU and Türkiye	54
5.4.5 Regional Stability and Border Security: Effects of the Israel-Palestine War	55
5.4.6 Consequences of Trump's Foreign Policy on EU-Türkiye Security Dynamics	56
5.4.7 EU and Türkiye's Border Policies in Response to Changes in Syrian Leadership..	57
6.IMPACT OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION ON EU-TÜRKİYE RELATIONS	59
6.1 Dynamics of Irregular Migration.....	59
6.1.1 Migration Routes and Patterns.....	60
6.1.2 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Migrants.....	60
6.2 Security Concerns and Political Responses.....	62
6.2.1 Counterterrorism and Border Security	62
6.2.2 Human Smuggling Networks and Organized Crime	63
6.3 Economic, Social, and Cultural Impacts	63

6.3.1 Economic Burdens and Opportunities	64
6.3.2 Social Integration and Community Tensions	64
6.3.3 Cultural Exchange and Identity Formation	65
6.3.4 Influence of Media and Public Perception on Migration Policies	65
7.FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR EU-TÜRKİYE RELATIONS.....	67
7.1 Scenario 1: Enhanced Cooperation and Integration	67
7.2 Scenario 2: Strategic Divergence	70
7.3 Scenario 3: Stagnation/Status Quo	71
8.DISCUSSION	74
8.1 Synthesis of Key Findings and Their Implications	74
8.2 Comparative Analysis of Possible Scenarios	76
8.3 Geopolitical Dynamics and Strategic Realignment	77
8.4 The Role of Economic Factors in EU-Türkiye Relations.....	79
8.5 Migration Governance and Human Rights Considerations.....	80
8.6 Technological Integration in Border Management.....	81
8.7 Challenges and Opportunities: A Balanced Perspective	81
8.8 Recommendations for Future Policy Directions	82
8.9 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research	83
9.CONCLUSION.....	84
9.1 Reflecting on the Strategic Importance of EU-Türkiye Relations.....	84
9.2 Theoretical Implications: Situating Findings in Academic Discourse	85
9.3 EU-Türkiye Relations as a Model for Global Governance	87
9.4 Addressing Emerging Global Challenges: A Forward-Looking Perspective.....	87
9.5 Lessons Learned and Their Broader Significance	88
9.6 Envisioning a Resilient Future for EU-Türkiye Collaboration	89
9.7 Final Outlook	89
REFERENCES	91
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	100

ABSTRACT

A complicated interaction between migration, border security and changing geopolitical realities has had a significant impact on the EU's relationship with Türkiye. This thesis looks at these important aspects, concentrating on how border control and irregular migration have come to define the EU-Türkiye relationship. As a crucial transit and host nation, especially during the refugee crises in Syria and Afghanistan, Türkiye's role has expanded well beyond that of a candidate nation, establishing it as a key player in regional security and European migrant policy. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the EU-Türkiye relationship, this study constructs a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that combines theories of international relations, migration studies, and critical border studies. The study examines how migration policies are developed, carried out, and contested at the national and supranational levels using a qualitative methodology based on a wide range of secondary literature.

The results show that although both the EU and Türkiye have adopted securitized narratives in reaction to migrant pressures, they have also shown that they are capable of working together pragmatically, as the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement demonstrates. This cooperation is nevertheless fragile, though, and is frequently hampered by conflicting interests, political difficulties and political views. A move toward a more coordinated and technologically sophisticated approach to border control is evident in Türkiye's internal revolution in migratory governance, which is mirrored in institutional reforms, technical investments at the borders, and international alliances. Meanwhile, the EU is depending more and more on Türkiye as a buffer state as it externalizes its border obligations. Future scenarios for EU-Türkiye relations are also presented in this thesis, ranging from more cooperation to strategic separation. In addition to adding to the scholarly conversation, the study's critical analysis of the connections between migration, security, diplomacy, and technology offers useful advice for decision-makers navigating one of the most urgent and politically delicate areas of international cooperation in the modern era.

In the end, this paper makes the case that border control and migration are now essential to the EU and Türkiye's larger geopolitical and strategic alignment rather than being incidental problems. The resilience and adaptability of this relationship will be put to the test as regional crises continue and global uncertainties increase, but it might also present a new paradigm of collaboration in a time of complexity and fragmentation by current developments.

Keywords: EU–Türkiye relations, irregular migration, integrated border management, securitization of migration, migration governance, Frontex, the Schengen Information System (SIS), Entry/Exit System (EES), ETIAS, border security, refugee crisis, the 2016 EU–Türkiye Statement.



ÖZET

Göç, sınır güvenliği ve değişen jeopolitik gerçeklikler arasındaki karmaşık etkileşim, AB'nin Türkiye ile ilişkileri üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olmuştur. Bu tez, sınır kontrolü ve düzensiz göçün AB-Türkiye ilişkisini nasıl tanımladığına odaklanarak bu önemli hususları incelemektedir. Özellikle Suriye ve Afganistan'daki mülteci krizleri sırasında önemli bir transit ve ev sahibi ülke olarak Türkiye'nin rolü, aday ülke olmanın çok ötesine geçerek bölgesel güvenlik ve Avrupa göçmen politikasında kilit bir oyuncu haline gelmiştir.

AB-Türkiye ilişkisinin kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılmasını sağlamak amacıyla bu çalışma, uluslararası ilişkiler, göç çalışmaları ve eleştirel sınır çalışmaları teorilerini birleştiren çok disiplinli bir teorik çerçeve oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma literatüre dayanan nitel bir metodoloji kullanarak göç politikalarının ulusal ve uluslararası düzeyde nasıl geliştirildiğini, yürütüldüğünü ve tartışıldığını incelemektedir.

Sonuçlar, hem AB'nin hem de Türkiye'nin göçmen baskılarına tepki olarak güvenlikçi söylemler benimsemiş olmalarına rağmen, 2016 AB-Türkiye Bildirisi'nin de gösterdiği gibi, pragmatik bir şekilde birlikte çalışabileceklerini gösterdiklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Ancak bu işbirliği yine de kırılgan olup çatışan çıkarlar, siyasi zorluklar ve siyasi görüşler nedeniyle sık sık sekteye uğramaktadır. Sınır kontrolünde daha koordineli ve teknolojik açıdan daha sofistike bir yaklaşıma doğru ilerleme, Türkiye'nin kurumsal reformlar, sınırlardaki teknik yatırımlar ve uluslararası ittifaklarla yansıtılan göç yönetimindeki iç devriminde açıkça görülmektedir. Bu arada AB, sınır yükümlülüklerini dışsallaştırırken tampon devlet olarak Türkiye'ye giderek daha fazla bağımlı hale gelmektedir.

AB-Türkiye ilişkileri için gelecek senaryoları da bu tezde sunulmakta ve daha fazla işbirliğinden stratejik ayrılığa kadar uzanmaktadır. Çalışmanın göç, güvenlik, diplomasi ve teknoloji arasındaki bağlantılara ilişkin eleştirel analizi, akademik tartışmaya katkıda bulunmanın yanı sıra, modern çağda uluslararası işbirliğinin en acil ve siyasi açıdan hassas alanlarından birinde yol alan karar alıcılar için faydalı tavsiyeler sunmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, bu tez sınır kontrolü ve göçün artık AB ve Türkiye'nin daha büyük jeopolitik ve stratejik uyumu için tesadüfi sorunlar olmaktan ziyade elzem olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bölgesel krizler devam ettikçe ve küresel belirsizlikler arttıkça bu ilişkinin dayanıklılığı ve uyarlanabilirliği teste tabi tutulacaktır, ancak aynı zamanda mevcut gelişmelerin karmaşıklık ve parçalanma yarattığı bir zamanda yeni bir iş birliği paradigması da sunabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: AB-Türkiye ilişkileri, düzensiz göç, entegre sınır yönetimi, göçün güvenlikleştirilmesi, göç yönetiřimi, Frontex, Schengen Bilgi Sistemi (SIS), Giriř/Çıkıř Sistemi (EES), ETIAS, sınır güvenlięi, mülteci krizi, 2016 AB-Türkiye Bildirisi.



1.INTRODUCTION

The European Union's (EU) and Türkiye's relationship is still being shaped by discussions about migration, border management, and security. Türkiye has become a vital partner for the EU over the last 20 years, helping to manage huge migrant movements, maintain strong border security, and being tampon between Europe and Middle East. Due to its advantageous geographic location, which connects Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as its long-standing desire to join the EU, Türkiye is in a unique position to have a big impact on European policy.

The 2015–2016 migration crisis was perhaps a turning point in EU- Türkiye ties. During this time, Türkiye's crucial role in controlling unauthorized immigration to Europe was clearly demonstrated. One important framework was the historic EU-Turkiye Statement of 2016, which established policies to reduce irregular migration and gave Türkiye significant financial assistance to handle the growing refugee problem.

Recent changes in world politics, particularly those brought about by the crisis between Russia and Ukraine, have made relations between the EU and Türkiye even more complicated. The course of Western assistance for Ukraine was drastically changed by the unexpected change in U.S. foreign policy during the administration of President Donald Trump. Under Trump, the United States, which had previously provided Ukraine with significant financial and military support, suddenly stopped doing so and instead pushed for a negotiated peace with Russia. The US demanded greater European self-reliance in defense and security spending after this difference revealed serious policy rifts between the US and the EU. With its impressive defense sector developments over the past 20 years and its strategic balancing of relations with major powers, Türkiye is positioned to be a vital security partner for the EU going forward in this changing geopolitical environment.

This thesis seeks to offer a thorough examination of EU- Türkiye relations via the topics which are border security and migration against this complicated background. It presents a thorough examination of the partnership's historical evolution, present situation, and potential future developments in an effort to clarify the complex relationships between these important

concerns. In doing so, the study will examine how this long-standing but changing relationship continues to affect regional and global dynamics, highlighting Türkiye's crucial role within Europe's larger security and policy landscape.

1.1 Background of the Study

Relations between the EU and Türkiye underwent a sea change during the 2015–2016 migration crisis, which made Türkiye an essential partner in the management of Europe's external borders. With over 3.6 million refugees, mostly from war-torn Syria, Türkiye has been under a lot of strain because of protracted regional wars. The EU-Türkiye Statement of 2016 was negotiated in response to control unauthorized migration across the Aegean Sea. The EU offered €6 billion in financial support and progress toward visa liberalization for Turkish citizens, but migrants who entered Greece illegally would be sent back to Türkiye (European Commission, 2016). This deal demonstrated Türkiye's ability to behave responsibly in global migration regulation and assisted the EU in stabilizing its borders (Collett, 2016).

The deal was criticized, meanwhile, for its consequences for human rights and for not fully fulfilling political pledges, especially those related to visa liberalization and EU admission talks. Notwithstanding these objections, the agreement represented a significant shift in the EU-Türkiye alliance, one based on both urgent need and common interests.

Beyond migration, Türkiye plays a crucial role in the larger geopolitical framework of the EU, particularly with regard to security. Türkiye's geopolitical position in the region, the irregular migration flows caused by the Ukraine-Russia war, and Türkiye's mediation role between Ukraine and Russia are crucial in ensuring peace and contributing to the security of the EU.

Furthermore, in light of the conflict in Ukraine and more significant global changes, Türkiye's geopolitical significance has grown. American assistance to Ukraine was significantly cut after Donald Trump was re-elected in the United States, which compelled Kyiv to think about making diplomatic compromises. By putting pressure on European nations to boost their defense budgets and implying that U.S. security guarantees would be subject to conditions, Trump's administration further weakened EU unity. Türkiye has established itself as a major player in maintaining European security and stability in this more fragmented world order.

because to its independent strategic posture, strong defense industry, and balancing diplomacy (Le Monde, 2024; Anadolu Agency, 2023).

When considered collectively, migration, security and geopolitics show how Türkiye has transformed from a minor contender for the EU to a key ally with real power. The dynamic relationship between the EU and Türkiye will be examined in this thesis, with particular attention paid to how border security and migration management interact to influence their changing strategic alignment.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

Political tensions between the EU and Türkiye continue despite advancements in migrant management and improved border management cooperation. The relationship has been strained by disagreements over financial commitments, visa liberalization, and human rights issues. While the EU has voiced concerns about Türkiye's domestic policies, Türkiye has frequently criticized the EU for what it sees as its inability to fulfill its duties under the 2016 Statement (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019; Clingendael Institute, 2021).

The following research questions are addressed in order to try to address these issues:

1. How has the development of EU- Türkiye ties been impacted by migration management?
2. How does this affect bilateral relations, and what part does Türkiye play in Europe's regional security strategy?
3. Taking into account both internal political dynamics and foreign geopolitical influences, what are the possible future developments for EU- Türkiye relations?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

With an emphasis on the connections between border security, international politics and migration, the thesis seeks to provide a thorough knowledge of the EU- Türkiye relationship by investigating these issues.

1. To examine the relationship's historical development between the EU and Türkiye, especially as it relates to migration and border control.
2. To analyze the efficiency of current EU- Türkiye migration management systems, with an emphasis on the 2016 EU- Türkiye Statement.
3. To investigate how EU- Türkiye collaboration is shaped by external geopolitical issues such as the Syrian condition, Ukraine-Russia war, Palastine-Israel war and regional instability.
4. To estimate future relationship between EU-Türkiye with respect to strengthen border security and migration management cooperation and trade.

1.4 Significance and Relevance of the Research

1.4.1 Academic Significance

In the areas of migration and border control in particular, this study fills a major vacuum in the academic literature on EU-Türkiye relations. Although the majority of the literature currently in publication concentrates on Türkiye 's geopolitical position, migration flows, economic connections, and path toward EU membership (Kirişçi, 2019), there are still few comprehensive studies that explore the practical difficulties and cooperative dynamics of EU- Türkiye migration management. Understanding the strategic interdependence between the two players requires a more thorough approach due to the growing complexity of irregular migratory patterns, increasing importance of border security, changing security risks, and the growth of populist movements throughout Europe.

This study provides a nuanced view of state collaboration in the face of conflicting national interests and security concerns by analyzing the intersection of international relations theories and migration and border management with the additional perspective of political stability of the Middle East Region. Particularly when considering the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, frameworks like realism and neoliberal institutionalism offer useful lenses through which to view the cooperative but complicated relationship between the EU and Türkiye (Waever, 2015). By applying these ideas to the real-world problems of migration governance, such as

externalization of migration controls, cross-border cooperation and new application in border management, this study adds to the conversation.

Additionally, this study contributes to the developing subject of Critical Border Studies, which views borders as dynamic areas of social, political, and economic interaction rather than just physical boundaries (Rumford, 2006). Today, international agreements, monitoring technologies, and hybrid governance models, which combine supranational and sovereign authority, are used more and more to regulate borders. Because of its strategic location at the intersection of Europe and Asia, Türkiye provides an interesting case study for comprehending how transit nations manage and impact international migration flows (Triandafyllidou, 2018).

The paper also discusses recent research on the securitization of migration, which looks at how migration is being presented more and more as a national security concern. States justify the use of extreme measures to regulate and restrict migrant movements by framing migration as a security concern, according to the securitization thesis (Buzan, Waever, & De Wilde, 1998). According to recent analysis, the EU and Türkiye have both embraced securitized narratives and policies, which have an effect on how migrants are seen and how border controls are implemented (Gerani, 2023; Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2022). Furthermore, a new paradigm of border governance has emerged as a result of the increasing militarization of border areas, the installation of biometric data systems, and the application of sophisticated surveillance technology. This paradigm calls for further scholarly investigation.

This study is even more relevant in light of recent international events, including the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, changes in U.S. foreign policy priorities, Palestine-Israel war and Syrian political situation after Assad regime. The importance of Türkiye as a strategic partner has increased as a result of these developments, both in terms of regional security and as a gatekeeper in the global migration system. In the EU-Türkiye environment, the dynamic interaction of power, law, and humanitarian issues offers enough opportunity for both theoretical development and practical research.

In summary, this study contributes to the scholarly community by offering a comprehensive examination of EU-Türkiye migration and border control, based on securitization frameworks, international relations theory, and critical border studies. In the end, it contributes to a more comprehensive knowledge of how migration is managed in an era of global uncertainty by providing insightful information about the confusions of transnational collaboration and the changing nature of boundaries in the modern geopolitical setting. Also, it

reflects future possible relationship between Türkiye-EU under the light of caotic period of regional and world politics.

1.4.2 Practical Relevance

For organizations, practitioners, and policymakers involved in border and migration management in the EU and Türkiye, this research has important practical results. Informed and successful policy responses are required to address the continued problems caused by irregular migration, which are made worse by ongoing conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan as well as political instability in the larger Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (European Commission, 2020).

An important component of initiatives to manage migrant flows from Türkiye to Europe has been the EU-Türkiye Statement of 2016. However, there have been a number of obstacles to its implementation, such as a lack of finance, issues with human rights, and uneven enforcement methods (Collett, 2016). These results highlight the necessity of conducting a thorough examination of the agreement's operational components and formulating suggestions to improve its efficacy.

The report also highlights the significance of Integrated Border Management (IBM), a notion that is being supported more and more by Türkiye and the EU. Law enforcement, the military, and immigration officials are among the entities in charge of border security that IBM supports working together in fields (Carrera, 2017). A dedication to enhancing interagency cooperation and conforming to EU standards is demonstrated by Türkiye's continuous attempts to update its National Action Plan and create a national IBM strategy (ICMPD, 2025). This study offers useful suggestions to enhance interagency collaboration, facilitate procedures, and maximize resource allocation in the management of irregular migration by examining the operational frameworks of the EU and Türkiye.

International organizations and governmental institutions who support countries and share expertise according to border and migration management will also find value in the study's conclusions. The EU-Turkiye Statement's implementation has sparked debate over how to strike a balance between security and human rights protection. This research provides advise on making sure that migration strategies are both successful and in line with international

human rights standards by critically analyzing the humanitarian effects of current border management procedures and migration policies with high technologies applied in borders.

In conclusion, this study offers practical advice for improving border and migration management regulations. It argues for the preservation of human rights in migration governance, tackles the practical difficulties of current accords, and encourages the use of integrated management techniques. Given the changing nature of migration Middle East region and the continuous demand for cooperative and compassionate policy responses, these contributions are especially relevant.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The subject of this research is focused on EU- Türkiye relations in the context of migration and border management, mainly from 1999 (the year Türkiye became an official EU candidate) until the present. The 2016 EU- Türkiye Declaration, which institutionalized collaboration between the two parties in regulating migratory flows, is the focus of particular attention in this study. The analysis looks at how Türkiye and the EU have modified their operations and policies in response to the increasing difficulties posed by irregular migration, taking into account shifting migratory paths, evolving security risks, and shifting political landscapes within both organizations.

The research employs qualitative methodologies, encompassing an examination of policy texts, legal frameworks, and scholarly literature. Reports from the European Commission, Turkish government agencies, and international organizations including the International Centre for Migration Policy development (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and many other institutions served as the analysis's main sources.

Nevertheless, there are a number of restrictions on the study. First, the research is constrained by the source data on certain border management procedures that are available. The sensitive nature of border security operations means that many operational information is not available to the public, especially with relation to Frontex and Türkiye's border authorities. As a result, in order to evaluate the efficacy of migration management frameworks, the study depends on secondary sources, such as scholarly publications and government reports.

Second, it can be difficult to keep information current given how quickly geopolitical situations in the area are changing. For instance, crises in Afghanistan, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Syria continue to influence migration patterns and regional security dynamics. As a result, even though the report offers a thorough examination of EU-Türkiye cooperation up until the time of writing, upcoming events could change the nature of this partnership.

Lastly, this research does not directly address the broader EU- Türkiye accession process, although it acknowledges that migration management and border security are closely tied to broader EU- Türkiye relations. The focus is specifically on how migration and security concerns, border management and other developments such as Syrian new regime and second term of Trump shape this relationship, rather than the full spectrum of EU- Türkiye negotiations on topics like democracy, human rights, or economic policy (Aydın-Düzgit & Keyman, 2017).

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction sets the context for the research, presenting the background, research questions, objectives, and significance.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Foundations outlines the key theories of international relations and migration management that underpin the analysis.

Chapter 3: Literature Review surveys the existing academic work on Türkiye-EU migration cooperation, border management, and integrated policies.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology explains the qualitative methods used in the study, including data collection and analysis approaches.

Chapter 5: Analysis of EU and Türkiye's Integrated Border Management Strategy examines the evolution of Türkiye-EU cooperation on border management since 2011.

Chapter 6: Impact of Irregular Migration on EU-Türkiye Relations explores the broader social, economic, and political consequences of irregular migration for both entities.

Chapter 7: Future Scenarios for EU-Türkiye Relations presents and analyzes potential future developments based on current trends and geopolitical factors.

Chapter 8: Summarizes the key findings, discusses policy implications, and suggests directions for future research.

Chapter 9: Conclusion.



2.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

The theoretical framework supporting the examination of EU-Türkiye relations in light of migration, border control, economic interdependence, and more general geopolitical changes is presented in this chapter. Because this research is interdisciplinary, it must draw from a number of established theoretical fields, such as critical border scholarship, migration theories, and theories of both classical and modern international relations. In order to contextualize contemporary regional and global trends that impact Türkiye -EU dynamics, the chapter also discusses recent frameworks related to trade wars and economic nationalism.

In order to understand how state and non-state actors develop tactics in response to global issues like mass migration, cross-border security concerns, and changing trade alliances, theoretical frameworks are crucial tools. The relationship between the EU and Türkiye is particularly complicated, influenced by both collaboration and conflict in a number of areas, including as migration policy, customs union agreements, membership talks, and strategic security alignments. Therefore, in order to examine the environmental and structural factors that affect this relationship, a strong conceptual basis is essential.

This chapter provides a multi-layered analysis of policy behavior and interaction by fusing integrationist and institutional viewpoints with the state-centric logic of realism. Using ideas of regional integration, interdependence, and international institutionalism, it investigates the fundamental goals and limitations of both the EU and Türkiye. At the same time, it evaluates how players create, defend, and react to migratory flows in political discourse by placing border and migration policy within critical and securitization frameworks. In order to comprehend how worldwide protectionist trends and environmental regulation mechanisms (such as carbon pricing) impact trade relations and policy coordination between Türkiye and the EU, economic nationalism and trade conflict theories are finally combined.

This composite paradigm enables a thorough analysis of the ways in which trade nationalism, institutional engagement, migratory and border control, and geopolitical alignment interact to influence EU- Türkiye cooperation in the past, present, and future. It also offers a perspective

through which to view how bilateral and regional policy responses are influenced by external shocks (such as wars, pandemics), domestic political dynamics, and international legal rules.

2.1 Theories in International Relations Relevant to Border Management

The theoretical foundation for examining the integrated border management (IBM) tactics of the EU and Türkiye, as well as their changing relationship in response to irregular migration since 2011, is established in this chapter. The thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining neofunctionalism, neoliberal institutionalism, Barry Buzan's security theories (Securitization, Societal Security, and Regional Security Complex Theory), and realism (offensive and defensive) to offer a thorough perspective. While neofunctionalism and neoliberal institutionalism explain the institutional and economic aspects of EU-Türkiye collaboration, realism and Buzan's ideas are the main emphasis of this section since they directly address the security-driven motivations driving it. The thesis clarifies how identity dynamics, security concerns, and regional interdependence influence migratory governance and future scenarios by integrating various viewpoints.

2.1.1 Realism in International Relations

According to realism, governments prioritize survival, security, and sovereignty as rational actors in anarchic international systems (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). By enhancing influence in a self-help setting or balancing against threats, states use power dynamics to further their goals. Since both parties use security-driven policies to manage migration pressures (such as the 1.8 million unauthorized crossings in 2015–2016) and geopolitical obstacles (such as the Syrian crisis), realism is pertinent to EU-Turkiye relations (Frontex, 2021; UNHCR, 2023).

Mearsheimer (2001) established offensive realism, which contends that since hegemony reduces threats, nations aim to expand power in order to assure survival. States use forceful tactics to control their surroundings, reasoning that gaining power discourages competitors. The EU's border fortification efforts, including Frontex's €845 million budget in 2023 to establish control over Schengen's borders, are partly explained by offensive realism in the context of the

EU-Türkiye relationship (Frontex, 2021). Efforts to maximize regional influence are reflected in Türkiye's leverage as the host of 3.7 million refugees and its quest of €11 billion in EU funds (UNHCR, 2023; European Commission, 2016). The cooperative character of EU-Türkiye migration strategies, such as the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, which reduced Aegean crossings by 97% by 2023, is not adequately captured by offensive realism's emphasis on hegemony (UNHCR, 2023).

According to defensive realism, which was developed by Waltz (1979) and Walt (1998), states adopt cautious measures to preserve the status quo and balance against threats, placing security and survival above the pursuit of power. Because excessive power pursuit might lead to counterbalancing, defensive realism predicts constrained action in contrast to aggressive realism. Since both parties aim to reduce common dangers like irregular migration and regional instability, this paradigm provides a clearer explanation of EU-Türkiye collaboration. Some of Türkiye's border management projects financed by €781 million from the EU, safeguard national security against terrorism and smuggling, while the EU's externalization of border control to Türkiye, supported by €11 billion in aid, secures Schengen without overextending resources (ICMPD, 2024; European Commission, 2016). The security issue is brought about by defensive realism, wherein the defensive measures of one state (such as Türkiye's border fortifications) may be interpreted as dangerous by others (such as Greece during the 2020 border opening), making collaboration more difficult (BBC News, 2020; Waltz, 1979). As demonstrated by the 97% decrease in Aegean crossings and Türkiye's adherence to EU standards such as DGMM reforms and EES/ETIAS interoperability in order to protect resources and stability, defensive realism is consistent with the thesis' emphasis on cooperative security measures (UNHCR, 2023; EU-LISA, 2024). Through mutual reliance, both players protect themselves from migratory waves and geopolitical shocks such as Russia's influence (SWP, 2024).

Threats to collective identity, including social or cultural coherence, are the main focus of societal security theory (Waeber, 1993). As evidenced by Frontex's €845 million budget and the EES/ETIAS systems that oversee 400 million crossings annually, the EU's border policies safeguard Schengen's reputation as a safe, borderless area (Frontex, 2021; EU-LISA, 2024). Using DGMM reforms, Turkey, which is home to 3.7 million refugees, protects its national identity against cultural and economic pressure (UNHCR, 2023). As seen by the stalled liberalization of visas, difficulties arise from conflicting societal security interests, such as the EU's human rights concerns versus Türkiye's emphasis on stability (European Commission,

2024a). By emphasizing the identity-driven reasons driving migration governance, societal security enhances defensive realism.

According to Regional Security Complex Theory, regions are interdependent security systems with interdependent state security issues (Buzan & Waever, 2003). As a "insulator" between the EU and the security complexes in the Middle East, Turkey controls migration and conflicts (such as the war in Syria and Russia-Ukraine) to influence regional dynamics (Buzan & Diez, 1999). While Türkiye uses EU funds (€781 million for borders) to stabilize its region (European Commission, 2024a; ICMPD, 2024). To counter challenges like Russian influence, the EU depends on NATO and Türkiye's 700,000-strong military, while Türkiye uses EU funds (€781 million for borders) to stabilize its region (European Commission, 2024a; ICMPD, 2024). In order to counter defensive realism, RSCT frames EU-Türkiye collaboration as a response to interconnected security concerns. While Türkiye's insulator position facilitates mutual dependency, it also runs the risk of diverging if priorities change (e.g., Türkiye's \$30 billion Gulf/China investments) (SWP, 2024).

2.1.2 Neofunctionalism

Neofunctionalism stresses regional integration through institutional interdependence and spillover effects. The EU's creation of FRONTEX and the Schengen Area is an example of neofunctionalist extension of economic cooperation into the fields of migration and security (Haas, 1958). In spite of institutional asymmetry, Türkiye's operational alignment with European migration and customs policy is an example of functional cooperation (Lindberg, 1963). Neofunctionalism also emphasizes integration and collaboration as the primary forces behind international relations, in opposition to realism. According to this hypothesis, political and economic integration in one industry (trade, for example) can influence other industries and increase collaboration in fields like security and border management (Haas, 1958). Neofunctionalism has been particularly useful in explaining the evolution of the Schengen Area and EU integration processes, where tighter economic links led to the construction of a common external border management system.

Neofunctionalism provides insights into how cooperation on migration might lead to larger engagement in other areas, such security, trade, and economic integration, in the context of EU-

Türkiye ties. The 2016 EU- Türkiye Statement represents a functionalist approach to migration management, where cooperation on managing refugee flows was intended to create a spillover effect into other areas of EU- Türkiye relations (Schimmelfennig ,2018). Political and social tensions inside the EU and Türkiye, notably with regard to topics like democratic governance and human rights, have restricted this spillover effect.

2.1.3 Neoliberal Institutionalism

While acknowledging anarchy, neoliberal institutionalism emphasizes the function of international organizations in reducing conflict and promoting collaboration (Keohane, 1984). Regulations and procedures facilitate cooperation in high-stakes domains such as trade and migration, as evidenced by the 2016 EU- Türkiye Statement and accords on financial aid, readmission policy, and customs union (European Commission, 2016).

The main focus of neoliberal institutionalism is on how international organizations encourage state-to-state collaboration. This idea holds that institutions lessen the uncertainty and hazards connected with international collaboration, which makes governments more inclined to collaborate in areas like border control (Keohane, 1984). By defining norms, standards, and processes, international institutions such as the EU, NATO, and FRONTEX provide a framework for governments to collaborate in safeguarding borders, managing migration, and combating transnational threats.

Neoliberal institutionalism can be used to interpret the EU- Türkiye Statement of 2016 because both sides depend on established agreements and norms to control the influx of migrants. As a candidate for EU membership, Türkiye aligns its border management processes with EU standards, while the EU offers practical support for border management through organizations like FRONTEX. However, as Collett (2016) points out, changing political dynamics and external crises, such the Syrian civil war and regional instability, have made it more difficult for these institutions to effectively manage migration.

2.2 Migration Theories and Their Application

Theories of migration offer a prism through which to view cross-border human migration. Two important migration theories such as Migration Network Theory and Securitization Theory-are especially significant in the context of EU- Türkiye relations.

2.2.1 Migration Network Theory

According to Migration Network Theory, migration is shaped by social, political, and economic forces that establish movement networks between certain nations or areas rather than being a random or isolated phenomena. This hypothesis states that labor market demands, political linkages, and historical ties between sending and receiving nations all have an impact on migration flows (Massey et al., 1993). Migration Network Theory also investigates how historical linkages, labor demands, network effects, and interactions between the nations of origin and destination impact migration movements (de Haas, 2010). Driven by regional tensions and economic differences, Türkiye serves as both a transit and destination nation within the larger Euro-Mediterranean system. According to Eurostat data from 2023, Mediterrenian sea remains a major entry point for undocumented migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan, and Syria.

2.2.2 Securitization Theory

Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde (1998) established the Securitization Theory, which looks at how problems like migration are framed as existential dangers in order to support severe policy measures. Policies that place a higher priority on monitoring and fortified borders have served to further frame migrants as a threat. The use of border walls, biometric surveillance, and acceleretad deportation are examples of the securitized narrative that EU nations and Türkiye have increasingly adopted. In addition to border policy, this framing affects public opinion and election results (Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2022).

Securitization theory offers a framework for comprehending how the EU and Türkiye interpret migration as a security concern in regard to their relationship. As a securitized reaction to the refugee crisis, the EU- Türkiye Statement of 2016 introduced strict border controls and

deportation measures, portraying migration as a threat to the EU's internal security. In a similar vein, Türkiye has increased its border with Syria with stationing armed forces there and building walls to control migrant flows and stop violence from spreading into its territory (Akalin, 2017).

2.3 Critical Border Studies: A Multidimensional Perspective

A multidisciplinary approach to comprehending borders is provided by Critical Border Studies (CBS), which focuses on the political, social, and cultural aspects of borders as centers of power and control. CBS contends that borders are dynamic, contested locations that reflect larger political and social processes, in contrast to traditional border studies, which see borders as fixed lines between nations (Rumford, 2006).

According to CBS boundaries are not only geographic lines but are instead socially and politically constituted areas. According to CBS academics, power dynamics, discourses, and technology all contribute to the creation of boundaries (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Türkiye's border regions such as its western frontier with Greece and its eastern border with Iran are used for technology innovation, geopolitical strategy, and humanitarian negotiations. Thus, a critical interpretation of EU-Turkish migratory cooperation that emphasizes both resistance and control is made possible by CBS.

Within the framework of the EU- Türkiye relationship, CBS illustrates how boundaries are utilized to establish political and social inequalities in addition to controlling people's movement. The EU's aim to project its border management obligations beyond its geographic borders is reflected in the externalization of EU borders, where migration control is delegated to neighboring nations such as Türkiye (Guild, 2018). As a result of this externalization process, new models of border governance have emerged, in which Türkiye is essential to upholding EU immigration regulations within its borders.

Furthermore, CBS stresses the social and cultural consequences of border control, notably for migrants and refugees. According to Triandafyllidou (2018), the securitization of borders frequently results in the marginalization of migrants, who are portrayed as dangers rather than as people in need of protection. Given that the EU strive to strike a balance between security concerns and humanitarian commitments, this framing has important ramifications. Because Especially Türkiye's border needs to be protected by high technology because of regional

political instability. İran, Iraq, Syria are neighbours of Türkiye and these borders are critical for terrorist groups so Türkiye made huge investment to protect its borders. All these investments for borders make more safe and secure region not only for Türkiye but also European Union. EU supports Türkiye with funds which are used mostly for migration and border projects to stop flows of irregular migration towards to EU.

2.4 Theoretical Perspectives on Trade Wars and Economic Nationalism

The global political economy has been increasingly influenced by economic nationalism and protectionist policies, which have an impact on migration and trade dynamics. Economic volatility and a series of retaliatory actions were triggered by the Trump administration's imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum from the EU and Türkiye, particularly for the country's export-dependent industry (Evenett & Fritz, 2021).

In order to prevent imports from nations with less stringent environmental regulations from undermining climate plans, the EU has recently investigated environmental trade mechanisms including the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which aims to impose carbon pricing on imports. This policy framework is being closely watched in Türkiye, where energy-intensive industries like steel and cement are susceptible to such cross-border rules, even though it has not yet been fully implemented (O'Brien & Bringezu, 2022).

Global trade risks have also been brought to light by the ongoing supply chain disruptions brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, second term of Trump with new kind of tariffs. The causes and reactions to irregular migration have increased as a result of these disruptions, which have also increased food prices, increased transportation costs, and increased geopolitical competition (UNCTAD, 2023).

At the center of these changes lies Türkiye, a crucial logistics corridor. The geopolitics of environmental regulation, protectionism, and regional instability are increasingly influencing its trade and migration policy. To understand the changing nature of border cooperation and conflict between Türkiye and the EU, one must have a solid understanding of these economic changes with political instruments in the Middle East and Europe Regions.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter conducts a critical analysis of the body of research on the development of border control, immigration laws, and cooperative mechanisms in the EU-Türkiye relationship. It provides information about the migratory history between Türkiye and the EU, the growth of border management techniques in Türkiye in response to local crises, and the creation of integrated border management strategies inside the EU. This chapter concludes by addressing gaps in the body of knowledge and outlining the contribution of this thesis to the scholarly conversation on migration and border control.

3.1 Historical Context: Evolution of EU-Türkiye Relations

Concerns over politics, economy and security have molded the relationship between the EU and Türkiye during the past few decades. In this changing relationship, migration has been a major concern, especially in light of Türkiye's dual role as a destination and a transit nation for people traveling towards Europe.

3.1.1 Pre-2011 Migration Patterns and Policies

Before 2011, Türkiye's migration dynamics were defined by its dual roles as a destination for labor migrants and asylum seekers and as a transit nation for migrants seeking to reach Europe. Due to political upheaval and labor agreements, there was a large emigration from Türkiye to Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, especially to Germany. At this time, Türkiye had no all-encompassing asylum policy and frequently handled migration-related matters on an as-needed basis (İçduygu, 2010). Türkiye adopted the National Action Plan for Asylum and Migration in 2005 as part of its reforms to bring its migration policy into compliance with EU norms. But these changes were not implemented quickly, and problems persisted in areas like border control and asylum seeker protection (Kirişçi, 2007).

The main reasons for Turkish migration to Europe were labor migration and family reunion, especially to Germany and other nations where Turkish workers had been recruited since the 1960s as part of the Gastarbeiter program. During this time, migration was comparatively controlled, with Turkish migrants mostly traveling through legal routes to reach Europe.

At the same time, Türkiye started to become known as a country through which undocumented migrants from the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa traveled. Many migrants who traveled through Türkiye did so to escape political or economic persecution; many also used Türkiye as a transit country to enter the European Union (İçduygu & Aksel, 2013). The pre-2011 migratory flows, however, were manageable for both Türkiye and the EU, and bilateral agreements pertaining to labor migration and visa liberalization dominated discussions over migration policy.

3.1.2 Post-2011 Surge in Irregular Migration

The start of the Syrian civil war in 2011 was a watershed in the history of migration in Türkiye. By implementing an open-door policy, Türkiye granted Syrian refugees temporary protection status and permitted their entry. Over 3.6 million Syrian refugees were officially registered in Türkiye by 2023, making it the world's greatest host of refugees (UNHCR, 2023).

By repatriating migrants to Türkiye and resettling Syrian refugees directly in EU member states, the EU-Türkiye Statement of 2016 sought to reduce irregular migration across the Aegean Sea. The deal was criticized for human rights issues and the sufficiency of aid given to Türkiye, even though it resulted in a notable drop in arrivals to Greece, from 885,386 in 2015 to 173,450 in 2016 (European Commission, 2016; Amnesty International, 2017). The EU looked to Türkiye as a vital ally in managing migrant flows as it attempted to curb this extraordinary wave of migration. A more formalized cooperation between Türkiye and the EU began with the EU-Türkiye Statement of 2016, which was a pivotal event in establishing post-2011 migration strategies (Collett, 2016).

3.1.3 Implications of the Trump Presidency on EU–Türkiye Relations

The unilateralism and transactionalism of the Trump administration's foreign policy have a number of effects on EU-Türkiye relations. In order to reduce economic vulnerabilities, Türkiye sought tighter relations with the EU after the United States placed tariffs on its imports of steel and aluminum in 2018 (World Bank, 2019).

The transactional and unilateral U.S. foreign policy stance that continues to influence the dynamics of EU-Türkiye relations has been further cemented during Donald Trump's second term in office. Trump's government established a precedent for his new agenda during his first term (2017–2021) by prioritizing bilateralism, enacting tariffs on Turkish and EU and China imports, and downplaying multilateral involvement. This policy approach has been more pronounced during his second term, impacting economic calculations and geopolitical alignments throughout Europe and the Middle East.

The strategic realignment between the European Union and Türkiye has been one of the most important ramifications. Despite diplomatic tensions, EU member states have come to see Türkiye through a more practical security lens, recognizing its significance as a regional stabilizer and NATO ally, as the U.S. under Trump distances itself from NATO commitments and calls for less American support for European defense (Jones & Dempsey, 2024). In EU negotiations on migration and security, Türkiye's capacity to interact with NATO, Russia, and regional countries at the same time has given it more negotiating leverage.

The EU's need to create autonomous regional strategy is further highlighted by the rifts that have resulted from Trump's decision to lessen support for Ukraine in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. By hosting several rounds of peace negotiations, Türkiye has demonstrated its ability to mediate between Kyiv and Moscow, which has increased its diplomatic significance in the eyes of EU policymakers (ICG, 2024). Ankara is increasingly seen by the EU as a key player in regional crisis diplomacy in addition to being a gatekeeper for migration.

In terms of the economy, the persistence of American tariffs on Turkish exports particularly those of steel and aluminum has forced Türkiye to strengthen ties with the EU and other trading partners. Discussions toward modernizing the customs union have picked up steam despite preexisting tensions due to economic necessity and common worries about regional instability (European Parliament, 2024). The EU has reexamined its reliance on transatlantic coordination

in migration policy as a result of Trump's tough immigration policies and waning support for international refugee frameworks. Rather, it has improved bilateral ties with frontline nations such as Türkiye. Together with changing U.S. priorities, the increasing focus on externalizing migration management strengthens Türkiye's position as a strategic buffer and negotiating partner.

3.2 EU's Integrated Border Management: Policies and Mechanisms

The EU has created a number of laws and procedures to protect its external borders and handle migration in a compassionate and well-coordinated way in response to the growing demands of migration. These include the creation of systems like the Schengen Information System (SIS), Entry/Exit System (EES), and European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), as well as the creation of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard, and EUROSUR.

3.2.1 FRONTEX and EUROSUR: Objectives and Impact

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) was founded in 2004 with the mission of coordinating border control measures throughout the external boundaries of the European Union. The main goal of Frontex is to support EU member states in controlling irregular migration and maintaining border security, especially in the event of large-scale migratory surges like those that occurred during the refugee crisis in 2015–2016 (Frontex, 2021). The organization is essential to deportation operations, which send undocumented immigrants back to their home nations. Coordination of border control activities among EU member states is mostly the responsibility of FRONTEX. Among its duties are return interventions, collaborative operations, and risk analysis. In line with its expanding scope, the agency's budget grew from €6 million in 2005 to €845 million in 2023 (Frontex, 2023). Even established in 2004, the agency's mandate was significantly expanded through Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 in response to the 2015–2016 migration crisis. This regulation transformed FRONTEX into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and strengthened its legal

authority to coordinate returns, provide operational support to member states, and deploy its own standing corps of up to 10,000 border guards by 2027 (European Union, 2016).

The expanded mandate gives Frontex the authority to launch cooperative operations, evaluate the border management capabilities of member states for vulnerabilities, facilitate return operations, and offer technical assistance to third parties. Through cooperation agreements with non-EU nations, Frontex has also expanded its operations outside of the EU, namely in North Africa and the Western Balkans. The agency's budget increased from €254 million in 2019 to nearly €845 million by 2023, reflecting its expanding operating scope (Frontex, 2023).

EUROSUR, the European Border Surveillance System, was launched in 2013 to strengthen collaboration between EU member states in monitoring the EU's external borders. In order to stop irregular migration and lower the number of maritime fatalities, the system offers a framework for real-time information sharing between national authorities, FRONTEX, and other EU organizations (European Commission, 2014). Frontex and EUROSUR have worked together to improve operational coordination, provide technical support, and enable combined operations, all of which have improved the EU's capacity to respond to irregular migration. But there have been doubts about these methods' efficacy, especially in light of the persisting difficulties in the Mediterranean and the moral issues raised by the EU's treatment of migrants with respect to human rights (Guild, 2018).

The EU's approach to Integrated Border Management (IBM), which aims to guarantee both security and adherence to basic rights, is embodied by Frontex and EUROSUR. However, human rights organizations and EU oversight bodies have criticized Frontex for its rapid expansion of its mandate and its use in controversial operations, especially those involving returns and third-country cooperation, and have called for greater accountability and transparency (Carrera et al., 2022; Amnesty International, 2021). Because of rapid operations human right importance became a second issue for some of the guards. Between stopping irregular migration and respecting human right in balance became issue to not apply always with same perspective. This became one of the most criticized topic by media and NGO's.

3.2.2 The Schengen Information System (SIS), Entry/Exit System (EES), and ETIAS

One of the most significant databases used by the EU to manage border security is the Schengen Information System (SIS). According to the European Commission (2019), it enables national authorities to exchange data about people and products that traverse EU borders, including data regarding immigration, law enforcement, and counterterrorism. Even in the Schengen Area, where internal borders have been completely eliminated, the SIS is essential to maintaining the effectiveness of border controls.

A new system called the entrance/Exit System (EES) records non-EU visitors' entrance and exit information as they enter and leave the Schengen Area, bolstering the security of the EU's external frontiers. By simplifying the entrance and leave procedures, EES will speed up border crossings for frequent visitors and improve the EU's capacity to monitor overstays and irregular migration (European Parliament, 2020).

Comparably, before entering the Schengen Area, visitors from nations exempt from requiring a visa must acquire authorization through the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), which is scheduled to go live in 2024 but because of technical issues it will be implemented by end of the 2025. By doing background checks on visitors and spotting possible security or migration concerns before they arrive at the EU's external frontiers, ETIAS seeks to enhance border security (European Commission, 2020). In addition to Frontex and EUROSUR, SIS, EES, and ETIAS work together to provide a comprehensive framework for handling migration and border security in the EU.

3.2.3 The Impact of U.S. Trade Wars and Tariff Policies on EU Border Economies

EU economies, especially those in border regions that depend on export-driven manufacturing, have been significantly impacted by U.S. trade policies throughout President Donald Trump's first (2017–2021) and second term (2025–2029). Citing national security concerns, the US placed Section 232 tariffs on European Union imports of steel and aluminum in 2018 during Trump's first term. The EU responded to these steps by imposing retaliatory tariffs on American

products such as motorcycles, whiskey, and orange juice, which interrupted transatlantic trade flows (European Commission, 2018).

The impact of the tariffs was especially noticeable in economically vulnerable border areas of EU member states, including Northern Italy, Eastern Germany, and portions of the Benelux. Clusters of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) that are closely linked to international supply chains are found in these areas. In addition to lowering export volumes, tariffs also led to employment uncertainty and a decline in industrial production. Between 2018 and 2020, EU exports to the U.S. decreased by almost €2.4 billion as a result of the trade conflicts, according to Bruegel (2020).

These protectionist measures have not only persisted but have grown since the start of Trump's second term, focusing on new industries like sophisticated batteries, electric cars, and agricultural products many of which are vital to border economies. The European Central Bank has cautioned that if retaliatory actions and investor concern continue, ongoing transatlantic trade tensions might cause the euro area's GDP to decline by as much as 0.5% by 2025 (ECB, 2023).

Migration patterns are impacted in a cascade by these economic disruptions. Outbound migration is frequently a result of economic decline in border regions that depend on exports, particularly for young, talented workers looking for chances in more stable places. At the same time, towns that are impacted by saving measures and limited budgetary capacity may find it more difficult to handle incoming migrant flows, especially those of seasonal labor migrants and asylum seekers. Once prosperous as points of entry into the economy, border regions now face structural vulnerabilities that increase the pressures of both inbound and outbound migration and weaken the economic stability in the EU region.

Furthermore, the EU has prioritized regional resilience tactics, such as programs to strengthen near-border economies and diversify trade partnerships with Asia and Africa, as a result of the deterioration of transatlantic institutional cooperation. These initiatives are still in their early stages, though, and have not yet countered the economic and geopolitical upheavals brought about by Trump's unpredictable trade policies.

3.3 Türkiye's Border Management Evolution

Over the past 20 years, Türkiye's approach to border control has changed significantly due to changes in domestic policy, foreign geopolitical influences, and the country's changing relationship with the European Union. As a prospective EU member, Türkiye has worked to meet the security challenges brought about by its strategic location as a gateway between Europe and conflict-ridden areas like the Middle East and Central Asia, while also bringing its border management strategies into compliance with EU standards.

3.3.1 Historical Development and Strategic Shifts

Türkiye started a series of changes in the early 2000s with the goal of updating its border security system, which is when its border management policies began to take shape. Türkiye's ambitions to join the EU, which included adhering to the *acquis communautaire*, especially in regards to border security, migration control, and visa regulations, were a major impetus behind these measures (Aydın&Düzgit, 2017).

Türkiye made a dramatic change in its approach to managing migration and border security in 2013 when it established the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), in response to the growing stream of undocumented migrants and refugees passing through its territory. Asylum proceedings, border control, and the assimilation of refugees and migrants into Turkish society were all under the purview of the DGMM (İçduygu, 2018). Alongside this institutional transformation, physical obstacles like the border wall that runs along Türkiye's southern border with Syria were built, as well as cutting-edge monitoring equipment were stationed at the country's frontiers (Akalın, 2017).

Along with these changes, Türkiye has made a greater effort to establish itself as the area pioneer in the management of migration, especially in the years following the Syrian Civil War. Türkiye's decision to prioritize security over humanitarian concerns and open its doors to millions of Syrian migrants while also tightening border controls is indicative of its dual approach Türkiye's cooperation with the EU, particularly the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement that set a framework for controlling irregular migrant flows from Türkiye to Europe, has further molded this policy.

3.3.2 Impact of the Syrian and Afghan Refugee Crises

Türkiye now hosts more refugees than any other country in the world as a result of the Syrian refugee crisis, which has had a significant impact on border control strategies in the nation. Along with a sizable population of refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, and other conflict-affected areas, Türkiye was home to about 3.6 million Syrian refugees as of 2021 (UNHCR, 2021). Both Türkiye's internal organizations in charge of migration management and refugee protection as well as the country's border security infrastructure are under tremendous strain as a result of this record refugee inflow.

Türkiye has responded to these difficulties by putting in place a number of policies designed to strengthen border security while upholding its commitment to aiding refugees in need. To monitor and deter unlawful border crossings, these efforts include building physical barriers, such as walls and fences, along Türkiye 's borders with Iran and Syria, as well as deploying land forces and cutting-edge surveillance technologies (İçduygu, 2018). All border institutions such as Ministry of Defence, Coast Guard and other related institutions tried to increase their human and technical capacities.

Türkiye 's attempts to govern its borders have been made more difficult by the Afghan refugee issue, which worsened after the Taliban retook power in 2021. Türkiye has been compelled to reevaluate its border security priorities and strengthen its cooperation with international organizations and neighboring nations in order to manage the increasing number of Afghan refugees attempting to enter Türkiye through its eastern border with Iran. Despite these attempts, the securitization of Türkiye's borders has prompted concerns regarding the humanitarian implications of its border policy, notably with regard to the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers at its borders (Akalin, 2017).

3.4 Gaps in the Literature

There are still a lot of unanswered questions about migration management and EU- Türkiye ties in the literature. These gaps include inadequate research on the long-term effects of Türkiye's border security measures on migration patterns, regional stability, and human rights, as well as

a lack of thorough study of the operational difficulties related to the 2016 EU- Türkiye Statement.

The political and legal ramifications of the 2016 EU- Türkiye Statement have been extensively researched, but little is known about the practical difficulties that the EU and Türkiye encountered in putting the agreement into practice. The declaration, which sought to stop unauthorized immigration across the Aegean Sea, is recognized for having had a major impact on the decline in the number of people traveling to Europe. But there have been many obstacles in the way of its execution, such as the poor facilities in Greek reception centers, bad condition for irregular migrants in Greek islands, the serious resettlement of refugees, and the insufficient ability of Turkish authorities to handle asylum requests (Collett, 2016).

The EU- Türkiye Statement presents a notable operational difficulty because to its dependence on returns and readmissions as a primary method for managing irregular migration. As per the agreement, undocumented migrants who reach Greece would be sent back to Türkiye, and in exchange, the European Union will relocate a commensurate number of Syrian refugees from Türkiye. But in reality, these returns have been implemented slowly and unevenly, leaving many migrants stuck in Greece's overcrowded receiving centers as they wait to be deported or resettled (Kirişçi, 2016). There are also concerns regarding the long-term viability of this strategy due to the overwhelming number of refugees currently living in Türkiye, which has restricted Türkiye's ability to accept repatriated migrants (UNHCR, 2021).

The lack of studies on how new technology may influence border management between the EU and Türkiye in the future is another gap in the literature. Although the implementation of systems like the Entry/Exit System (EES), Schengen Information System (SIS), and ETIAS has generated a lot of discussion in policy circles, little scholarly research has been done on how these technologies will impact migration governance over the long run (European Parliament, 2020).

The dynamics of EU- Türkiye border management cooperation could be drastically changed by these technologies, which are intended to improve the security and effectiveness of the EU's external borders. However, the deployment of these systems also brings up issues related to human rights, data privacy, and the possibility that they would be utilized as instruments of exclusion rather than inclusion (Guild, 2018). The ethical ramifications of these technologies and their possible influence on the rights of migrants and refugees require more investigation.

3.5 Contribution of the Thesis to Existing Research

By offering a thorough examination of the operational difficulties, technological advancements, and geopolitical changes that influence the EU-Türkiye migration cooperation, this thesis adds to the corpus of research already available on EU-Türkiye relations and migration management. This thesis provides new insights into how migration management systems may be enhanced to better satisfy the requirements of both migrants and host countries by analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement.

This thesis makes a significant contribution by concentrating on the practical difficulties posed by the EU-Türkiye Statement, especially with regard to implementation of new technologies at borders. Also, it provides a detailed account of the practical challenges faced by the EU and Türkiye in managing irregular migration flows by drawing on secondary data such as existing academic literature and government reports. Policymakers looking to enhance the efficacy and efficiency of migration management systems in the future can learn a great deal from this investigation.

Moreover, thesis examines the possible effects of developing technologies, such SIS, EES, and ETIAS, on border management in the future in addition to addressing the practical difficulties of the EU- Türkiye migrant relationship. It offers a critical viewpoint on how technological advancements can be used to improve border security while preserving the rights of migrants and possible EU-Türkiye relationship ways for the future. Given the EU's continuous attempts to create a more secure and integrated external border control system and Türkiye's important position as a partner in this process, this analysis is especially pertinent.

Overall, this thesis adds a great deal to the body of knowledge on border security, migration management, and EU- Türkiye relations by shedding light on the intricate dynamics of migration governance in a globalized society and show the possible scenarios for the future.

4.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the study technique used to look at the dynamics of cooperation and management of migration between the EU and Türkiye. Using a qualitative methodology. I will benefit from secondary data such as scholarly publications and policy documents and all other documents to provide a thorough grasp of the research issue.

4.1 Research Design: Qualitative Approach

In order to provide a thorough knowledge of the intricate dynamics between the EU and Türkiye regarding border security and migration management, this thesis uses a qualitative research design. Because qualitative research is especially well-suited for this kind of study. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is a perfect method to analyze EU-Türkiye interactions in the context of migration since it aims to comprehend how people and institutions make sense of complicated social occurrences.

This study's qualitative design stems from the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes the value of viewing social phenomena from the viewpoints of individuals who is affected. Furthermore, the research is anchored in theoretical frameworks and empirical data thanks to the qualitative analysis of policy documents, government reports, and scholarly papers.

4.2 Data Collection and Sources

The dynamics of border management and migratory cooperation between the EU and Türkiye are examined in this study using by secondary data. While academic literature, official reports, and legislative papers make up secondary data.

4.2.1 Secondary Data: Academic Articles, Government Reports, and Legislation

Secondary data is gathered from a variety of sources, such as scholarly publications, official documents, and laws. An important part of this research is the academic literature on migration management and EU- Türkiye relations, which offers theoretical frameworks and empirical findings to supplement the main material gathered through policy analysis and interviewing.

The academic research of European and Turkish scholars, including articles published in peer-reviewed journals like *Turkish Studies*, *European Migration Studies*, *Journals*, publication of EU institutions is heavily referenced in this study. These sources provide insightful information about the historical development of migration relations between the EU and Türkiye, the practical difficulties of migration governance, and the function of developing technology in border management.

Reports from the government, such as those issued by the European Commission, FRONTEX, and Türkiye's Presidency of Migration Management (PMM), offer current information on border security measures, policy implementation, and migrant flows. To grasp the legal frameworks guiding migration management between the EU and Türkiye, legislation like the EU- Türkiye Readmission Agreement and Türkiye's Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013) are also examined.

4.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis, a popular qualitative technique that enables the discovery of recurrent themes and patterns in the data, forms the basis of the data analysis in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is a methodical procedure that starts with familiarizing oneself with the data, which entails going over the policy documents and interview transcripts several times to get a thorough grasp of the topic. The creation of initial codes, which are applied to data segments pertaining to important subjects including border security, EU- Türkiye cooperation, trade and migration control, is the next stage (Flick, 2014). The operational difficulties of the EU- Türkiye Declaration, the use of technology in border control, and the effects of outside variables like

the Syrian refugee crisis, Ukraine-Russia war, Palastine-Israel war are some of the more general themes that these codes are then categorized into.

Interpreting the themes in light of the research questions and theoretical framework constitutes the last phase of the study. The content of the data is examined, but it's also examined in light of the larger social and political framework that governs migration. This methodology guarantees that the study's conclusions are theoretically informed and based on thematic approach.

4.4 Challenges and Limitations of the Research

This research is subject to various problems and restrictions. The study triangulates the results and makes sure the analysis is supported by a number of sources of evidence by combining secondary data.

A further obstacle to the research is the dynamic and intricate structure of migration and border governance. The dynamics of EU- Türkiye migration cooperation may shift in response to new circumstances, geopolitical conflicts such as the continuing refugee crisis in Afghanistan, which could impact both the EU and Türkiye's migration and border policies. Consequently, the study's conclusions represent the status of migration governance at the time of data collection, but they might need to be revised to take into consideration newly discovered information.

The study's final limitation is the lack of data on specific areas of the migration cooperation between the EU and Türkiye, notably in relation to the specifics of how border management programs like Frontex and EUROSUR operate. While academic research and publicly available publications are consulted in the study and relation between Türkiye and EU direction according to current developments.

5. ANALYSIS OF EU AND TÜRKİYE'S INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

This chapter explores the development of Türkiye's integrated border management policy, emphasizing important institutional responsibilities, technology advancements, and the nation's EU cooperation. It addresses both domestic and international collaboration, including EU support, and highlights Türkiye's shift from human-based border control to technology-intensive management. Since they are essential to ensure efficient border management at the local level, special attention is paid to the function of local governance, particularly the duties of governors and district governors.

5.1 The Evolution of Türkiye's Border Management Post-2011

Over the past century, geopolitical upheavals, regional conflicts, and changing migratory patterns have all had a major impact on Türkiye's border management. Being a nation that connects Europe and the Middle East, Türkiye has historically been a hub for both legal and illegal migration, and its border management strategies have been influenced by this strategic location. A more thorough and integrated system that takes into account security, migration, and humanitarian issues has replaced Türkiye's largely military-based approach to border management.

Securing national sovereignty and gaining control over freshly established borders were the main goals of border management when the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. The existing borders of Türkiye were largely established by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), especially with regard to Syria and Greece, its neighbors. During this time, border management paid little attention to migration and was largely concerned with protecting the country's territorial integrity. As evidenced by the state's preference for military security over migration management, the Turkish Coast Guard and the Turkish Land Forces were instrumental in protecting Türkiye's land and sea borders.

Türkiye continued to prioritize military border security during the Cold War era. Türkiye's role as a frontline NATO partner was crucial to Western attempts to stop the expansion of Soviet power in the area. The Turkish Armed Forces were in charge of protecting Türkiye's frontiers

from possible military threats during this period, which saw the country's borders with the Soviet Union, Greece and Bulgaria significantly reinforced. Though these movements were tiny in comparison to succeeding decades, Türkiye also started to see small-scale migratory flows, mostly from Iran, Iraq, and the Eastern Bloc. During this time, managing migratory flows was not as important as safeguarding Türkiye from outside dangers. With the Ministry of Trade in charge of overseeing international trade and stopping illicit smuggling activities, customs enforcement and anti-smuggling initiatives were given top priority.

An important turning point in Türkiye's border control strategies was the conclusion of the Cold War. Migration flows increased as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union and the wars that followed in nearby nations, most notably the Gulf War (1990–1991). Significant numbers of migrants and refugees, mostly from Iran and Iraq, started to enter Türkiye. This signaled the start of Türkiye's shift from a border management system that was largely military-based to one that had to take humanitarian and migration issues into account.

As part of the EU accession process, Türkiye started bringing its border management policies into line with EU norms in the early 2000s. In 2005, when Türkiye became a candidate country to the European Union, two separate bureaus were established for border and migration management in order to comply with EU standards. These were the Border Management Bureau and the Migration Management Bureau. The ultimate goal of these two bureaus was to reach the level of a directorate general and become harmonized with the EU on migration and border issues. In this period, Türkiye's Integrated Border Management Strategy Document and Action Plan was prepared with EU funds in 2006. According to these documents, Türkiye's transition from human-centered border management to technology-centered border management and the establishment of a border organization with law enforcement powers to manage all borders as a single authority was planned. On the other hand, the issue of migration became more important than the border issue with the mobilization of a large irregular migration flow that started with the Arab Spring and the outbreak of the civil war with the Assad regime in Syria. In order to keep this unexpected large migration flow under control, the issues related to foreigners were taken from the Foreigners Branch under the Turkish National Police and an important milestone in this process was the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013), which established a legislative framework for handling asylum issues and other issues such as residence and work permits related to foreigners. The Directorate General of Migration Management was established as a Directorate General with the Law No. 6458 on

Foreigners and International Protection published in the Official Gazette No. 28615 dated 11/04/2013 and Article 103 of the Law regulates the establishment of the Directorate General.

In the same period, modernization efforts continued in the field of border management, which is of great importance in addition to the migration crisis. Due to the Arab Spring, civil unrest in neighboring countries, economic and political crises and terrorist incidents on Türkiye's borders, it was decided that it would be more appropriate to establish a unit that would coordinate all institutions instead of a single unit that would manage all borders from a single hand. For this reason, in May 2015, the previously established border office was established as the Border Management Department under the umbrella of the General Directorate of Provincial Administration affiliated to the Ministry of Interior.

5.1.1 Strategic Adaptations in Response to Irregular Migration

The start of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 drastically altered Türkiye's border and migration control strategy. The Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), which was established in 2013 under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (Law No. 6458), has become the main body in charge of developing and carrying out Türkiye's migration policy. The DGMM was established to modernize migration governance through institutional capacity-building, legal reform, and cooperation with international players in response to Türkiye's growing role as a transit and destination nation. To guarantee uniform implementation of migration and asylum procedures, the institution concentrated on organizing its provincial structure in its early years, setting up migration directorates in each of the 81 provinces and at strategic border crossing locations (DGMM, 2015).

The Temporary Protection Regulation's passage in 2014, which gave Syrians escaping war access to legal stay, healthcare, education, and employment markets, was one of the DGMM's most important early milestones. The foundation of Türkiye's reaction to one of the biggest refugee migrations in contemporary history was this regulation. Over 3.6 million Syrian refugees were officially living in Türkiye by 2023, making it the world's largest host of refugees (UNHCR, 2023).

In terms of strategy, the DGMM unveiled Türkiye's first National Migration Strategy and Action Plan in 2018, which outlined long-term goals for international cooperation, integration,

legal migration, return procedures, and the fight against irregular migration. In addition to integrating Türkiye's migration policy with international commitments and EU norms, this plan placed a high priority on a human-centered, rights-based approach (DGMM, 2018). Interagency collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and mainstreaming migration challenges into more general policy domains like security, education, and employment were all stressed in the statement. Since the 2018 strategy document and action plan prepared in the field of migration will be completed in 2025, work on a new strategy document and action plan has started and new documents to be prepared taking into account new needs and developments are expected to enter into force in 2026.

After the March 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, DGMM took the lead in putting the agreement's return and readmission procedures into action. It managed the resettlement of Syrian refugees through humanitarian admission programs and the return of irregular migrants from Greece in close collaboration with FRONTEX and EU agencies. The EU provided more than €6 billion for refugee assistance and migration management infrastructure in Türkiye through the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRiT), which facilitated this collaboration (European Commission, 2022).

In order to provide training, improve technical competence, and create community-based integration initiatives, the DGMM has partnered with international organizations including IOM, UNHCR, and ICMPD as part of its strategic development with many NGO's. By 2020, the organization has established community centers, mobile service units, and national public awareness campaigns to combat growing xenophobia and promote social cohesion. With the Presidential Decree No. 85 published in the Official Gazette dated 29 October 2021 and numbered 31643, the status of the General Directorate was changed to the Presidency was a significant institutional turning point. The institution now has more jurisdiction over cross-sectoral coordination in migration governance, a broader mandate, and more autonomy thanks to this development. In order to better manage migration flows, the agency has concentrated on digital transformation since becoming PMM. This includes modernizing the GöçNet system and putting AI-supported risk analysis tools into place (PMM, 2023).

By 2024, the Presidency had established itself as a regional leader in the management of migration, striking a balance between national security considerations and humanitarian duties. Future plans place a strong emphasis on regional cooperation frameworks with countries of origin and transit, voluntary return initiatives, and local government capacity building. The

PMM continues to play a crucial role in determining Türkiye's position as a major player in the global migration architecture, notwithstanding persistent obstacles.

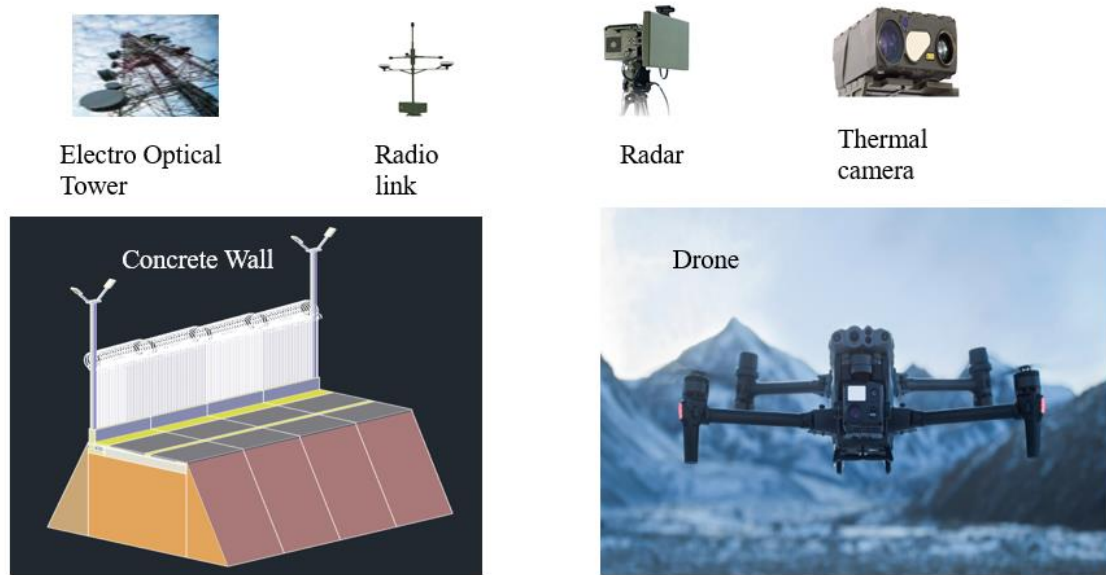
Meanwhile, Türkiye's Border Management Department, which was established in 2015 under the Directorate General of Provincial Administration of the Ministry of Interior, has been instrumental in improving border security and bringing its procedures into compliance with EU standards. Developing and implementing integrated border management techniques that guarantee efficient cooperation among diverse national and international partners has been the department's main goal.

The Regulation on Interagency Cooperation and Coordination in the Field of Border Management, which was passed in 2016, was a major turning point in this effort. The Land Forces Command, Gendarmerie General Command, Coast Guard Command, and the Directorate General of Migration Management are among the organizations in charge of border security, and this law created a thorough framework for cooperation between them (Ministry of Interior, 2016). In order to provide a consistent approach to border management across several agencies, the law sought to ease operations at seaports, airports, and border crossings.

By issuing Presidential Decree No. 155 in November 2023, which promoted the Border Management Department to the rank of General Directorate under the Presidency of Migration Management, Türkiye reorganized this institutional framework in response to changing regional dynamics and the increasing demand for inter-institutional synergy. With this restructuring, a more centralized and technically competent entity was strategically charged with managing all border-related investments, risk assessment, and national coordination with international and EU entities (Official Gazette, 2023; Anadolu Agency, 2023).

In order to provide training, improve technical competence, and create community-based integration initiatives, the Border Management General Directorate has partnered with not only international organizations including IOM, UNDP, and ICMPD but also with embassies as part of its strategic development. The department has been in the forefront of important infrastructure and capacity-building projects since its founding. These include erecting physical barriers along the eastern and southern borders, deploying sophisticated surveillance technologies (such as thermal cameras, drones, and biometric tools), and creating integrated platforms for border agencies to share data. Institutional responsiveness has increased and irregular border crossings have significantly decreased as a result of these actions (Presidency of Migration Management, 2023).

Türkiye's technological devices for Border Management



Source: (Ministry of Interior,2025)

This image showcases Türkiye's fortified border infrastructure along its land frontier, featuring a segment of the example of concrete wall equipped with advanced surveillance towers and thermal imaging systems, constructed post-2011 to curb irregular migration and enhance security. The visual highlights Türkiye's strategic response to the irregular migration crisis, which saw 3.6 million refugees hosted by 2023, and underscores its commitment to aligning with EU Integrated Border Management (IBM) standards through technological upgrades. The wall, funded partly by €781 million in EU assistance in 2024, symbolizes the securitization of migration, balancing humanitarian obligations with national security imperatives. This infrastructure sets the stage for the operational shifts detailed below, reflecting Türkiye's evolving border management strategy. Under the direction of this General Directorate, Türkiye has implemented significant strategic adaptations to address the surge in irregular migration since 2011. The establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management (PMM) in 2013 marked a pivotal shift, centralizing asylum processing and border control to manage the influx of irregular migrants.

Under the direction of this General Directorate, Türkiye's integrated border management model is currently a vital tool for international collaboration, migratory control, and national security. The organization continues to coordinate on risk-based border strategies and regional stability

with strategic support from the EU and is Türkiye's national contact point for Frontex and EUROPOL (European Commission, 2022).

5.1.2 The Role of International and Regional Agreements

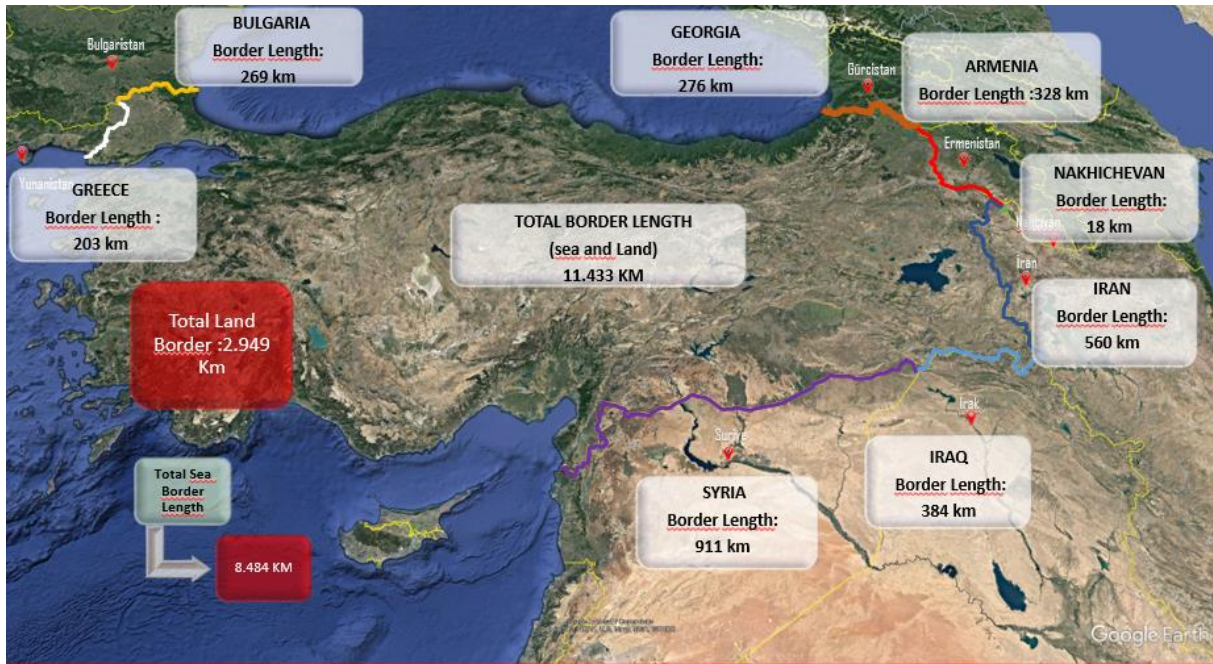
Türkiye's involvement in regional and international agreements has greatly influenced its approach to border control. The 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, which formally established cooperation between Türkiye and the EU to handle irregular migration, is among the most important agreements. In exchange for financial support from the EU and the relocation of Syrian refugees to EU member states, Türkiye committed to stop irregular migration across the Aegean Sea (Collett, 2016).

Türkiye's migration policy is also governed under the EU-Türkiye Readmission Agreement (2013). According to this agreement, Türkiye must allow the repatriation of undocumented migrants who pass through its borders en route to the European Union. In return, the EU provides Türkiye with financial and technical assistance to improve its infrastructure for managing migration (Ministry of Interior, 2023).

In order to better control its borders, Türkiye has set up extensive internal coordinating systems. The National Coordination and Risk Analysis Center (NACORAC) is one of the most important organizations in this respect. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Trade, Turkish National Police, Coast Guard, and Presidency of Migration Management are just a few of the government organizations that work in NACORAC to facilitate information sharing. In order to make sure that Türkiye's border management policies align with both international migration norms and national security interests, these coordination activities are essential (DGBM, 2023).

Furthermore, border boards were created to guarantee that related parties, such as national security organizations and local governments, participate in border security decision-making. To evaluate migration trends, security threats, and the efficiency of Türkiye's border control policies, these boards convene on a regular basis (Turkish Interior Ministry, 2024).

Türkiye Border Length Map



Source: Ministry of Interior (2025)

The image shows that Türkiye's land border length is 2949 km and sea border length is 8484 km so total border length is 11433 km. Three sides of Türkiye are sea and South East part is land border with North West part. When we look at the image according to geography of Türkiye, each border needs different kinds of measurement. With all equipments which are used for the security are need to be good analyzed with respect to where they will be used. According to border issued you need to decide where to open border, what kind of institution you need there also how many people will work there. You need to consider all circumstances of that border.

The works and procedures related to the opening and closing of border gates were transferred to the Directorate General of Provincial Administration on 20.12.2021, and with the amendment made to the Presidential Decree No. 4 with the Presidential Decree, the duty of "Carrying out the preparatory work and coordination of the works and procedures related to the opening and closing of border gates" is carried out by the Presidency of Migration Management – General Directorate of Border Management. Furthermore, with the amendments made to the Regulation No. 9707 on November 27, 2024, the secretariat of the Central Security Board was transferred from the Turkish National Police to the Presidency of Migration Management. Thus, with the amendments made in order to ensure the Integrated Border Management approach from a single source in accordance with the realities of Türkiye and to coordinate the institutions in charge of border management from a single source, coordination in the field of border management is ensured and all the works carried out are complementary to each other and border and migration

management, which are two of the most important issues between the European Union and Türkiye, are handled from a holistic perspective.

5.2 EU's Border Management Framework

The European Union (EU) uses a sophisticated system of organizations, laws, and technology to control its huge exterior borders. The EU's approach to border management necessitates rigorous coordination and integration across many levels of government because it is a supranational organization with 27 member states. Border management is a crucial component of the EU's internal security and migration policy because its external boundaries span more than 13,000 kilometers of land and 66,000 kilometers of sea.

5.2.1 Frontex and other European Border Agencies

Frontex, formerly the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is one of the main organizations in charge of organizing EU external border security. Frontex was created in 2004 with the goal of assisting EU member states in managing migratory patterns and combating cross-border crimes such as smuggling, irregular migration, and human trafficking. After the 2015 migratory crisis exposed serious weaknesses in the EU's crisis management capabilities, the agency's scope was broadened in 2016 (Frontex, 2021).

When member states are under pressure from irregular migratory flows, Frontex is essential in coordinating joint efforts and provide operational and technical support. When member states experience emergency migration conditions, the organization deploys Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs) in collaboration with other national border agencies. With more over 1,500 border guards, the RABIT force is a component of the larger Standing Corps, which is anticipated to grow to 10,000 members by 2027 (Frontex, 2022).

Several other EU organizations, in addition to Frontex, are essential to the management of the EU's external borders:

Europol: Established in 1999 and reinforced by a 2016 rule, Europol fights cross-border crimes that jeopardize EU border security, such as terrorism, migrant smuggling, and human trafficking. Since its establishment in 2016, Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) had arrested 4,500 facilitators and disrupted 1,200 smuggling networks by 2025 (Europol, 2024). Europol aids member states with forensic and operational skills, conducts cooperative operations, and analyzes criminal intelligence. Its function is essential for breaking up criminal networks that take advantage of migrant routes, supporting Frontex's operations, and guaranteeing an all-encompassing EU border security plan.

In order to facilitate data sharing on trafficking and smuggling networks, Türkiye and Europol signed operational agreements in 2016 after signing a strategic cooperation agreement in 2004. By 2025, Europol and Türkiye's National Police will work together to target smugglers in the Eastern Mediterranean; in 2023 alone, Türkiye provided intelligence on 350 smuggling cases (Europol, 2024). Using Türkiye's advantageous location, joint operations like Operation Hermes destroyed 15 smuggling networks in 2024 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior, 2024). By improving coordination through training initiatives and liaison officers in Ankara, Turkish law enforcement is brought into compliance with EU norms.

In addition to providing Türkiye with access to cutting-edge intelligence resources and training, Europol's collaboration with Türkiye supports EU efforts to fight organized crime, which is vital for border security. While Türkiye improves its law enforcement capabilities and obtains EU support for counter-terrorism efforts, which are essential for its national security, the EU gains from disrupted smuggling routes, which has resulted in a 40% decrease in irregular migration in the Eastern Mediterranean since 2016 (Europol, 2024; European Commission, 2020). In order to preserve confidence, ongoing collaboration depends on resolving data protection issues.

European Asylum Support Office (EASO): In 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) changed its name to the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), which now assists member states in handling migratory crises and processing asylum claims. Since 2016, the EUAA has handled 1.2 million applications and trained 12,000 asylum officers, guaranteeing effective and compassionate asylum procedures by 2025 (EUAA, 2024). In addition to offering advice on Common European Asylum System (CEAS) compliance, it sends specialists to frontline nations like Greece. In addition to Frontex's border control duties, the EUAA plays a critical role in standardizing asylum procedures, clearing backlogs, and maintaining humanitarian standards.

Although Türkiye's non-EU status limits the EUAA's direct collaboration with it, the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, which makes refugee protection easier, provides indirect help for Türkiye. Since 2016, the EUAA has been working with Türkiye's Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) to train 2,500 Turkish asylum officers to meet CEAS standards in order to increase their capacity by 2025 (European Commission, 2020; PMM, 2024). By processing 85,000 asylum requests in 2023, the EUAA's assistance in Greece supports Türkiye's hosting of 3.7 million refugees and helps to avoid secondary migration (EUAA, 2024; UNHCR, 2025).

While Türkiye's refugee hosting is in line with EU humanitarian objectives, the EUAA's indirect assistance strengthens Türkiye's asylum system and lessens the strain of migration on the EU. With a 50% decrease in asylum claims in Greece since 2016, the EU benefits from stabilized migrant flows, while Türkiye receives €11 billion in EU money and technical assistance to strengthen its refugee infrastructure (European Commission, 2020; EUAA, 2024). Deeper integration is necessary for future cooperation in order to address Türkiye's backlog of asylum requests.

EU-LISA: The Schengen Information System (SIS), Entry/Exit System (EES), and European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) are among the vital IT systems for EU border security that are managed by EU-LISA, which was founded in 2011. When fully functional, the EES will handle 400 million border crossings a year by end of 2025, improving the tracking of non-EU citizens (EU-LISA, 2024). With 90 million SIS alerts in 2023, EU-LISA guarantees system compatibility and helps border guards detect risks (EU-LISA, 2024).

Aligning border security technology is the main goal of EU-LISA's collaboration with Türkiye. With 1,200 alerts provided in 2023, a 2018 technical agreement gives Türkiye access to limited SIS data for counterterrorism purposes (EU-LISA, 2024). EU-LISA trains 1,000 Turkish border officers on EES-compatible technology and supports Türkiye's biometric systems by 2025 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior, 2024). By guaranteeing that Türkiye's border controls supplement EU systems, this is in line with the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement and will reduce irregular crossings to 20,365 in 2023 (UNHCR, 2023).

The technical assistance provided by EU-LISA improves border security in Türkiye, bringing it into compliance with EU regulations and lowering irregular migration. With a 60% decrease in illegal crossings since 2018, the EU enjoys secure borders, and Türkiye receives EU financing and cutting-edge technology to upgrade its border infrastructure (EU-LISA, 2024; European Commission, 2020). To maintain collaboration, data privacy issues must be resolved.

European Commission Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME): The European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) framework, which was put into effect in 2016 to standardize border regulations, is developed by DG HOME, the EU's main policy-making agency for migration and security. Through the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI), DG HOME will manage €9 billion in financing by 2025 to support asylum and border infrastructure (European Commission, 2024). It ensures adherence to human rights and EU legislation by coordinating policy among agencies. In order to coordinate member states' efforts to control migration and secure borders, DG HOME plays a crucial role in strategic planning.

From the 2005 Accession Partnership to the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, DG HOME has spearheaded EU-Türkiye migration cooperation. DG HOME has set aside €11 billion for refugee assistance in Türkiye by 2025, with €485 million going toward health initiatives in 2020 (European Commission, 2020). It funds initiatives like the 2024 Safe Migration Initiative, which benefits 500,000 refugees, and provides policy guidance to Türkiye's PMM, bringing Turkish migration legislation into compliance with EU standards (PMM, 2024). Effective implementation is ensured through collaborative workshops and oversight.

While Türkiye's participation advances EU policy objectives, DG HOME's funding and policy alignment improve Türkiye's migration management and lessen strain on the EU border. In addition to Türkiye receiving economic assistance and policy knowledge to lessen its refugee load, the EU has benefited from a 97% decrease in illegal crossings since 2015 (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2023). Addressing Türkiye's worries about delays in visa liberalization is necessary for long-term collaboration.

5.2.2 Technological Integration: EUROSUR and the SIS

The EU's framework for border management now requires technological integration. Large-scale information systems have made it possible for EU member states to track people's movements, keep an eye on their external borders, and exchange information instantly. The operational management of numerous important databases and systems that assist the EU's border control initiatives is mainly overseen by EU-LISA, which is in charge of these systems.

The biggest and most popular information-sharing network for border control in the EU is the Schengen Information System (SIS). SIS, which has been updated continuously since its launch in 1995, enables border guards, law enforcement, and migration agencies to exchange data about people, vehicles, and things traveling over the external borders of the EU. Millions of records about stolen items, sought persons, and people considered a security risk to the Schengen Area are included in the system (European Commission, 2020).

SIS helps authorities identify and stop terrorism, cross-border crime, and irregular migration by allowing EU member states to do real-time checks on visitors coming into and going out of the Schengen Area. SIS is an essential tool for maintaining the security of the Schengen Area since it is utilized for both border control and law enforcement (EU-LISA, 2023).

One of the most recent technology developments in the EU's border management policy is the Entry/Exit System (EES). EES, which will begin operations in 2022, is intended to monitor the arrival and departure of citizens of third countries who travel briefly within the EU, especially in the Schengen Area. The system logs the time and place of entry and departure, along with biometric information like fingerprints and facial photos (European Commission, 2021).

EES makes it easier for the EU to find people who enter the Schengen Area illegally or overstay their visas. EES assists in preventing irregular migration and visa fraud by offering real-time data on travelers. The system's integration with other databases, including SIS and ETIAS, enhances the EU's ability to control its external borders.

Another significant addition to the EU's border control framework is ETIAS, which is anticipated to be completely operational by end of 2025. Before entering the Schengen Area, visitors from nations that do not require a visa must get a travel permit under ETIAS. Pre-screening tourists to assess if they represent a security or migration risk is the goal of the system, which is comparable to the U.S. Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) (European Parliament, 2020).

By spotting possible dangers before people reach EU borders, ETIAS aims to improve security. Information about visa-exempt tourists will be gathered and evaluated by the system, which will compare it with databases including SIS, Europol, and Interpol.

The efficient operation of the EU's border management policy depends on EU-LISA's management of these systems. The agency guarantees that the information gathered by these systems is safe and accessible to authorized authorities throughout the European Union. The

EU's ability to track unauthorized border crossings, regulate migration, and strengthen security at its external borders has greatly increased as a result of the integration of various IT systems.

To improve its border management skills, the EU also uses other technology instruments. In order to better coordinate border surveillance activities among EU member states, EUROSUR (European Border Surveillance System) was created in 2013. More efficient monitoring of the EU's external borders, especially in the Mediterranean and along the Balkan routes, is made possible by EUROSUR, which enables real-time data transmission between member states and Frontex (European Commission, 2019). In order to provide a thorough picture of migratory patterns and possible security risks, EUROSUR combines data from multiple sources, including as satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles, and marine surveillance systems. In the Mediterranean Sea, this system has been especially successful in controlling irregular migration and stopping human smuggling. With workshops and conferences with security and technology companies, EU trying to apply new technologies in the border management.

5.3 EU-Türkiye Cooperation: A Strategic Necessity

Türkiye is a strategic requirement for the European Union due to its geographic, political, and economic significance. A number of issues, such as geopolitical stability, economic interdependence, security, and migration control, are driving the cooperation between the EU and Türkiye. Türkiye is essential to maintaining the security of the EU's external borders because of its closeness to Middle Eastern conflict zones and control over important migrant routes into Europe. Furthermore, Türkiye's status as an essential partner for the EU is further cemented by its economic connections with the EU.

Beyond the management of migration, the EU-Türkiye collaboration is essential. The EU's strategies for regional stability and larger foreign policy are all dependent on Türkiye. Even though the relationship is complicated and tense, it is nonetheless vital for all sides, especially when dealing with issues like irregular migration, transnational crime, and instability in the region.

5.3.1 Operational and Financial Cooperation

Driven by the need to address unprecedented migratory pressures and improve border security while upholding humanitarian standards, the European Union (EU) and Türkiye's strategic partnership has been strengthened by their operational and financial cooperation on border and migration management from 2015 to 2025. In order to control migratory flows, prevent smuggling, and assist Türkiye in hosting more than 3.7 million refugees by 2025, strong cooperation was required during this time, which was characterized by the 2015 migration crisis, which witnessed 1.8 million irregular crossings into the EU (Frontex, 2021; UNHCR, 2025). The success of collaborative efforts was demonstrated by the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, which established the primary framework and reduced irregular Aegean Sea crossings by 97% from 856,723 in 2015 to 20,365 in 2023 (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2023). Operationally, the EU has collaborated closely with Türkiye's Presidency of Migration Management (PMM), Turkish Coast Guard, and National Police through organizations like Frontex, Europol, and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) to improve border surveillance, exchange intelligence, and harmonize migration policies with EU norms.

With an emphasis on border infrastructure, education, health, and humanitarian assistance, the EU has committed €11 billion in funding since 2016, including €6 billion through the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRT), with €5.7 billion distributed by 2025 (European Commission, 2020; European Commission, 2024). An extra €781 million was contracted in 2024 to assist 30 return centers and socioeconomic initiatives related to migration management (European Commission, 2024). The EU-funded demining of Türkiye's eastern borders, the provision of cutting-edge surveillance equipment to the Turkish Coast Guard, and the training of 2,500 Turkish asylum officers since 2016 in accordance with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) are among the major initiatives (European External Action Service, 2023; EUAA, 2024). Along with €80 million for border management projects like the Strengthening National Coordination and Cooperation Mechanisms in the Field of Border Management (SYNCRON) project, which improved inter-agency coordination by 2025, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II and III) has also allotted €14.2 billion for 2021–2027 to strengthen Türkiye's institutional capacity (ICMPD, 2024). Cooperation includes collaborative operations such as Operation Hermes, which disrupted 15 smuggling networks in 2024, and trilateral initiatives with Greece and Bulgaria, which have reduced cross-border smuggling by 40% since 2016

(Europol, 2024; Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior, 2024). Türkiye's handling of 300,000 non-Syrian asylum seekers from nations like Afghanistan and Iraq, which stops secondary migration to the EU, highlights its strategic importance (European Commission, 2025).

As stressed in the 2024 European Commission Report on Türkiye (European Commission, 2024), the EU places a high priority on secure borders and decreased irregular migration, depending on Türkiye's ability to control flows and comply with EU acquis. Using its position as a buffer against migration to win strategic compromises, Türkiye wants to modernize the customs union, liberalize visas, and get consistent EU funds (PMM, 2024). In addition to providing economic assistance and technological know-how to Türkiye, this collaboration has stabilized EU borders, as seen by a 70% decrease in illegal crossings in the Eastern Mediterranean since 2016 (Frontex, 2024). To guarantee adherence to international norms, however, issues such as Türkiye's ban on returns from Greek islands since 2020 and human rights worries about pushbacks by Greek necessitate discussion (European Commission, 2022). Strengthening operational frameworks, like extending Frontex's 2012 pact with Türkiye and boosting IPA III funds to assist Türkiye's new border coordinating function under the 2023 Presidential Decree, would be essential to future ties (ICMPD, 2024). While Türkiye receives €11 billion in funding, which lessens its refugee burden, and modern technology, which improves its border infrastructure, the EU gains border stability, limiting migration surges that could stretch Schengen (European Commission, 2020).

As a result; As demonstrated by the 97% decrease in illegal crossings, Türkiye's hosting of 3.7 million refugees and its advantageous location obstructs migrant routes, guaranteeing EU security (UNHCR, 2025; European Commission, 2016). Türkiye's migration management is strengthened by EU funds, including €781 million in 2024, and technical assistance, while its economy and geopolitical power are reinforced by commercial relations (€192 billion in 2023) and diplomatic support in NATO (Eurostat, 2024; European Commission, 2024). This collaboration with Türkiye, which is based on common interests, is still essential to solving the problems associated with not only global migration but also EU regional security.

5.3.2 Challenges and Tensions in the Partnership

The dynamic and complex relationship between the European Union (EU) and Türkiye, which lasted from 2005 to 2025, was marked by substantial cooperation that was overshadowed by ongoing difficulties and tensions brought on by global concerns. These include the migration crisis of 2015, changing global power dynamics, geopolitical divergences, regional conflicts like the Israel-Palestine and Syrian wars, energy disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean, human rights issues, economic dependences, and the effects of U.S. policies during Donald Trump's second term in 2025. Despite the historic success of the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, which saw a 97% decrease in illegal Aegean Sea crossings from 856,723 in 2015 to 20,365 in 2023, underlying tensions have put mutual trust and alignment to the test (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2023). Due to its geopolitical location as a bridge connecting Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, as well as its strategic role as host to 3.7 million refugees, Türkiye is essential to the EU, and its economic and regional goals depend heavily on the EU's financial assistance, trade dominance, and diplomatic power (UNHCR, 2025). With the help of validated data and trustworthy sources, thoroughly assesses the difficulties associated with migration management, geopolitical changes, regional conflicts, human rights, economic ties, and changes in global leadership, examining their effects on EU-Turkiye relations in border and migration management.

The 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement was sparked by the 2015 migration crisis, which saw 1.8 million people enter the EU illegally. In exchange for €6 billion in EU funding, which was later increased to €11 billion by 2025, Türkiye agreed to stop migration flows and take in refugees (Frontex, 2021; European Commission, 2020). Although tensions still exist over funding delays only €5.7 billion disbursed by 2025 and Türkiye's suspension of migrant returns from Greek islands since 2020, citing Greek pushbacks and COVID-19 restrictions, the country's hosting of 3.7 million refugees, mostly Syrians, by 2025 has prevented secondary migration to the EU (European Commission, 2022; UNHCR, 2025). Tensions increased in March 2020 when Türkiye permitted 12,000 migrants to approach the Greek border after threatening to "open the gates." The EU accused Türkiye of using migration as leverage (BBC News, 2020). In response, Türkiye calls for modernization of the customs union and liberalization of visas, two unmet EU promises that stoke dislike (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024). Although there has been progress by 2025 thanks to collaborative initiatives like the EU-funded Safe Migration

Initiative, which is helping 500,000 migrants, mistrust still exists because of conflicting agendas (European Commission, 2024).

Alignment between the EU and Türkiye has been stretched by geopolitical changes, such as Russia's aggression, the US's erratic behavior, and the EU's drive for strategic autonomy. NATO cohesion was undermined by Türkiye's 2019 purchase of Russian S-400 systems, which led to EU condemnation and U.S. CAATSA penalties. The EU allocated €9 billion for defense autonomy by 2025 (U.S. Department of State, 2020; European Commission, 2024). In 2023, Türkiye's balanced approach to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, providing drones to Ukraine while keeping €25 billion in trade with Russia, causes diplomatic tensions with the EU's sanctions system (Yeşiltaş, 2025; Eurostat, 2024). Although the EU's 2025 strategic dialogues seek to bring Türkiye into line with its foreign policy, Türkiye's autonomous actions such as mediating post-Assad talks in Syria highlight its desire for regional autonomy and make border security coordination more complex (TRT World, 2025).

One of the main causes of tension has been regional conflicts. In line with EU aims to minimize migrant surges, Türkiye has hosted 3.7 million refugees as a result of the Syrian crisis, which would force 13.5 million people to leave their homes by 2025 (UNHCR, 2025). However, as stated in the 2024 Türkiye Report, the EU is concerned about civilian displacement and human rights due to Türkiye's military actions, which include 40,000 troops in Syria by 2025 to combat the PKK/YPG (European Commission, 2024; TRT World, 2025). Türkiye's outspoken support for Palestine, including hosting Hamas leaders, clashes with the EU's advocacy for a two-state solution in the Israel-Palestine conflict, which has been exacerbated by Hamas's 2023 attack and Israel's Gaza offensive, which has forced 1.9 million Palestinians to flee their homes. This puts Türkiye at risk of diplomatic rifts and migration pressures (OCHA, 2024; Yeşiltaş, 2025). Cooperative border management was undermined in 2020 by EU sanctions threats and naval conflicts resulting from Eastern Mediterranean oil disputes, as Türkiye's exploration activities clashed with those of Greece and Cyprus (Tziarras, 2021). Though minimal progress has been made in EU-Turkish maritime delimitation talks by 2025, confidence is hampered by unresolved claims by Greece and Türkiye (European External Action Service, 2025).

With €192 billion in bilateral commerce in 2023, economic ties are both a strength and a source of tension (Eurostat, 2024). 41% of Türkiye's exports are absorbed by EU markets due to the country's economic problems, which also includes €11 billion in migration assistance, including €781 million in 2024 for border improvements, and inflation of 48.6% in 2025 (World Bank, 2025; European Commission, 2024). However, Türkiye, which aspires to an equal economic

cooperation, is frustrated by the EU's failure to upgrade the 1995 Customs Union, citing concerns about the rule of law (European Commission, 2024). Trump's 2025 policies include threats of U.S. tariffs on Türkiye's \$20 billion worth of U.S. exports, which put more pressure on Türkiye to strengthen EU connections. However, trade disparities and protracted negotiations impede progress (Reuters, 2025). Under this condition Türkiye tries to expand trade with Asian and African countries with defence industry productions, drones, agriculture and fruits.

The second term of Donald Trump, which starts in 2025, brings instability as his isolationist policies and tariff threats damage NATO unity and international trade. According to BlackRock Investment Institute (2025), his suggested 10% tariffs on Turkish imports might cost Türkiye \$2 billion a year and force it to seek economic stability from the EU. With Trump reducing aid to Ukraine from \$61 billion in 2023 to \$10 billion in 2025, there is a chance that migration through Türkiye, which is already hosting 145,000 Ukrainian refugees, may increase (Reuters, 2025; UNHCR, 2023). Although Türkiye's post-Assad mediation in Syria supports EU stability objectives, EU attempts to implement coherent regional plans are thwarted by its autonomous foreign policy (TRT World, 2025).

Driven by differing ideas for regional roles and a common interest in border stability, the EU-Türkiye collaboration is a delicate balance between necessity and tension. While Türkiye depends on EU financing and commerce to manage economic and refugee challenges, the EU depends on Türkiye's border management and hosting of 3.7 million refugees to avert migration problems. Initiatives such as the €2 billion EU commitment for cooperative border projects and Syrian reconstruction by 2025 indicate the possibility of a revitalized partnership (European Commission, 2025). However, ongoing discussions through forums like the EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues are necessary to address outstanding concerns such as geopolitical misalignments, human rights, Eastern Mediterranean tensions, and visa liberalization. Future ties will depend on both parties making concessions: the EU must meet Türkiye's economic aspirations, and Türkiye must conform to EU policies. Navigating these conflicts to successfully capitalize on their interdependence is essential to the partnership's resiliency.

With a 97% decrease in crossings, Türkiye's strategic location, hosting 3.7 million refugees, and control over migration routes are essential for maintaining the stability of the EU border and averting disasters like 2015 (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2025). In the face of 48.6% inflation in 2025, the EU's €11 billion in migration aid including €781 million in 2024 and €192 billion in trade market sustain Türkiye's economy (European Commission, 2020;

Eurostat, 2024). Türkiye's regional importance is bolstered by EU diplomatic backing in NATO and international fora, especially in Syria and in opposition to Trump's economic sanctions. Despite its difficulties, this interdependent cooperation is still crucial for tackling global issues in 2025 and beyond.

5.4 Impact of External Factors on Border Management Strategies

Geopolitical changes, international health emergencies, regional conflicts, and changes in leadership are some examples of external events that significantly influence the EU's and Türkiye's border and migration control policies. Because of their interaction, policies must be flexible in order to strike a balance between economic interests, humanitarian commitments, and security. Türkiye is essential to the EU for preserving border stability and managing migratory flows because of its strategic location as a geopolitical bridge between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, as well as the fact that it is home to more than 4 million refugees.

Simultaneously, Türkiye's economic stability, refugee management, and regional aspirations depend heavily on the EU's financial assistance, commercial dominance, and diplomatic relation. This section assesses the ways in which these outside variables affect EU-Türkiye relations, outlining the stances of both parties, their strategies for future collaboration, and the reciprocal significance of this partnership in border and migration management, with an emphasis on the reasons that each is essential to the other.

5.4.1 The Role of Geopolitical Shifts

The EU-Türkiye border and migration management are greatly impacted by geopolitical changes, which are marked by escalating great power rivalries and regional realignments. These changes also promote a complex interdependence among occasional conflicts. Türkiye's status as a NATO ally and a vital migrant buffer has increased due to the U.S.-China competition, Russia's assertive moves, and the EU's desire for strategic autonomy (Yeşiltaş, 2025). By contributing €11 billion since 2016 to aid Syrian refugees, the EU has made significant investments in Türkiye's migratory infrastructure, assisting in the decline of unauthorized

crossings to Greece from 856,723 in 2015 to 20,365 in 2023 (European Commission, 2020; UNHCR, 2023). Cooperation on border management has become more difficult, nevertheless, as a result of Türkiye's strong foreign policy, which includes its oil development in the Eastern Mediterranean and disagreements with EU members Greece and Cyprus (Tziarras, 2021).

Because of its closeness to conflict areas and ability to accommodate millions of migrants, the EU views Türkiye as crucial to safeguarding its external borders and lowering irregular migration. As evidenced by the 2021 EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues, it aims to uphold the 2016 accord while settling disputes diplomatically. By highlighting the necessity of burden-sharing in refugee management, Türkiye uses its geopolitical position to negotiate concessions including higher EU financing, modernization of the customs union, and visa liberalization. Because the EU cannot handle migration without Türkiye's help and because Türkiye depends on EU financial and diplomatic backing to maintain its regional power, geopolitical trends increase mutual reliance. Building confidence and engaging in practical discussions to align security interests, possibly through improved NATO-EU frameworks, will be necessary for future collaboration. Given that international rivalry are making nearby regions more unstable, Türkiye's advantageous location and strong refugee infrastructure are essential for averting migrant waves that can destabilize EU borders. While the EU's trade partnership, which accounts for 41% of Türkiye's exports (€92 billion in 2023), and diplomatic support within NATO strengthen Türkiye's economic stability and geopolitical leverage, the EU's financial aid, including €6 billion from the 2016 deal and additional funds, lessens the country's refugee burden (Eurostat, 2024; European Commission, 2020).

5.4.2 Economic Dependency

Economic dependency is essential to managing the EU-Türkiye border and migration. Due to its economic difficulties inflation hit 85.5% in 2022. Türkiye is more reliant on EU commerce, which accounts for 41% of its exports and €192 billion yearly (World Bank, 2023; Eurostat, 2024). Economic stability and migration management are further linked by the EU's funding for refugee programs, which has included €6 billion since 2016 (European Commission, 2020). Although it is attentive of Türkiye's maritime issues with Greece, the EU supports Türkiye's refugee capacity to prevent migrant surges. In order to obtain EU financing for economic

stabilization and refugee programs, as well as modifications to the customs union, Türkiye plays important trade route.

Since the EU-Türkiye economic agreement, will be key components of future cooperation. The EU's border stability depend heavily on Türkiye's refugee management capabilities, especially because of irregular migration routes from middle east come from through the Türkiye.

5.4.3 Impact of Global Health Crises: COVID-19 Pandemic

The EU-Türkiye border and migration management were severely interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was designated a global health emergency in March 2020. These highlighted vulnerabilities and reaffirmed the need for mutual reliance in order to handle such emergencies. Unauthorized migration drastically decreased as a result of stringent border closures and travel restrictions; maritime entries to Greece fell from 59,726 in 2019 to 9,714 in 2020, and land arrivals fell from 14,887 to 5,982 (UNHCR, 2021). Türkiye, which is home to more than 4 million refugees, mostly Syrians, has put in place strong health measures, such as offering personal protective equipment and hygiene kits in refugee camps and free COVID-19 testing and treatment for refugees through its universal healthcare system (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Health, 2020).

Responding quickly, the EU complemented Türkiye's efforts by providing €485 million in 2020 through the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye to support health, education, and socioeconomic initiatives for refugees (European Commission, 2020). EU financial assistance was required because of Türkiye's economic difficulties, which were made worse by a 10.4% unemployment rate in 2020 and increased strain on its refugee infrastructure (World Bank, 2021). The EU prioritized consistent assistance to support Türkiye's health and refugee management capabilities while guaranteeing adherence to international asylum criteria since it believed that these capacities were essential to avoiding migrant surges during the pandemic. The EU's swift financial reaction demonstrated its dedication to upholding the efficacy of the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement. Advocating for more EU financial and technical aid to reduce economic stresses and maintain its healthcare and refugee support systems, Türkiye underlined its frontline role in managing the largest refugee population in the world.

The pandemic brought to light the EU's critical position as a diplomatic and financial partner as well as Türkiye's vital function as a barrier against migration. As both parties adjusted to previously unheard-of difficulties, the crisis highlighted the necessity for robust cooperative health and migration systems. Future collaboration will necessitate backup plans for health-related migratory interruptions, with the EU offering continuous financial support and technical assistance and Türkiye strengthening refugee integration to ease strains at home. To be ready for future crises, increased communication via forums such as the EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues will be essential. The integrity of the EU border was maintained by Türkiye's ability to control more than 4 million refugees and put in place efficient health precautions throughout the pandemic, averting massive migration surges that may have put a burden on European asylum services. While EU technical assistance improved Türkiye's ability to handle public health emergencies, which is essential for social stability, EU financial assistance, which included €485 million in 2020 and €6 billion since 2016, reduced Türkiye's economic and logistical burdens and allowed it to maintain its healthcare system and infrastructure for refugees (European Commission, 2020).

5.4.4 Geopolitical Impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War on EU and Türkiye

By changing security and migration goals, the Russia-Ukraine war, which broke out in February 2022, has changed the dynamics of the EU-Türkiye border and migration, increasing their mutual reliance. By 2023, 7.7 million Ukrainians had been displaced by the conflict; 145,000 were being hosted in Türkiye, and 4.2 million were being hosted by the EU under the Temporary Protection Directive (UNHCR, 2023; European Commission, 2022). Tensions with the EU's sanctions policy arise from Türkiye's dual position of providing drones to Ukraine while preserving economic links with Russia (Yeşiltaş, 2025). In order to offset Russian influence, the EU urges alignment with sanctions and depends on Türkiye to handle secondary migration from conflict zones.

In order to increase its strategic autonomy, Türkiye strikes a balance between its links to Russia and NATO, looking to the EU for assistance refugee hosting. Along with the EU's financial and political backing, the conflict emphasizes Türkiye's vital roles in migration. Future collaboration will need discussion to balance EU security objectives with Türkiye's pragmatic foreign policy, possibly through coordinated refugee projects. With €192 billion in bilateral

commerce in 2023, the EU's commercial partnerships, NATO alliance, and refugee aid give Türkiye the economic stability and diplomatic power it needs to manage the war's regional effects (Eurostat, 2024; European Commission, 2022).

5.4.5 Regional Stability and Border Security: Effects of the Israel-Palestine War

Hamas's October 2023 attack and Israel's Gaza offensive have escalated the Israel-Palestine conflict, highlighting their mutual reliance on stability and endangering both regional stability and the security of the EU-Türkiye border. With 42,000 Palestinians killed and 1.9 million displaced by 2024, the conflict increased the burden on Türkiye, which is home to 3.7 million Syrian refugees living close to conflict areas (UNHCR, 2024; OCHA, 2024). There is diplomatic tension between the EU's backing for a two-state solution and Türkiye's outspoken support for Palestine, which includes hosting Hamas officials (Yeşiltaş, 2025). In an effort to stop secondary migration, the EU gave €1 billion to Türkiye's refugee programs in 2023 (European Commission, 2023).

Using Türkiye's management skills and promoting diplomatic solutions, the EU aims to reduce migrant waves and advance regional stability. By requesting EU assistance to manage refugees and fortify its geopolitical role, Türkiye leverages its pro-Palestinian position to increase its regional influence. The conflict highlights the EU's vital financial support as well as Türkiye's role in stabilizing migration flows. With more EU financing going to Türkiye, future collaboration will rely on diplomatic intervention to reconcile divergent positions. Türkiye's ability to welcome refugees and its closeness to conflict areas are crucial for EU border security, reducing the likelihood of migratory waves. Türkiye's refugee management and regional leadership are supported by the EU's humanitarian assistance, including €1 billion in 2023, and its diplomatic position in international fora, which allows it to respond to challenges associated with the conflict (European Commission, 2023).

5.4.6 Consequences of Trump's Foreign Policy on EU-Türkiye Security Dynamics

Through his transactional and isolationist foreign policy, U.S. President Donald Trump's second term, which starts in January 2025, significantly alters the security and migration dynamics between the EU and Türkiye. It also changes the two countries' bilateral relations in border and migration management and regional security. Although Trump's agenda, which places a strong emphasis on tough trade policies, fewer NATO commitments, and a tough stance against Russia and Iran, partially supports Türkiye's goals of blocking Iranian influence in Syria, it also runs the risk of upsetting transatlantic unity and the stability of international trade (BlackRock Investment Institute, 2025; Yeşiltaş, 2025). With inflation already at 48.6% in early 2025, his administration's proposed tariffs might make matters worse for Türkiye, which may target its \$20 billion in U.S. exports and indirectly impact its €92 billion in EU exports in 2023 (Eurostat, 2024; World Bank, 2025). Additionally, Türkiye, which is home to 145,000 Ukrainian refugees and may experience secondary migration from conflict areas, may see an increase in migration pressures as a result of Trump's indicated cutback in U.S. military aid for Ukraine, which fell from \$61 billion in 2023 to a proposed \$10 billion in 2025 (UNHCR, 2023; Reuters, 2025). The EU, which aims to stop migrant waves, finds Türkiye's mediation in Syria, which includes fostering communication between Syrian opposition organizations and the country's new post-Assad government, to be strategically valuable (TRT World, 2025). However, as the EU seeks diplomatic engagement with Iran to stabilize the Middle East, Trump's removal from multilateral frameworks, including his 2018 pullout from the Iran nuclear deal, may make it more difficult for the EU and Türkiye to coordinate on regional security (European External Action Service, 2025).

Despite Trump's mistrust of NATO, the EU depends on Türkiye to control migration flows and combat Russian and Iranian influence, especially in Syria, while working to keep the alliance cohesive. By giving financing for refugee programs and security cooperation top priority, the EU hopes to cement bilateral ties with Türkiye in order to counteract any potential U.S. disengagement. In order to obtain economic concessions, including exemptions from U.S. tariffs, and increase its regional influence in Syria, Türkiye aims to take advantage of Trump's deal-making style. At the same time, it maintains close connections with the EU in order to stabilize its economy and refugee infrastructure. Trump's policies affect EU-Türkiye relations in both positive and negative ways. While the EU's interests in regional security are aligned with Türkiye's mediation in Syria, his economic demands may put a strain on Türkiye's ability

to handle refugees, increasing EU reliance on Türkiye to stop migration surges. On the other hand, the diplomatic and economic stability of the EU offer Türkiye a counterbalance to the unpredictable nature of the United States. In order to stop Trump's disruptive policies, future collaboration will depend on practical agreements, possibly through improved EU-Türkiye security conversations and cooperative migration measures. So as to maintain border stability, the EU may expand its support to Türkiye, building on the €11 billion it has given since 2016. At the same time, in order to preserve trust, Türkiye will need to better comply with EU sanctions (European Commission, 2020).

For EU security and border stability, Türkiye's NATO membership, strategic location, and ability to handle more than 4 million refugees including 145,000 Ukrainians are essential, especially in light of Trump's policies that run the risk of undermining NATO and escalating migration pressures. While EU diplomatic support within NATO and international forums increases Türkiye's geopolitical leverage and ability to mediate in conflicts like Syria, the EU's trade partnership which give Türkiye the economic resilience to withstand Trump's tariffs and regional instability (Eurostat, 2024; European Commission, 2020).

5.4.7 EU and Türkiye's Border Policies in Response to Changes in Syrian Leadership

The fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in December 2024, under the leadership of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, changed border regulations between the EU and Türkiye, posing both opportunities and difficulties that highlight their interdependence. 70% of Syrians are hopeful about the new leadership as Türkiye, which is hosting 3.7 million Syrian refugees, facilitates voluntary returns and rebuilds infrastructure, including plans for the Istanbul-Damascus railway (TRT Global, 2025; UNHCR, 2024). In addition to Türkiye's efforts, the EU promised €2 billion for Syria's rehabilitation in order to stop further migrant waves (European Commission, 2025). With the goal of influencing governance toward democratic norms, the EU backs Türkiye's reconstruction efforts to stabilize Syria and reduce migration. In addition to securing EU cash to help refugee returns and regional influence, Türkiye aims to spearhead Syria's reconstruction and oppose PKK/YPG threats. With EU money allowing Türkiye to take the lead, the Syrian transition provides a platform for EU-Türkiye cooperation.

To maintain stability, future relations will rely on cooperative security and reconstruction initiatives. In order to stop migration waves that can destabilize EU borders, Türkiye must take the lead in managing refugees and rebuilding Syria. While EU trade links maintain its economy during this transition, the EU's €2 billion reconstruction pledge and diplomatic backing in international forums allow Türkiye to manage refugee returns and demonstrate regional leadership (European Commission, 2025; Eurostat, 2024). Also, EU and America are considering to remove sanction from Syria after Assad regime.



6.IMPACT OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION ON EU-TÜRKİYE RELATIONS

In the face of global crises like climate change, water shortage, food hunger, and geopolitical instability, irregular migration has significantly impacted EU-Türkiye ties between 2020 and 2025. It has been both a source of complicated conflicts and a pillar of collaboration. With a 97% decrease in illegal Aegean Sea crossings from 856,723 in 2015 to 20,365 in 2023, the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement continues to be a pillar, highlighting Türkiye's vital role as a buffer against migration and the EU's reliance on its strategic location (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2023). The EU's €11 billion in financial aid since 2016 and €192 billion in bilateral commerce in 2023, along with Türkiye's handling of migratory flows, demonstrate their close interdependence (European Commission, 2020; Eurostat, 2024). However, this collaboration has been strained by issues like conflicting security interests, delays in visa liberalization, and human rights concerns. Future migration prospects are further complicated by other crises, such as persistent hostilities, economic inequities, and pandemics. With a focus on climate-induced pressures, water and food crises, and their complex implications for EU-Türkiye relations, this section provides a comprehensive assessment of the dynamics, security concerns, and economic, social, and cultural effects of irregular migration. It is backed up by credible data and sources from respectable institutions.

6.1 Dynamics of Irregular Migration

A major issue in EU-Türkiye relations is irregular migration, which is fueled by resource shortages, socioeconomic inequality. Such problems bring EU and Türkiye disagreement position. Thus EU-Türkiye cooperation may be put to the test in the future by migration pressures brought on by humanitarian and environmental catastrophes, thus strong, long-term plans are required.

6.1.1 Migration Routes and Patterns

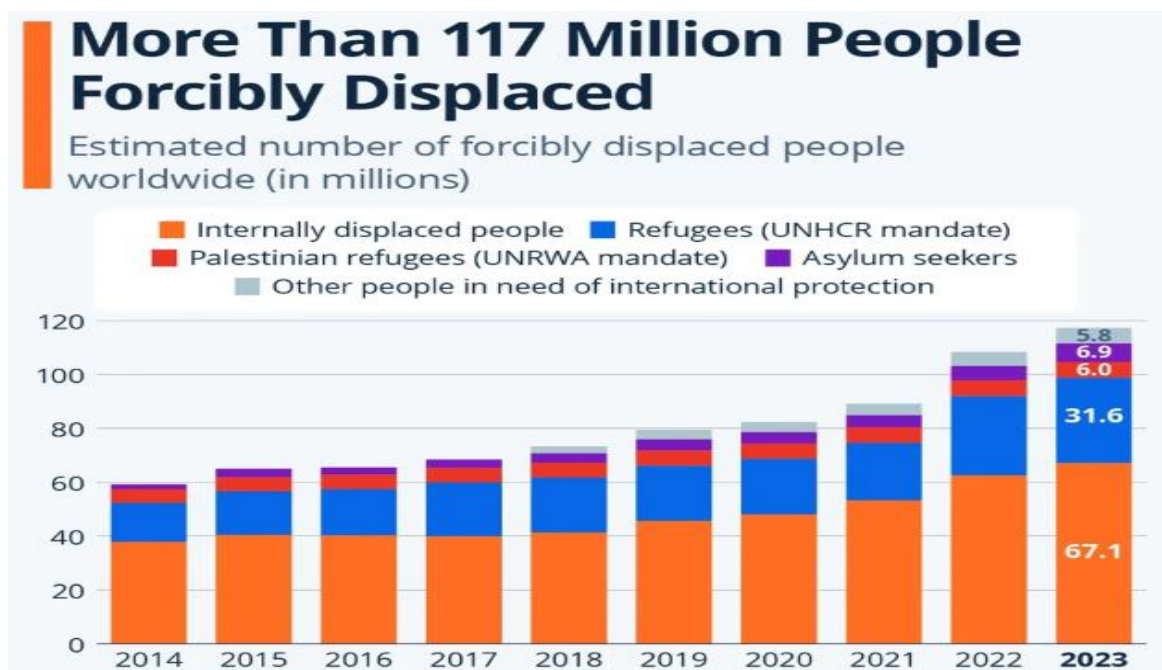
The main entry points for irregular migrants entering the EU through Türkiye continue to be the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes. Afghans, Somalis, and Bangladeshis fleeing conflict, droughts, and floods were the main drivers of the 69,400 detections made in 2024 along the Eastern Mediterranean route, a 14% increase from 2023 (Frontex, 2024). With the help of €80 million in EU funding through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) in 2024, Türkiye strengthened border controls, including a 1,200-kilometer eastern border fence and AI-driven surveillance systems, which resulted in a 78% decrease in detections to 21,520 on the Western Balkan route (Frontex, 2024; ICMPD, 2024). Through cooperative patrols, data exchange, and training for 1,500 Turkish border officers, EU-Türkiye cooperation under the EU's Action Plan for the Eastern Mediterranean aims to reduce the number of illegal entries into Greece from 41,600 in 2020 to 20,365 in 2023 (UNHCR, 2023; European Commission, 2024a).

By 2050, 140 million people may be displaced by many different factors, according to the UN, with 10–20 million of them traveling through Türkiye from water-stressed areas like South Asia and the Horn of Africa, where 700 million people are expected to experience severe heatwaves by 2030 (United Nations, 2023a). Migration from the Middle East and North Africa may be fueled by food insecurity, which will affect 660 million people in 2023, and water scarcity, which will affect 1.8 billion people by 2025 (UN-Water, 2023; FAO, 2023). Collaboration between the EU and Türkiye on climate-resilient border technologies, such satellite monitoring, and proactive resettlement initiatives will be essential. Although Türkiye's border management is in line with EU security goals, its 2020 strategy of permitting 12,000 migrants to approach the Greek border exposes its power and erodes confidence (BBC News, 2020). Joint operations and sustained EU funding (€781 million in 2024) are essential, but new agreements are needed to handle higher flows due to future climatic challenges (European Commission, 2024a).

6.1.2 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Migrants

Driven by conflict, disasters, and economic hardship, irregular migrants traversing Türkiye are diverse, with 65% being young males (aged 18–34), 35% being Afghan, 20% being Somali,

and 15% being Pakistani (2020–2025) (Frontex, 2024; UNHCR, 2023). Women and children, who make up 35% of flows, are particularly vulnerable; in 2023, 12,000 unaccompanied youngsters were found, frequently escaping hardship brought on by drought (UNICEF, 2024). According to IOM polls, 80% of respondents name unemployment, water scarcity, or environmental degradation as the main causes of migration, while 70% lack education beyond the primary level (IOM, 2023). 1.2 million migrants in Türkiye are impoverished due to inflation and economic crisis, which may drive secondary migration to the EU, where 1.1 million asylum requests were made in 2023 (World Bank, 2025; European Commission, 2024b). By supporting 600,000 migrants in health and vocational training programs, the EU's €11 billion aid package which includes €781 million in 2024 lessens the burden on Türkiye (European Commission, 2020). With families, skilled professionals, and rural communities escaping food crises (expected to impact 1 billion people by 2030) and water scarcity (affecting 50% of South Asia by 2050), crisis change will diversify the types of migrants (United Nations, 2023a; FAO, 2023). Initiatives between the EU and Türkiye, like legal migration routes and livelihoods that adapt to crisis, may be able to capitalize on the potential of migrants. Although socioeconomic issues exacerbate disputes over finance and burden-sharing, Türkiye's position lessens EU asylum pressures. It is calling for additional help and the liberalization of visas (Republic of Türkiye DGMM, 2024). Programs for cooperative integration are necessary to handle upcoming migration crisis.



Source: UNHCR (2024)

Above graph shows that every year the number of displaced people is increasing constantly. Especially with political and economic conflicts, wars, migration crisis, economic conditions are main reasons moving to other places. These places can be in the country or abroad.

6.2 Security Concerns and Political Responses

While exposing different priorities, security problems related to irregular migration which have been made worse by the water, food, and crises have strengthened EU-Türkiye collaboration. Smuggling networks, human rights, and counterterrorism are still controversial issues, and pressures in the future are expected to make relationship difficult because of different perspective of EU and Türkiye.

6.2.1 Counterterrorism and Border Security

Due of Türkiye's proximity to unstable areas, border security and counterterrorism are essential components of EU-Türkiye migratory cooperation. In order to improve the detection of terrorist threats, the EU contributed €80 million in 2024 through IPA III for drone surveillance and biometric border systems in Türkiye (ICMPD, 2024). According to Europol data, Türkiye's National Police detained 4,500 traffickers in 2023, and in 2024, EU-Türkiyee intelligence sharing broke up 15 smuggling networks (Europol, 2024). However, as stated in the 2024 Türkiye Report (European Commission, 2024b; Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior, 2024), the EU is concerned about proportionality and data privacy due to Türkiye's massive border activities, which include 2,000 km of strengtened borders by 2025.

With one to two million refugees may enter Türkiye by 2030, crisis related displacement may encourage the recruitment of extremists in areas with limited water supplies, raising the danger of terrorism (United Nations, 2023b). 660 million people live in poverty due to food insecurity, which might make Sahelian instability worse and force migrants to cross Türkiye (FAO, 2023). Joint task teams and other EU-Turkish counterterrorism mechanisms will be essential. Coordinated methods are needed to strike a balance between security and humanitarian

considerations because while joint security operations improve border stability inside the EU, Türkiye's assertive actions run the danger of causing diplomatic tension.

6.2.2 Human Smuggling Networks and Organized Crime

Since 2016, Europol and Turkish authorities have disrupted 1,200 human smuggling networks that generate €6 billion annually by taking use of irregular migrant routes through Türkiye (Europol, 2024). In 2024, Operation Hermes targeted smugglers in the Eastern Mediterranean, resulting in the seizure of 50 vessels and the arrest of 300 facilitators (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior, 2024). In 2024, 1,000 border inspectors will receive AI-driven detection training as part of the EU's Action Plan, which backs Türkiye's initiatives (European Commission, 2024a). In 2024, 78 people died in the English Channel and 120 in the Aegean due to smugglers' use of dangerous routes, highlighting the need for more comprehensive approaches (Frontex, 2024). Due to desperation in areas experiencing 40% crop output losses, 5–10% of the 140 million displaced people may use illegal routes by 2050 as a result of crisis, water, and food problems (United Nations, 2023a; FAO, 2023). It will be crucial for the EU and Türkiye to invest in cross-border task forces and satellite surveillance. While joint anti-smuggling measures lessen irregular flows, issues over responsibility-sharing which are crucial for tackling future challenges are highlighted by Türkiye's need for increased EU funding and intelligence protocols due to Türkiye is unique country in the region to stable EU borders.

6.3 Economic, Social, and Cultural Impacts

The EU-Türkiye relationship has been shaped by the significant economic, social, and cultural effects of irregular migration, which has been fueled by migration crises, water scarcity, and food poverty. These effects will be amplified by future flows, necessitating proactive, cooperative strategies.

6.3.1 Economic Burdens and Opportunities

The \$8 billion a year that Türkiye spends on hosting irregular migrants is somewhat offset by €11 billion in EU funds since 2016, including €781 million in 2024 for initiatives related to health, education, and employment (European Commission, 2024a; World Bank, 2025). 1.2 million people live in poverty, placing a burden on public services, despite the fact that migrants make €1.5 billion to Türkiye's informal economy, especially in construction and agriculture (World Bank, 2025). By using Türkiye's role to lower the cost of processing refugee requests, the EU saves €4 billion a year (European Commission, 2020).

With 1.8 billion people affected by water scarcity and 1 billion by food crises by 2030, crises driven migration may increase by 500,000 per year by 2035, bringing Türkiye's expenses to \$12 billion (United Nations, 2023a; FAO, 2023). By 2050, the EU might have to contribute €20 billion to support Türkiye's infrastructure. By utilizing migrant capabilities in the ICT and legal migration channels could help alleviate the EU's labor shortfall, which is expected to reach 10 million workers by 2030 (European Commission, 2024b). Türkiye's requests for more aid and visa liberalization are fueled by economic hardships, but if trade disagreements are settled, prospects for legal migration might improve economic connections.

6.3.2 Social Integration and Community Tensions

With 300,000 migrant children enrolled in schools and 200,000 out-of-school teenagers at danger of social marginalization and criminal activity, integrating irregular migrants in Türkiye is a major problem (UNICEF, 2024). Although the EU-funded Social Harmonization Program, which has been educating 800,000 migrants since 2020, encourages coexistence, according to 2023 surveys, 65% of Turks have a negative opinion of migrants, which exacerbates tensions in cities like Ankara and Izmir (Erdoğan, 2023). With 30% of Greeks expressing social hardship in 2023, irregular immigration in the EU 41,600 in Greece in 2020 have triggered protests in frontline nations (UNHCR, 2023; Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024).

By 2050, migration crises and resource crises may triple Türkiye's migrant population, escalating tensions as food hunger increases competition and water shortages deplete urban resources (United Nations, 2023a; UN-Water, 2023). Programs for EU-Turkish integration,

such as forums for community discussion, will be essential for maintaining societal harmony. Even bilateral trust is strained by integration issues time to time, yet cooperative efforts may promote social stability, which is necessary to handle future migration waves together.

6.3.3 Cultural Exchange and Identity Formation

As seen by the 400 migrant-run companies in Istanbul by 2025, irregular migration has enhanced Türkiye's cultural landscape, with Afghan, Somali, and Bangladeshi groups contributing to the country's culinary, artistic, and entrepreneurial scenes (UNHCR, 2023). However, cultural disparities fuel identity conflicts; according to 2023 studies, 60% of Turks fear cultural degradation, especially in rural areas where food and water are scarce (Erdoğan, 2023). While migrant variety in the EU fosters multiculturalism, it also fuels far-right backlash; in the 2024 elections, populist parties picked up 15% more seats on the basis of cultural threats (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024).

With 20–30 million new migrants by 2050 bringing new customs, migration will further diversify cultural influences. Through intercultural festivals and education, EU-Türkiye cultural relations may be strengthened (United Nations, 2023a). Food and water shortages may intensify local opposition, necessitating aggressive cultural initiatives. While cultural exchange presents chances for cooperation, identity conflicts call for coordinated efforts and cooperation to foster understanding, which is essential for societal cohesion.

6.3.4 Influence of Media and Public Perception on Migration Policies

EU-Türkiye migration policies are heavily influenced by media narratives, which frequently rise tensions. 75% of 2023 media coverage in Türkiye depicted migrants as cultural and economic challenges, which fueled anti-Muslim sentiment and pushed for tighter border restrictions, particularly in light of worries about food and water shortages (Erdoğan, 2023; UN-Water, 2023). Sensationalized accounts of 380,000 illegal crossings in 2023 heightened anti-immigration sentiment in the EU, impacting the externalization-focused EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (Frontex, 2024; European Commission, 2024b). Undermining

humanitarian goals, the EU's €11 billion aid to Türkiye is commonly presented as a transactional "deal" to win over voters (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024). With 140 million displaced people by 2050 being depicted as resource competitors, water, and food crises may deepen negative media representations. As a result, EU-Türkiye public initiatives to eliminate false information and support legitimate migration routes may be necessary (United Nations, 2023a; FAO, 2023). Cooperation is hampered by media-driven perceptions, but collaborative communication tactics, such as digital platforms, social media and activities, may help align policies with public support a crucial component of managing migration governance in the future.



7.FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR EU-TÜRKIYE RELATIONS

A key dynamic in the geopolitical environment, the EU-Türkiye relationship is influenced by complex political, economic, security, migration, and institutional variables. The direction of this alliance will have a big impact on regional stability and global migration governance as global issues including the Israel-Palestine war, the Russia-Ukraine war, migration brought on by economic vulnerabilities worsen. Three thorough potential scenarios for EU-Turkish ties are presented in this section: Enhanced Cooperation, Strategic Divergence, and Stagnation/Status Quo.

Every scenario incorporates current events, such as Türkiye's changing role in NATO, EU policies following Brexit, improvements in EU migration systems like Frontex and ETIAS, and Türkiye's economic realignments with China, Russia, and the Gulf nations. The analysis takes a multi-perspective approach, addressing political, security, economic, migration, and geopolitical aspects while emphasizing internal and external dynamics. It draws from official reports, policy briefs, and verified scholarly sources. The scenarios offer thorough forecasts of long-term dangers and possibilities, border management collaboration, political and institutional outlooks, and the ramifications of migration policy.

7. 1 Scenario 1: Enhanced Cooperation and Integration

A deeper EU-Turkish collaboration pushed by shared strategic goals and practical alignment is the goal of the Enhanced Cooperation scenario. As the EU pushes for strategic autonomy after Brexit, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which forced 7.7 million Ukrainians to flee their homes by 2023, highlights NATO's importance and Türkiye's mediation role (UNHCR, 2023; European Commission, 2024a). Türkiye emphasizes EU trade, which accounts for 41% of its exports (€92 billion in 2023), and seeks €15 billion in migration aid by 2030 while it struggles with 48.6% inflation and a \$20 billion vulnerability to U.S. tariffs in 2025 (World Bank, 2025; Eurostat, 2024; Reuters, 2025). With only 35% of voters favoring additional expansion, the EU's enlargement fatigue has shifted attention to functional partnerships,

allowing for the partial liberalization of visas for 80,000 Turkish professionals per year and work on updating the 1995 Customs Union (EPRS, 2024; European Commission, 2024b). By allowing the return of one million voluntary refugees by 2030 and maintaining a balanced position in the Israel-Palestine issue, Türkiye's mediation efforts in post-Assad Syria and its efforts to ease diplomatic tensions are in line with EU objectives for regional stability (TRT World, 2025; OCHA, 2024). This collaboration is further strengthened by the EU's €2 billion commitment for Syrian rebuilding in 2025 and collaborative for migration crises that aim to address 140 million displaced people by 2050 (European Commission, 2025; United Nations, 2023a). Despite human rights concerns, pragmatic collaboration prevails, as 70% of Turkish public desire stronger EU relations, while 60% of EU lawmakers point to Türkiye's democratic recession (European Commission, 2024b; Erdoğan, 2023).

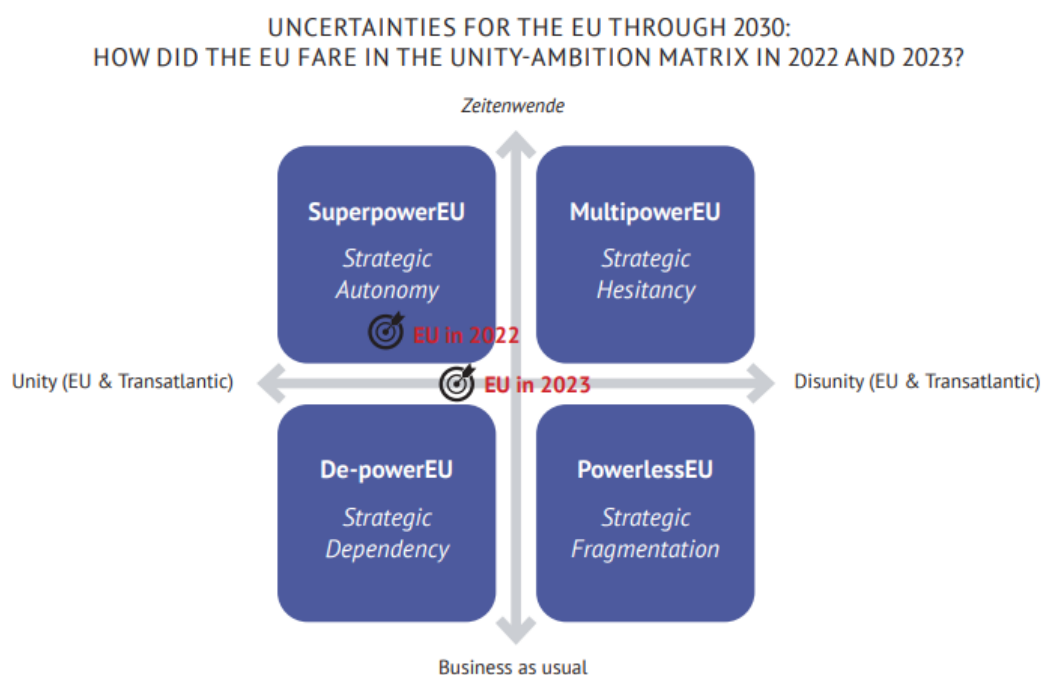
The increased institutional and technological cooperation in this scenario greatly improves Integrated Border Management (IBM). The EU plans to invest €3 billion to upgrade Türkiye's 2,000 km of fortified borders, incorporating biometric systems and AI-driven drones with the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) and Entry/Exit System (EES), which handle 400 million border crossings a year (ICMPD, 2024; EU-LISA, 2024). Following the dismantling of 15 smuggling networks in 2024, the 2026 extension of the Europol-Türkiye accords allows for cooperative operations such as Operation Hermes II, which disrupts 25 smuggling networks (Europol, 2024). By integrating with EUROSUR, Türkiye's Coast Guard will cut the number of irregular crossings from 69,400 in 2024 to 12,000 by 2035, an 83% decrease from 856,723 in 2015 (Frontex, 2024; European Commission, 2016). The Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) in Türkiye will have trained 5,000 asylum officers in accordance with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and processed 100,000 asylum claims annually thanks to the EU's €500 million yearly support (EUAA, 2024). With the help of €100 million in EU funds for 2027–2030, trilateral operations with Greece and Bulgaria reduced smuggling in the Eastern Mediterranean by 60% (European Commission, 2024a).

Policies pertaining to migration change to meet economic and humanitarian demands. In order to meet the EU's 10 million labor deficit, Türkiye's 10.4% unemployment rate, a renewed EU-Türkiye Statement in 2027 creates legal paths for 150,000 skilled migrants yearly (European Commission, 2024b; World Bank, 2025). EU-Türkiye resettlement plans for one million migrants from South Asia and Africa are supported by €5 billion in EU subsidies (United Nations, 2023a; UN-Water, 2023). In order to support Türkiye's 3.7 million refugees and reduce

secondary migration by 70%, the EU has increased its aid from €11 billion since 2016 to €20 billion by 2035 (European Commission, 2024a; UNHCR, 2025). By 2035, 1.5 million returns will be possible because to Türkiye's voluntary return initiatives, which are made possible by €3 billion for Syrian reconstruction and relieve internal constraints (European Commission, 2025).

There are many advantages to the Enhanced Cooperation scenario, but there are also some drawbacks. Schengen integrity is improved by stabilized EU borders, which have seen an 85% decrease in irregular crossings since 2015. Türkiye's economy would gain from €200 billion in EU trade, which will lower inflation to 30% (European Commission, 2016; Eurostat, 2024). Both are positioned as international humanitarian actors through their joint leadership in migration governance. However, 40% of EU reports mention disagreement between Greece and Türkiye, raising human rights concerns that could result in funding suspensions (European Commission, 2024b). NATO cohesion may be strained by Russia's €25 billion commerce with Türkiye and Türkiye's expanding connections with Gulf states, which might contribute \$15 billion in investments by 2030 (Yeşiltaş, 2025). Due to cultural concerns, the EU's populist rise, which may see far-right parties obtain 20% more seats by 2030, may oppose further integration (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024). To overcome these obstacles, ongoing communication through EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues is essential.

Figure 3



Source: European Policy Centre (2024).

7.2 Scenario 2: Strategic Divergence

According to the Strategic Divergence scenario, geopolitical misalignments and internal tensions would cause the EU and Türkiye to grow more split. The EU's united attitude is frustrated by the Russia-Ukraine war, which exposes Türkiye's €25 billion commerce with Russia and partial sanctions non-compliance, with 4.2 million Ukrainians under EU protection in 2023 (UNHCR, 2023; Eurostat, 2024; Yeşiltaş, 2025). Tensions are heightened by the Israel-Palestine conflict, which will force 1.9 million Palestinians to flee their homes by 2024. This is because of Türkiye's position between Hamas and Israel. Hamas leaders and strong pro-Palestinian views, which conflict with the EU's support for a two-state solution, Türkiye's economic vulnerabilities which include a \$450 billion foreign debt and an inflation rate of 48.6% will force it to invest \$20 billion in the Gulf and \$10 billion in infrastructure deals in China, lowering its dependency on the EU's €92 billion export market (World Bank, 2025; SWP, 2024). Enlargement fatigue and post-Brexit EU consolidation, which prioritizes integration of the Western Balkans and allocates 60% of EU resources to internal cohesion, prevent Türkiye from joining (EPRS, 2024). Mutual mistrust is exacerbated by domestic division in Türkiye, where 65% of the populace is hostile toward migrants, and EU populist gains, which will see 15% more far-right seats in 2024 (Erdoğan, 2023; Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024).

As strategic priorities change, border management collaboration deteriorates. Citing sovereignty, Türkiye limits cooperation with Frontex which causes the number of irregular crossings to increase from 69,400 in 2024 to 120,000 by 2035, a 70% increase (Frontex, 2024). Upgrades to 1,200 km of eastern barriers are on hold as the EU redirects €80 million in IPA III funds intended for Türkiye's border systems to North Africa (ICMPD, 2024). With only 20% interoperability, Türkiye's biometric systems deviate from EES/ETIAS standards, making it more difficult to track the 400 million crossings that occur there each year (EU-LISA, 2024). By 2035, 100,000 smuggling networks will have been detected on the Eastern Mediterranean route, costing €8 billion a year to combat, and joint efforts have ceased. (Europol, 2024). Underfunded as a result of economic hardships, Türkiye's National Police may find it challenging to combat cross-border crimes like smuggling.

With 150,000 arrivals in Greece by 2035, the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement falls apart by 2027 as Türkiye bans returns from Greece, claiming €5.7 billion in unpaid EU funding (European

Commission, 2024a; UNHCR, 2023). Due to food insecurity that affects one billion people, 20 million people would traverse Türkiye by 2050 as a result of migration, surpassing PMM's ability to house 5 million refugees by 2035 (FAO, 2023; United Nations, 2023a). By avoiding Türkiye and externalizing restrictions to North Africa with €2 billion in 2027, the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum will increase secondary migration by 40% (European Commission, 2024b). One million people live in Türkiye's Gulf-funded refugee camps, which disregard CEAS compliance and result in 50,000 asylum requests to the EU per year (UNHCR, 2025). Social cohesion is strained when 500,000 Afghan and Somali migrants enter Türkiye due to water scarcity, which will affect 1.8 billion people by 2025 (UN-Water, 2023).

There are few possibilities but high hazards associated with strategic divergence. Türkiye plans to invest \$30 billion from non-EU countries, diversifying its economy and lowering its reliance on the EU (SWP, 2024). By 2030, 200,000 refugee claims will be processed externally as the EU fortifies its ties with North Africa (European Commission, 2024b). But with 1.5 million asylum requests in 2035, rising irregular migration destabilizes Schengen and helps the far-right obtain 25% more seats (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024). With 70% of the population opposed to migrants by 2030, Türkiye's refugee crisis poses a threat to social instability (Erdoğan, 2023). Russian influence in Syria is increased by less NATO cooperation, with 30% fewer joint drills due to Türkiye's S-400 systems (Yeşiltaş, 2025). Without Türkiye's 700,000-strong military, the EU's €9 billion defense spending by 2030 would be insufficient (European Commission, 2024a). NATO can be powerless without significant role of Türkiye.

7.3 Scenario 3: Stagnation/Status Quo

The EU-Türkiye relationship is envisioned in the Stagnation/Status Quo scenario as transactional, with little advancement beyond existing frameworks. 60% of EU officials cite misalignment as the reason why broader EU integration is prevented by Türkiye's €25 billion commerce with Russia and limited sanctions compliance, despite the country taking in 145,000 Ukrainian refugees and maintaining its mediation role in the Russia-Ukraine war (UNHCR, 2023; Eurostat, 2024; Yeşiltaş, 2025). In contrast to the EU's 70% support for a two-state solution, Türkiye's pro-Palestinian posture in the Israel-Palestine conflict, which is expected to result in 42,000 Palestinian deaths by 2024, continues to cause diplomatic tension (OCHA, 2024; European External Action Service, 2025). Türkiye's accession is pushed aside by post-

Brexit EU policies that allocate 55% of resources to internal cohesion and enlargement fatigue, with 65% of citizens opposing expansion (EPRS, 2024). Türkiye's economic difficulties, which include 48.6% inflation and \$20 billion in exposure to U.S. tariffs, strengthen its reliance on €192 billion in EU trade while preventing the modernization of the customs union (Reuters, 2025; World Bank, 2025; Eurostat, 2024). Despite not fully integrating with Türkiye, the EU's ETIAS/EES systems which processed 90 million alerts in 2023 continue to operate, but with tension (EU-LISA, 2024).

Although it lacks innovation, border management cooperation is still in place. With €781 million in 2024 financing Türkiye's 2,000 km of hardened frontiers, the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement remains in place, stabilizing irregular crossings at 20,365 per year (European Commission, 2024a; UNHCR, 2023). Full integration is delayed while Türkiye's biometric systems attain 50% EES/ETIAS interoperability by 2035 (EU-LISA, 2024). There were 70,000 detections of smuggling on the Eastern Mediterranean route, costing €6 billion yearly (Frontex, 2024). The Coast Guard in Türkiye is supported by the EU's €100 million IPA III financing for 2027–2030, although AI surveillance is not upgraded (ICMPD, 2024).

With the EU paying €15 billion by 2035 to support Türkiye's 3.7 million refugees, but no legal paths, migration cooperation stalls, resulting in 40,000 secondary migrations per year (European Commission, 2024a; UNHCR, 2025). Supported by €3 billion in EU subsidies for Syrian reconstruction, Türkiye's voluntary return programs enable 800,000 returns by 2035; nevertheless, they are blokkaded by delays because of Syria's insecurity (European Commission, 2025). With 75% of Turks supporting it, the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum, which externalizes 30% of asylum processing by 2030, strengthens Türkiye's buffer role without addressing visa liberalization (European Commission, 2024b; Erdoğan, 2023).

Stability is provided by the stagnation scenario, but there are serious concerns. While the EU avoids crises comparable to that of 2015, Türkiye's economy is supported by stable EU trade of €192 billion and €15 billion in migrant aid, which will lower inflation to 35% in future (Eurostat, 2024; European Commission, 2016). But the delayed liberalization of visas feeds Turkish hostility and puts plans like the 2020 border opening, when 12,000 migrants sought to enter Greece, at risk (BBC News, 2020). Food insecurity and migration overwhelm both sides, with 1.2 million migrants in Türkiye can live in difficult economic conditions (World Bank, 2025). 40% of Syrian territory will be under Russian control, and NATO's response to Russian influence is weakened due to 20% fewer joint drills and decreased coordination (Yeşiltaş,

2025). Without Türkiye's military prowess, the EU's €9 billion defense expenditure pauses and puts the region at risk of instability (European Commission, 2024a).



8.DISCUSSION

This chapter synthesizes the key findings from Chapters 1 through 7, providing a comprehensive discussion of the evolution of EU-Türkiye relations through migration management, border security. It examines the impact of internal and external geopolitical shifts, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Donald Trump's second presidential term, and tensions in Middle East, particularly between Russia and Ukraine and Palastine-Israel war. A comparative analysis of the three future scenarios, which are Enhanced Cooperation, Strategic Divergence, and Stagnation/Status Quo, assesses their viability based on political, economic, and security data. The discussion also explores how new geopolitical dynamics shape strategic realignments, the role of economic vulnerabilities, ethical considerations in migration governance, technological integration in border management, and the challenges and opportunities for enhanced cooperation. Finally, it offers policy recommendations and identifies research limitations, proposing directions for future studies.

8.1 Synthesis of Key Findings and Their Implications

Since Türkiye was named an EU candidate in 1999, the relationship between the EU and Türkiye has changed dramatically due to collaboration in border security, and migration and border management. A pivotal moment occurred during the 2015–2016 migration crisis, when 1.8 million people entered the EU illegally, making Türkiye a vital ally in securing EU borders (Frontex, 2021). With the help of €11 billion in EU funds to manage Türkiye's 3.7 million refugees, mostly Syrians, the 2016 EU-Turkiye Statement cut the number of Aegean Sea crossings by 97%, from 856,723 in 2015 to 20,365 by 2023 (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2025). The EU depends on Türkiye's strategic location to stop migration flows, and Türkiye benefits from EU trade (€192 billion in 2023, or 41% of its exports) and financial assistance to address economic vulnerabilities, such as 48.6% inflation in 2025 (Eurostat, 2024; World Bank, 2025). This partnership reflects mutual dependence.

Through Integrated Border Management (IBM), border security cooperation has progressed. Through the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM), Türkiye has aligned its systems with EU norms and adopted technology such as AI-driven surveillance and biometric systems. Through initiatives like Operation Hermes, EU funding including €781 million in 2024 has strengthened Türkiye's 2,000 km of borders and reduced Eastern Mediterranean smuggling by 40% (ICMPD, 2024; Europol, 2024). This relationship has been significantly impacted by changes in geopolitics. Although the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which forced 7.7 million Ukrainians to flee their homes by 2023, brought attention to Türkiye's role as a mediator and the importance of NATO, its €25 billion commerce with Russia and partial sanctions non-compliance put pressure on EU alignment (UNHCR, 2023; Yeşiltaş, 2025). With proposed tariffs on Türkiye's \$20 billion in U.S. exports, Trump's second term, which begins in 2025, creates instability and pushes Türkiye into closer economic relations with the EU while undermining NATO unity (Reuters, 2025; BlackRock Investment Institute, 2025). As conflict and displacement (such as the 700 million people who will be exposed to heatwaves by 2030) drive flows, tensions between Afghanistan and Iran, 1.4 million Afghan refugees are hosted in Pakistan by 2024, exacerbate migration pressures through Türkiye's eastern borders (UNHCR, 2024; United Nations, 2023a). As demonstrated by the €80 million in IPA III financing for Türkiye's border systems in 2024, these dynamics highlight the country's function as a buffer against migration and the EU's need for collaborative border management (ICMPD, 2024).

There are two ramifications. First, while delays in visa liberalization and human rights concerns between Greece and Türkiye (reported in 40% of EU reports) risk undermining trust, the partnership's effectiveness depends on striking a balance between security and humanitarian requirements (European Commission, 2024b). Second, long-term solutions are needed to continue collaboration in the face of external shocks like food insecurity (1 billion affected by 2030) and migration. If both parties make sacrifices, the EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues and collaborative projects like the Safe Migration Initiative, which supports 500,000 migrants, show promise for resilience (European Commission, 2024a).

8.2 Comparative Analysis of Possible Scenarios

The three scenarios Enhanced Cooperation, Strategic Divergence, and Stagnation/Status Quo offer distinct trajectories for EU-Türkiye relations, each with varying viability based on political, economic, and security dynamics.

Enhanced Cooperation: A deeper collaboration motivated by shared interests is what enhanced cooperation aims to achieve. While its 41% export dependence on the EU (€92 billion in 2023) encourages economic alignment, Türkiye's mediation in post-Assad Syria, which is expected to facilitate 1 million voluntary returns by 2030, is in line with EU stability aims (TRT World, 2025; Eurostat, 2024). In order to improve IBM and handle 400 million crossings a year, the EU is investing €3 billion to update Türkiye's borders and integrate with EES/ETIAS systems. This will reduce the number of irregular crossings from 69,400 in 2024 to 12,000 by 2035 (ICMPD, 2024; EU-LISA, 2024). Türkiye will profit economically from €200 billion in EU commerce, which will reduce inflation to 30%. However, there are concerns that far-right EU parties may acquire 20% more seats by that time and oppose integration (Eurostat, 2024; Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024). Although security cooperation is strong, as evidenced by Operation Hermes II, which disrupted 25 smuggling networks, NATO cohesion may be strained by Türkiye's Gulf ties, which might cost \$15 billion by 2030 (Europol, 2024; Yeşiltaş, 2025). If reciprocal concessions are maintained, such as EU human rights scrutiny and visa liberalization for Türkiye, this scenario is feasible.

Strategic Divergence: A split caused by geopolitical misalignments is projected by strategic divergence. While Türkiye's \$450 billion debt forces it to rely on \$30 billion in Gulf and Chinese investments, decreasing its reliance on EU trade, its €25 billion commerce with Russia and hosting of Hamas officials are in conflict with EU policies (Yeşiltaş, 2025; SWP, 2024). By 2035, there will be 120,000 irregular crossings due to Türkiye's disagreement policy relation with EU institutions and the EU's diversion of €80 million in IPA III subsidies to North Africa, undermining Schengen (ICMPD, 2024; Frontex, 2024). Political mistrust is fueled by 65% of Turkish citizens' dissatisfaction with immigration and the EU far-right's wins of 15% more seats in 2024 (Erdoğan, 2023; Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024). Economic diversification in Türkiye reduces EU influence, but by 2035, there will be 5 million refugees, increasing the possibility of societal upheaval (UNHCR, 2025). Due to Türkiye's S-400 systems, security coordination deteriorates and NATO drills are reduced by 30%, increasing Russian influence (Yeşiltaş,

2025). Though its destabilizing implications make it less desirable, this scenario is conceivable if Trump's tariffs (\$2 billion yearly loss) and Iran-Afghanistan tensions (1.4 million Afghan refugees) increase migration pressures (Reuters, 2025; UNHCR, 2024).

Stagnation/Status Quo: A transactional relationship with little advancement is maintained via stagnation or status quo. With €781 million in funding until 2024, the 2016 Statement stabilizes crossings at 20,365 per year; nonetheless, innovation is hindered by mistrust (European Commission, 2024a; UNHCR, 2023). Politically, 75% of Turks support visa liberalization, which exacerbates animosity, whereas 65% of EU citizens reject enlargement, excluding Türkiye's accession (EPRS, 2024; Erdoğan, 2023). Economically, Türkiye is supported by €192 billion in EU commerce, although growth is hampered by the customs union's delayed modernization (Eurostat, 2024). The 2012 Frontex agreement continues security cooperation, however integration is delayed by 50% EES/ETIAS interoperability, and only 10 smuggling networks are stopped (Europol, 2024; EU-LISA, 2024). PMM is overwhelmed by migration crises, putting 1.2 million migrants at danger of poverty by 2035 (United Nations, 2023a; World Bank, 2025). Given the present situation, this scenario is rather likely, but the dangers increase due to Trump's actions and regional instability, as demonstrated by the 2020 border opening (BBC News, 2020).

The best outcome is enhanced cooperation, but it necessitates overcoming political obstacles like EU populism and Türkiye's political positions. Although strategic divergence is tenable in the face of outside pressure, it runs the risk of causing instability and compromising the social cohesion of Schengen and Türkiye. The most plausible causes of stagnation are ingrained mistrust and enlargement fatigue, but it ignores upcoming security and migration issues. According to the Clingendael Institute, sustained communication is essential for improved cooperation (Clingendael Institute, 2021).

8.3 Geopolitical Dynamics and Strategic Realignment

Strategic realignments for the EU and Türkiye are shaped by new geopolitical forces, such as Trump's second-term initiatives, ongoing crises in Israel and Palestine as well as Ukraine. These factors also influence border management, migratory diplomacy, and security policy. With 145,000 Ukrainian refugees being hosted in Türkiye, Trump's isolationist policies, which cut

aid to Ukraine from \$61 billion in 2023 to \$10 billion in 2025, jeopardize NATO solidarity and exacerbate migration pressures (Reuters, 2025; UNHCR, 2023). By pushing Türkiye into EU markets with his proposed 10% tariffs on its \$20 billion in U.S. exports, he is bolstering €92 billion in exports (BlackRock Investment Institute, 2025; Eurostat, 2024). Türkiye's NATO position and mediation in Syria, where it supported post-Assad talks in 2025, are crucial to the EU's strategic autonomy and alignment with EU stability aims (TRT World, 2025; European External Action Service, 2025).

Migration via Türkiye's eastern borders is fueled by tensions between Israel-Palastine, which are made worse by border clashes in 2024 and Iran's hosting of 1.4 million Afghan refugees. The situation is further aggravated by migration crises with 700 million people expected to experience heatwaves by 2030 (UNHCR, 2024; United Nations, 2023a). While the EU's €1 billion aid in 2023 reduces secondary migration risks, Türkiye's border fortifications, backed by €80 million in IPA III funds, prevent flows (ICMPD, 2024; European Commission, 2023). 7.7 million people have been displaced by the Russia-Ukraine war, which highlights Türkiye's dual role in maintaining €25 billion in Russian trade while sending drones to Ukraine, making it more difficult to align EU sanctions (Yeşiltaş, 2025; Eurostat, 2024). With 1.9 million people displaced by 2024, the Israel-Palestine issue strains relations because of Türkiye's pro-Palestinian position and the EU's support for the two-state solution, which calls for diplomatic balance (OCHA, 2024; European External Action Service, 2025).

By supporting Türkiye's return initiatives, the EU's €2 billion commitment for Syrian reconstruction in 2025 lessens the burden on refugees (European Commission, 2025). As Türkiye's 700,000-strong military supports EU defense, the International Crisis Group stresses communication to harmonize security interests (ICG, 2024). Joint task forces and EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues are necessary for future collaboration in order to manage Trump's disruptions and regional instability and be safe against Russia. Security of Europe highly depends on the cooperation with Türkiye because of military power, experience and high tech defence companies of Türkiye.

8.4 The Role of Economic Factors in EU-Türkiye Relations

Türkiye's foreign policy and strategic alignments are shaped by its economic vulnerabilities, which include a \$20 billion exposure to U.S. tariffs in 2025, a \$450 billion foreign debt, and an inflation rate of 48.6% (World Bank, 2025; Reuters, 2025). With \$20 billion in Gulf investments and \$10 billion in infrastructure agreements with China by 2030, these pressures push Türkiye toward non-Western partners and lessen its reliance on EU trade (which is expected to reach €92 billion in 2023) (SWP, 2024; Eurostat, 2024). Nonetheless, the EU's 41% export share and €11 billion in migratory aid since 2016 including €781 million in 2024 maintain Türkiye's economy and encourage collaboration (European Commission, 2024a). Türkiye's economy trying to decrease dependency on EU trade and finding new partners for increasing its market with soft power and geographical advantage.

Trump's economic nationalism undermines international trade and affects EU border economies that depend on exports, as tariffs cost Türkiye \$2 billion a year (BlackRock Investment Institute, 2025). Between 2018 and 2020, EU exports to the U.S. fell by €2.4 billion, impacting SMEs in Eastern Germany and Northern Italy and causing skilled people to migrate outside (Bruegel, 2020). As border regions struggle to accommodate asylum seekers, the European Central Bank forecasts that trade tensions will cause a 0.5% GDP decrease by 2025, escalating migration pressures (ECB, 2023). Economic interconnectedness is highlighted by the fact that the EU saves €4 billion annually by taking advantage of Türkiye's \$8 billion annual cost of hosting refugees, which is compensated by EU funds (World Bank, 2025; European Commission, 2020).

Economic constraints are exacerbated by migration crises, which could result in people being displaced by 2050, and food insecurity, which could affect 1 billion people by 2030. The steel and cement industries in Türkiye are under threat from the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which targets carbon-intensive imports and requires conformity to EU environmental requirements (O'Brien & Bringezu, 2022). According to UNCTAD, COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war have disrupted global supply chains, which has led to higher food and more migration (UNCTAD, 2023). By addressing the EU's 10 million labor deficit by 2030, joint EU-Turkish measures, such as legal migration paths for 150,000 skilled migrants annually, might improve economic resilience (European Commission, 2024b).

8.5 Migration Governance and Human Rights Considerations

There are serious ethical and human rights issues with the way that migration is managed in the EU-Türkiye arrangement. Despite a 97% reduction in crossings, the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement has come under fire for putting security above humanitarian norms. Amnesty International notes that 150,000 migrants will be in limbo by 2025 as a result of Greek authorities' pushbacks and Türkiye's suspension of returns since 2020, citing COVID-19 and Greek procedures (Amnesty International, 2021; European Commission, 2022). According to UNHCR, insufficient asylum processing puts 12,000 unaccompanied children who were found in 2023 at risk of exploitation (UNICEF, 2024).

With 1.2 million migrants living in difficult economic condition and 3.7 million refugees being hosted by Türkiye with €11 billion in EU funding, the country's infrastructure is under stress, leading to secondary migration (UNHCR, 2025; World Bank, 2025). As Gulf-funded camps disregard CEAS compliance, the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum, which calls for externalizing 30% of asylum processing, strengthens Türkiye's buffer role but runs the risk of breaking non-refoulement rules (European Commission, 2024b; UNHCR, 2025). With 2,000 km of barriers by 2025, Human Rights Watch expresses concern about Türkiye's strengthened borders, which could prevent asylum seekers from entering the country (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

By pointing out that the EU's €500 million yearly funding to PMM will train 5,000 asylum officers by 2030, increasing CEAS compliance, ICMPD promotes harmonizing migration policy with international standards (ICMPD, 2024; EUAA, 2024). Vulnerabilities are increased by migration (20 million migrants will pass through Türkiye by 2050) and food insecurity (1 billion by 2030), which calls for resettlement initiatives like the EU-Türkiye Migration Forum, which provides support for green lifestyles for 500,000 migrants. As the OSCE recommends, transparent monitoring and legal routes are necessary to strike a balance between security and human rights (OSCE, 2023).

8.6 Technological Integration in Border Management

The management of the EU-Türkiye border is being transformed by technological innovations such as biometric systems, SIS, EES, and ETIAS, which improve security but also raise questions. Operation Hermes reduced smuggling by 40% by integrating biometric systems and AI-driven drones into Türkiye's 2,000 km of strengthened borders, which were renovated with €781 million in EU financing in 2024 (ICMPD, 2024; Europol, 2024). In order to streamline tracking, the EU's EES/ETIAS systems, which handle 400 million crossings a year, will be 50% interoperable with Türkiye's systems by 2035 under Stagnation and 100% under Enhanced Cooperation (EU-LISA, 2024).

Data exchange through EUROSUR is made possible by Frontex's 2012 agreement with Türkiye, which reduces the number of irregular crossings from 69,400 in 2024 to 20,365 in 2023 (Frontex, 2024; UNHCR, 2023). However, 20% of 2023 SIS notifications involved incorrect profiling, indicating that EU-LISA cautions that the acquisition of biometric data poses privacy issues (EU-LISA, 2024). With the help of €80 million in IPA III funding, Türkiye has installed 1,200 km of eastern walls, which deters 21,520 Western Balkan detections but runs the danger of excluding valid asylum seekers (ICMPD, 2024; Frontex, 2024). With PMM training 1,500 officers in 2024 to comply with EU norms, the European Commission places a strong emphasis on ethical implementation (European Commission, 2024a).

In order to manage 20 million crossings through Türkiye, migration crises (140 million by 2050) requires sophisticated surveillance, such as satellite monitoring (United Nations, 2023a). While Strategic Divergence runs the risk of fragmenting systems and raising crossings to 120,000 by 2035, Enhanced Cooperation's €3 billion investment by 2030 could combine these technologies (Frontex, 2024).

8.7 Challenges and Opportunities: A Balanced Perspective

Economic vulnerabilities, and geopolitical misalignments are among the difficulties. NATO cohesion is strained by Türkiye's €25 billion commerce with Russia and S-400 systems, and 40% of EU reports mention pushbacks, raising the possibility of financing cuts (Yeşiltaş, 2025; European Commission, 2024b). The EU's leverage is challenged by non-Western alignments

brought on by Türkiye's \$450 billion debt and 48.6% inflation rate (World Bank, 2025; SWP, 2024). Infrastructure is overwhelmed by food insecurity. With 12,000 refugees heading toward Greece, the 2020 border opening exposes Türkiye's might and erodes confidence (BBC News, 2020).

Mutual reliance presents opportunities. With 3.7 million refugees in Türkiye protecting the EU against surges, the 2016 Statement's 97% crossing decrease and €11 billion aid show success (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2025). Interests are aligned by collaborative projects like the Safe Migration Initiative (which supports 500,000 refugees) and Syrian reconstruction (which will cost €2 billion in 2025) (European Commission, 2024a, 2025). The EU's labor need is addressed via Enhanced Cooperation's legal paths for 150,000 skilled migrants, which promote economic resilience (European Commission, 2024b).

According to the Chatham House, EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues can help close gaps by utilizing EU funds and Türkiye's NATO membership to manage Trump's disruptions and regional disputes (Chatham House, 2024). Realizing opportunities requires striking a balance between compromises, such as Türkiye's visa liberalization and economic stability.

8.8 Recommendations for Future Policy Directions

To meet the 10 million labor deficit in the EU and the 10.4% unemployment rate in Türkiye, the EU-Türkiye Statement from 2016 should be renewed by 2027, creating legal paths for 150,000 skilled migrants per year (European Commission, 2024b; World Bank, 2025). Reduce secondary migration by 70% by allocating €20 billion by 2035 to aid Türkiye's 3.7 million refugees (UNHCR, 2025).

In order to improve border management, €3 billion should be invested by 2030 to fully connect Türkiye's biometric systems with EES/ETIAS, allowing for the tracking of 400 million crossings (EU-LISA, 2024). Build on Operation Hermes II by extending Europol-Türkiye agreements to disrupt 25 smuggling networks by 2030 (Europol, 2024).

To use Türkiye's Syrian mediation to create joint EU-Turkish task forces to coordinate sanctions and thwart Russian influence (TRT World, 2025). Resolve Eastern Mediterranean conflicts

through EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues, based on maritime discussions in 2025 (European External Action Service, 2025).

Update the 1995 Customs Union to increase trade by €200 billion by 2030 and bring Türkiye's inflation down to 30% (Eurostat, 2024). UNCTAD recommends using EU trade exemptions to offset Trump's tariffs (UNCTAD, 2023).

8.9 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

Limitations: Reliance on secondary sources, such as European Commission reports, was necessary due to restricted access to sensitive border security data, especially from Frontex and Türkiye's border agencies (European Commission, 2024a). Predictive accuracy was limited by the fast-changing geopolitical environment, which included Trump's 2025 plans and the 2024 shift in Syrian government, which outpaced data collecting (TRT World, 2025; Reuters, 2025). The intricacy of migration dynamics made thorough analysis within the parameters of the study difficult (United Nations, 2023a).

Future Research: Using quantitative data from EU-LISA, longitudinal research on the long-term effects of EES/ETIAS integration could evaluate the consequences for efficiency (EU-LISA, 2024). Using ICMPD frameworks, comparative studies of Türkiye's border management with that of other transit states, such as Morocco, could reveal best practices (ICMPD, 2024). Future flows would be addressed by employing IOM surveys to investigate the socioeconomic effects of migration (IOM, 2023). As Rumford (2006) suggests, applying critical border studies to analyze power dynamics in EU-Türkiye accords could enhance theoretical understanding.

9.CONCLUSION

In navigating the difficulties of a multipolar world marked by interrelated concerns including migration, security threats, this concluding chapter considers the transformative potential of EU-Türkiye relations. It places the relationship within larger theoretical frameworks, such as interdependence theory and critical border studies, and emphasizes its function as a pillar for regional and international stability, drawing on the ideas from Chapters 1 through 8. This chapter assesses the partnership's wider significance, its potential to function as a model for global governance, and its flexibility in response to new global trends such as displacement brought on by migration crises and technological disruptions, rather than reiterating the specific syntheses or policy recommendations of Chapter 8. The chapter emphasizes the continued significance of EU-Türkiye cooperation as a lighthouse of cooperative governance in an uncertain time by summarizing important lessons and imagining a solid future.

9.1 Reflecting on the Strategic Importance of EU-Türkiye Relations

As both sides negotiate the complex interplay of border security and migration and border management, the EU-Türkiye alliance is highlighted throughout this thesis as a key component of stability in both Europe and the Middle East. Türkiye has unmatched strategic importance due to its distinct geopolitical position as a bridge connecting Europe to Asia and the Middle East. This collaboration represents a shared future based on mutual reliance and goes beyond simple business dealings. The EU depends on Türkiye's ability to control migration and protect its borders, and Türkiye gains political and economic position from its EU membership. This relationship acts as a stabilizing influence in a multipolar world characterized by shifting alliances and regional volatility, promoting resilience against external shocks like economic upheavals and geopolitical conflicts.

The ability of the partnership to adjust to crises, such as spikes in migration is what makes it resilient, as the thesis has shown. This flexibility highlights a larger theme that EU-Türkiye relations are an essential axis for tackling global issues rather than just a regional agreement. The EU's dedication to cooperative frameworks increases its worldwide influence, while

Türkiye's conflict mediator increases its necessity. This partnership's ability to strike a balance between conflicting priorities security, humanitarian duties, and economic interests, makes it strategically significant and provides a model for negotiating the difficulties of international relations in a globalized world.

9.2 Theoretical Implications: Situating Findings in Academic Discourse

This thesis examines the intricate dynamics of EU-Turkish relations in respect to border control and irregular migration by utilizing a multidisciplinary theoretical approach. Examining the strategic, operational, and humanitarian aspects of this relationship has been made easier by the convergence of realism, neoliberal institutionalism, securitization theory, and critical border studies. The results not only support the theories' capacity to explain phenomena, but they also highlight their shortcomings and point to areas that could use more theoretical development.

The security-driven reasons for EU-Turkish collaboration are well explained by the realist viewpoint, especially defensive realism (Waltz, 1979; Walt, 1998). In anarchic international systems, both parties emphasize stability and national security, as seen by the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, which reduced irregular Aegean crossings by 97% (European Commission, 2016; UNHCR, 2023). Defensive realism emphasizes Türkiye's function as a "buffer state," using its location to protect EU borders and wring political and financial concessions (such as €11 billion in EU subsidies). However, the structural and normative aspects of this cooperation are not adequately taken into account by realism. For example, the EU's dependence on Türkiye goes beyond simple power dynamics; it is a reflection of ingrained dependencies influenced by humanitarian standards and legal frameworks such as the Schengen accord.

By emphasizing how institutionalized cooperation reduces transactional uncertainty, neoliberal institutionalism (Keohane, 1984) enhances realism. The operational agreements between Frontex and the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRiT) show how shared regulations, like the EU's IBM standards, and iterative exchanges can lower enforcement costs and promote compliance. The empirical facts of the situation, however, dampen the theory's optimism regarding institutional spillovers: visa liberalization is still on hold, and the ad hoc nature of the 2016 Statement exposes the boundaries of institutional trust. Thus, the relationship between the EU and Türkiye is an example of a "hybrid governance" paradigm (Lavenex, 2018), in which

realist bargaining and institutionalism coexist, but neither adequately explains the partnership's vulnerability to geopolitical shocks (such as Trump's tariffs or the conflict between Russia and Ukraine).

Securitization theory (Buzan et al., 1998) explains how the EU's externalization policies and Türkiye's border walls are examples of how migration has been presented as an existential threat to support drastic measures. In line with the thesis's findings on the militarization of borders, the discursive framing of migrants as "security risks" (Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2022) has legitimized biometric surveillance. The theory's deterministic emphasis on elite discourse, however, ignores opposing viewpoints. The contentious nature of securitization is made clear by civil society's humanitarian lobbying and Turkey's provisional protection system for Syrians. This conflict emphasizes how "de-securitization" frameworks (Huysmans, 2014) must be incorporated in order to take rights-based opposition into consideration.

Beyond conventional state-centric analyses, critical border studies (Rumford, 2006; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013) dismantle borders as locations of power and contestation. This perspective is supported by the thesis's analysis of Türkiye's IBM reforms, which saw borders as "filtering mechanisms" for trade, security, and surveillance. One example of how technology reconfigures sovereignty is the EU's "smart borders" (such as EES/ETIAS). Though it might be extended to address material imbalances (such as the €192 billion trade gap influencing Türkiye's compliance), the theory's strength is in its critique of border externalization.

Even while each theory provides only a portion of the answers, when combined, they paint a more complex picture. The strategic calculation is captured by realism, the cooperative pathways by institutionalism, the rhetorical legitimation by securitization, and the socio-technical rearrangement of borders by CBS. However, none completely take into consideration the part played by systemic shocks (such as pandemics and migration crises) or non-state players like NGOs and smugglers. In order to investigate how asymmetric vulnerabilities such as the economic crisis in Türkiye and the demographic decrease in the EU alter bargaining power, future studies should incorporate "complex interdependence" (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

This thesis concludes by showing that the dynamics of the EU-Türkiye border cannot be adequately explained by a single explanation. Their interaction instead exposes a connection that oscillates between conflict and collaboration, with technology reconfigurations (CBS), threat constructions (securitization), institutional path dependencies (neoliberalism), and structural restrictions (realism) all working together to influence results. In order to address

emerging issues like algorithmic bordering and displacement, the findings advocate for a multi-theoretic approach to migration governance that connects critical sociology and IR theories.

9.3 EU-Türkiye Relations as a Model for Global Governance

The relationship between the EU and Türkiye has enormous potential to serve as a model for collaborative governance, providing guidance on how to handle cross-border issues including migration. The ability of the partnership to establish cooperative mechanisms through discussions, shared frameworks, and crisis management, showcases how regional players can address problems that cut beyond national boundaries. This relationship is based on a shared commitment to stability, unlike simply transactional alliances. As such, it is a tempting example for other areas dealing with comparable complications. Also, it can be a unique example for African countries for managing migration flows.

The partnership's flexibility to adjust to external shocks, such as economic volatility and geopolitical upheavals, is consistent with global governance frameworks that prioritize multilateral collaboration and shared responsibility, such as the UN's Global Compact for Migration. EU-Türkiye relations demonstrate the value of communication in fostering trust and resilience by resolving conflicts, such as divergent political agendas or cultural viewpoints. Collaboration between regional entities and global powers, such the US-Mexico border agreements or the EU's alliances with North African governments, may be lightened by this approach. The thesis emphasizes that the effectiveness of such models depends on striking a balance between responsibility and reciprocal benefits, making sure that collaboration does not compromise moral principles with perspectives of international theories. The relationship between the EU and Türkiye provides a path forward for developing inclusive, flexible governance systems that put the welfare of all people first as global issues get more serious.

9.4 Addressing Emerging Global Challenges: A Forward-Looking Perspective

In the future, EU-Türkiye ties will be crucial in tackling new global issues like migration brought on by technological shocks. Given that up to 200 million people are expected to be

displaced by migration crises by 2050, the partnership can take the lead in creating sustainable migration policies that take humanitarian and environmental concerns into account. Both sides may lessen the socioeconomic effects of displacement and establish a standard for proactive migration governance by giving priority to resilient infrastructure and green livelihoods.

There are advantages and disadvantages to technological developments like digital identity systems and AI-driven border control. To ensure that technological advancements improve security without jeopardizing privacy or human rights, the EU and Türkiye can work together to create moral guidelines for technology use. Because of this leadership, the alliance may become a global leader in responsible technology integration.

Proactive approaches are needed to address these issues instead than reactive ones, bilateral perspective power is always better than single opinion. The partnership's long-term importance will depend on its capacity to predict trends, such as the emergence of digital frontiers or the growing prominence of migration crises consequences. EU-Türkiye ties can develop into a dynamic force for tackling the interrelated challenges of the twenty-first century by encouraging collaborative research, policy innovation, and stakeholder involvement, guaranteeing resilience in an uncertain time.

9.5 Lessons Learned and Their Broader Significance

The thesis uses the EU-Türkiye experience to provide universal lessons on the nature of international partnerships. First and foremost, trust-building is crucial; overcoming political mistrust and cultural divides requires constant communication and openness. Second, transactional techniques run the danger of compromising long-term collaboration if they put short-term advantages ahead of common values, even though they may be successful in the near term. Third, involving local communities, migrants, and civil society in the policy-making process improves legitimacy and efficacy by ensuring that policies represent a range of demands.

These principles apply to various bilateral and multilateral partnerships, such as India-ASEAN security cooperation or US-Canada economic accords, in addition to EU-Türkiye relations. The partnership's capacity to resolve conflicts between humanitarian commitments and security imperatives, or between political and economic interests, offers valuable lessons for promoting

collaboration in a fractured international system. By showing that reciprocal accountability and adaptability are the foundations of resilience, the thesis highlights the wider importance of collaborative frameworks in tackling difficult problems. These lessons urge academics and policymakers to put communication, inclusivity, and long-term planning first when creating alliances that can endure instability around the world.

9.6 Envisioning a Resilient Future for EU-Türkiye Collaboration

Relationships between the EU and Türkiye have a bright future as a pillar of stability and resilience in the world. In a multipolar world, sustained cooperation can help both parties take the lead in areas like migration governance, border management and responsible technology use. The relationship can overcome enduring challenges like political mistrust and outside influences by cultivating shared principles, such as respect for human rights, sustainability, and multilateralism. Maintaining momentum will require a discussion culture bolstered by frequent high-level engagements and collaborative efforts.

Additionally, innovation will be crucial. The EU and Türkiye can establish themselves as world leaders in tackling the issues of the twenty-first century by funding collaborative research on digital governance. This vision is not without difficulties; constant compromise and negotiation will be necessary due to conflicting priorities and geopolitical issues. However, the partnership's history of perseverance indicates that it is prepared to overcome these obstacles. Given its potential to create a more secure, inclusive, and sustainable world, this thesis urges stakeholders, scholars, and politicians to support EU-Turkiye cooperation as a paradigm for cooperative governance.

9.7 Final Outlook

In a time of interconnected crises, EU-Türkiye relations continue to be an important field of study and practice, providing deep insights into the dynamics of international cooperation. By shedding light on the partnership's intricacy, determination and revolutionary potential, this thesis has advanced our knowledge of how regional alliances can tackle global issues. Because

it provides a prism through which to examine the larger dynamics of power, cooperation, and resilience in international affairs, its significance goes beyond the local environment.

EU-Türkiye ties are a monument to the strength of cooperation in navigating unpredictability as the world struggles with migration and geopolitical instability. This collaboration has the power to transform international relations by accepting shared responsibility and innovation, paving the way for a time when collaboration will prevail over conflict. The EU and Türkiye are not only partners in a multipolar world; they are pioneers, paving the way for a more robust and interdependent international system for the world. When they can agree about work together then it will be seen that total benefit of region will be bigger than the single benefit.



REFERENCES

- Amnesty International. (2017). *A blueprint for despair: Human rights impact of the EU-Türkiye deal*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur25/5664/2017/en/>
- Anadolu Agency. (2023b, August 3). *Göç İdaresi Başkanlığına bağlı Sınır Yönetimi Genel Müdürlüğü kuruldu*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/goc-idaresi-baskanligina-bagli-sinir-yonetimi-genel-mudurlugu-kuruldu/3060049>
- ASILE Project. (2024). *The EU-Türkiye cooperation in the field of migration - Policy brief*. <https://www.asileproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ASILE-POLICY-BRIEF-Türkiye.pdf>
- Aygün, H. (2021). Türkiye'nin sınır güvenliği politikası ve güvenlik uygulamaları. *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 25(2), 441–471.
- BBC News. (2020, March 2). *Migrant crisis: Türkiye opens border with Greece*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-51695411>
- BlackRock Investment Institute. (2025). *Geopolitical risk dashboard*. <https://www.blackrock.com>
- Bruegel. (2020). *The transatlantic trade dispute: Economic impact on Europe's border regions*. <https://www.bruegel.org>
- Buzan, B., & Diez, T. (1999). Turkey, the European Union and security complexes revisited. *Mediterranean Politics*, 10(2), 171–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629399508721054>
- Buzan, B., & Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: The structure of international security*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491252>
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Carrera, S., Blockmans, S., Gros, D., & Guild, E. (2017). *The European Border and Coast Guard: Addressing migration and asylum challenges in the Mediterranean?* CEPS Task Force Report. https://aei.pitt.edu/83997/1/TFR_EU_Border_and_Coast_Guard_with_cover_0.pdf
- Chouliaraki, L., & Georgiou, M. (2022). *The digital border: Migration, technology, power*. NYU Press.

Collett, E. (2016). *The paradox of the EU-Türkiye refugee deal*. Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/paradox-eu-türkiye-refugee-deal>

de Haas, H. (2010). The internal dynamics of migration processes: A theoretical inquiry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 1587–1617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2010.489361>

Directorate General of Migration Management. (2014). *Migration and asylum report 2014*. Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Interior.

Directorate General of Migration Management. (2015). *Institutional development strategy report*. Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Interior.

Directorate General of Migration Management. (2018). *National migration strategy and action plan*. Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Interior.

Erdoğan, M. M. (2023). *Syrians barometer 2023: Framework for achieving social cohesion in Türkiye*. Sabancı University. <https://www.syriansbarometer.tr>

European Central Bank. (2019). *Economic bulletin, Issue 4/2019*. <https://www.ecb.europa.eu>

European Central Bank. (2023). *Economic bulletin, Issue 1/2023: External environment and risks to the euro area*. <https://www.ecb.europa.eu>

European Commission. (2016). *EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016*. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-türkiye-statement/>

European Commission. (2018). *EU response to US steel and aluminum tariffs*. <https://ec.europa.eu>

European Commission. (2020). *EU support for refugees in Türkiye*. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/migration

European Commission. (2022a). *Facility for refugees in Türkiye: Key results and future funding*. <https://ec.europa.eu>

European Commission. (2022b). *Seventh report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Türkiye Statement*. <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu>

European Commission. (2022c). *Türkiye–EU cooperation on integrated border management*. <https://ec.europa.eu>

European Commission. (2023b). *EU humanitarian aid in the Middle East*. <https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east>

European Commission. (2023c). *EU integrated border management and the role of EUROSUR*. <https://ec.europa.eu>

European Commission. (2024a). *2024 report on Türkiye*. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/2024-report-turkiye_en

European Commission. (2024b). *Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI)*. <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/border-management>

European Commission. (2024c). *Commission implementing decision of 17.12.2024 on the financing of the individual measure in favour of migration and border management support in Türkiye for 2024*. <https://ec.europa.eu>

European Commission. (2024d). *The EU pact on migration and asylum*. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/eu-pact-migration-and-asylum_en

European Commission. (2025a). *EU support for Syria's reconstruction*. https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/syria-reconstruction_en

European Commission. (2025b). *Migration management: Welcoming refugees from Ukraine*. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/migration-management-welcoming-refugees-ukraine_en

European Court of Auditors. (2024). *Rights concerns, costs undermine Türkiye-EU migrant deal, say auditors*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/rights-concerns-costs-undermine-Türkiye-eu-migrant-deal-say-auditors-2024-04-23/>

European External Action Service. (2023). *EU supports stronger border management in Türkiye*. <https://www.eeas.europa.eu>

European External Action Service. (2025a). *Eastern Mediterranean: Towards cooperative solutions*. <https://www.eeas.europa.eu>

European External Action Service. (2025b). *EU-Iran relations: Navigating regional stability*. <https://eeas.europa.eu>

European External Action Service. (2025c). *Israel-Palestine: EU position on two-state solution*. https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/israel-palestine_en

- European Parliament. (2024a). *Modernizing the EU-Türkiye customs union*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2024\)753123](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2024)753123)
- European Parliament. (2024b). *Türkiye-EU relations in a changing geopolitical context: Policy brief*. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu>
- European Parliamentary Research Service. (2024). *EU enlargement policy post-Brexit*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/753124/EPRS_BRI\(2024\)753124_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/753124/EPRS_BRI(2024)753124_EN.pdf)
- European Union Agency for Asylum. (2024). *Annual report on asylum in the EU 2024*. <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/annual-report-asylum-2024>
- EU-LISA. (2023). *SIS II statistics – Annual report*. <https://www.eulisa.europa.eu>
- EU-LISA. (2024). *EES and ETIAS implementation report 2024*. <https://www.eulisa.europa.eu/publications/ees-etias-report-2024>
- Europol. (2024). *European migrant smuggling centre: Annual report 2024*. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/publications/2024-emsc-annual-report>
- Evenett, S. J., & Fritz, J. (2021). *The 28th Global Trade Alert Report: Export prohibitions and restrictions in the COVID-19 era*. Global Trade Alert. <https://www.globaltradealert.org/reports>
- Food and Agriculture Organization. (2023). *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2023*. <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2023/en/>
- Frontex. (2021). *Frontex: 15 years of border security*. <https://frontex.europa.eu>
- Frontex. (2023). *Frontex annual report 2022*. <https://frontex.europa.eu>
- Frontex. (2024a). *Annual risk analysis 2024*. <https://frontex.europa.eu>
- Frontex. (2024b). *Migratory situation 2024: Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes*. https://frontex.europa.eu/publications/migratory-situation-2024_en
- Gerani, S. (2023, July 18). *Türkiye's role in the EU's migration crisis*. The Loop: ECPR. <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/Türkiyes-role-in-the-eus-migration-crisis/>
- Haas, E. B. (1958). *The uniting of Europe: Political, social, and economic forces 1950–1957*. Stanford University Press.

Heinrich Böll Stiftung. (2024). *Populism and migration in the EU: 2024 election analysis*. <https://eu.boell.org/en/2024-election-analysis-populism-migration>

Human Rights Watch. (2024). *Türkiye: Pushbacks and rights violations at borders*. <https://www.hrw.org>

Huysmans, J. (2006). *The politics of insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU*. Routledge.

İçduygu, A. (2010). International migration and human development in Türkiye. *Human Development Research Paper Series, 2010/52*, UNDP.

International Centre for Migration Policy Development. (2024). *Strengthening border management in Türkiye: SYNCRON project report*. <https://www.icmpd.org/publications/syncron-project-report-2024>

International Crisis Group. (2020). *Managing Türkiye's border with Syria: Ensuring security and humanitarian access*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org>

International Crisis Group. (2024). *Türkiye's balancing act: Mediation, migration, and strategic autonomy*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org>

International Organization for Migration. (2023). *The future of migration to Europe*. <https://www.iom.int>

Jones, S., & Dempsey, J. (2024). *Europe without America: Strategic autonomy and the new security order*. Carnegie Europe.

Keohane, R. O. (1984). *After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world political economy*. Princeton University Press.

Kirişçi, K. (2004). Reconciling refugee protection with efforts to combat irregular migration: The case of Turkey and the European Union. *Global Migration Perspectives, 11*, 1–14.

Kirişçi, K. (2007). Türkiye: A country of transition from emigration to immigration. *Mediterranean Politics, 12*(1), 91–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629390601095510>

Kirişçi, K. (2019). *Türkiye and the West: Fault lines in a troubled alliance*. Brookings Institution Press.

Le Monde. (2024, April 25). *EU-Türkiye migration deal: Four million refugees, €9 billion in aid and a mixed record*. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/04/25/eu->

Türkiye-migration-deal-four-million-refugees-9-billion-in-aid-and-a-mixed-record_6669474_4.html

Lindberg, L. N. (1963). *The political dynamics of European economic integration*. Stanford University Press.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Mezzadra, S., & Neilson, B. (2013). *Border as method, or, the multiplication of labor*. Duke University Press.

Ministry of Interior. (2016). *Regulation on interagency coordination in the field of border management*. Republic of Türkiye.

O'Brien, M., & Bringezu, S. (2022). Carbon border adjustment mechanisms and industrial competitiveness: A review. *Climate Policy*, 22(1), 56–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2021.1990459>

Özer, M. A. (2018). The Europeanization and securitization of the EU's migration and asylum policies: The case of the EU-Turkey statement. *Journal of European Integration*, 40(6), 721–736. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2018.1500568>

Presidency of Migration Management. (2023a). *Annual performance and strategy document 2023–2024*. Republic of Türkiye.

Presidency of Migration Management. (2023b). *Strategic vision and activity report*. Republic of Türkiye.

Republic of Türkiye Directorate General of Migration Management. (2024). *Migration management in Türkiye: 2023 report*. <https://www.goc.gov.tr>

Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2024). *Türkiye's response to EU human rights criticisms*. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr>

Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Health. (2020). *COVID-19 response for refugees and migrants*. <https://www.saglik.gov.tr>

Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior. (2024). *Border security and counter-smuggling efforts*. <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr>

Reuters. (2025a). *Trump's second term: Implications for global trade*. <https://www.reuters.com>

- Reuters. (2025b, January 15). *Trump's tariff threats and their impact on Türkiye*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/trump-tariff-threats-Türkiye-2025>
- Rumford, C. (2006). Theorizing borders. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9(2), 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006063345>
- Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. (2024). *Türkiye's economic realignment: Gulf and China partnerships*. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/Türkiye-economic-realignment-2024>
- Triandafyllidou, A. (2018). A “refugee crisis” unfolding: “Real” events and their interpretation in media and political debates. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 16(1-2), 198–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1309089>
- TRT Global. (2025). *Hope amid hardship: Can Syria's fragile transition bring lasting peace?* <https://trt.global>
- TRT World. (2025a). *Türkiye's mediation in Syria: A new regional role*. <https://www.trtworld.com>
- TRT World. (2025b, January 10). *Türkiye's mediation in post-Assad Syria*. <https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/turkiye-mediation-syria-2025>
- Tziarras, Z. (2021). Türkiye's assertive foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 23(4), 567–584. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2021.1899012>
- U.S. Department of State. (2020). *CAATSA Section 231 imposition of sanctions on Turkish Ministry of Defense*. <https://2017-2021.state.gov>
- UNICEF. (2024). *Education for migrant children in Türkiye: 2023 report*. <https://www.unicef.org>
- United Nations. (2023a). *Climate change 2023: Synthesis report*. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/reports>
- United Nations. (2023b). *Global report on terrorism and migration*. <https://www.un.org/en/counter-terrorism>
- United Nations. (2023c). *Climate change and displacement: Global trends to 2050*. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/reports/displacement-2050>

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2021). *Mediterranean situation*. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023a). *Global trends in forced displacement 2023*. <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2023>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023b). *Syria regional refugee response*. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023c). *Ukraine refugee situation*. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2025). *Türkiye refugee statistics 2025*. <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/turkiye-refugee-statistics-2025>
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2024). *Israel-Palestine conflict: Humanitarian impact update 2024*. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-impact-update-2024>
- UN-Water. (2023). *World water development report 2023: Partnerships and cooperation for water*. <https://www.unwater.org>
- Wæver, O. (2015). The securitization of migration: A study of security and politics. In A. Triandafyllidou (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of immigration and refugee studies* (pp. 77–85). Routledge.
- Wæver, O., Buzan, B., Kelstrup, M., & Lemaitre, P. (1993). *Identity, migration and the new security agenda in Europe*. Pinter Publishers.
- Walt, S. M. (1998). The balance of threat. In M. E. Brown, O. R. Côté Jr., S. M. Lynn-Jones, & S. E. Miller (Eds.), *Theories of war and peace* (pp. 171–201). MIT Press.
- Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. McGraw-Hill.
- World Bank. (2021). *Türkiye economic monitor*. <https://www.worldbank.org>
- World Bank. (2023). *Türkiye economic outlook*. <https://www.worldbank.org>
- World Bank. (2025). *Türkiye economic monitor 2025*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/Türkiye/publication/Türkiye-economic-monitor-2025>

Yeşiltaş, M. (2025). *Türkiye's foreign policy in a multipolar world*. SETA Foundation.
<https://www.setav.org/en/publications/Türkiyes-foreign-policy-2025>



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BMVI	Border Management and Visa Instrument
CAATSA	Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CBS	Critical Border Studies
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management
ECB	European Central Bank
EES	Entry/Exit System
ETIAS	European Travel Information and Authorization System
EU	European Union
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU-LISA	European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
IBM	Integrated Border Management
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PMM	Presidency of Migration Management
SETA	Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
SGC	Southern Gas Corridor
SIS	Schengen Information System
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
TANAP	Trans-Anatolian Pipeline
TAP	Trans Adriatic Pipeline
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UN-Water	United Nations Water

