

The New German Coalition and Its Impact on EU-Turkey Relations

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ABSTRACT *Turkish-German relations not only have a long tradition of close cooperation but are also based on mutual dependence. A structure that has become increasingly complex and intertwined over time shapes the dynamics of Turkish-German relations through numerous historical, economic, cultural, and social factors. As a result, the scale of the bilateral relationship has occasionally caused frustration and disappointment due to various political differences on both sides. The growing European dimension of bilateral relations has further complicated relations and is increasingly dominating the agenda. Since the turn of the millennium, Turkish-German relations can be described as a roller coaster ride. There have been many ups and downs, conflicts, and collaborations. In the past, the formation of a new government in Germany with a new Federal Chancellor (Gerhard Schröder, Angela Merkel) had a decisive influence on the course of the roller coaster ride. It is therefore necessary to analyze the possible effects of the new federal government under Chancellor Olaf Scholz on bilateral relations with a concentrated focus on European politics.*

Keywords: Turkey, Germany, Bilateral Relations, NATO, European Union

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New German Government's 'Assertive' Foreign and Security Policy Agenda

With the formation of the 'traffic light' coalition between the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Alliance 90/The Greens, and Free Democratic Party (FDP) as a result of the national elections of September 26, 2021, the Chancellor candidate of SPD, Olaf Scholz, became Germany's ninth post-war Chancellor. Moreover, the first three-party coalition in German history marked the beginning of the post-Merkel era. The shift from a two to a three-party coalition in Germany reflects the same erosion of the established large *Volksparteien* already seen in many other European countries.

In fact, German foreign and security policy is under new management after sixteen years under Angela Merkel. With reference to the coalition agreement, there is no reason to expect radical departures from Germany's existing foreign policy orientation, however, the new coalition government will still bring in different perspectives on Germany's international role.

According to the coalition agreement (the playbook of the government) with reference to foreign policy, all three parties are committed to deepening European integration with the ultimate vision of the establishment of a federalized 'United States of Europe' as the sole facilitator of an endogenous European 'strategic autonomy,' capable of collectively safeguarding Euro-

pean interests in the near future. The implementation of such an ambitious vision seems to be less realistic than intended. It may address and please the expectations of some EU member states calling for German leadership in times of challenges within the EU (geopolitical tensions, financial, and migration crisis).¹

It is assumed that Germany will not deviate from its multilateral approach tradition in foreign policy by actively pushing for a common European approach to the major geopolitical challenges instead of engaging in exclusive unilateral initiatives. From the U.S. perspective, the critical question will be whether the strategic sovereignty of the EU will be complementary to NATO, as the German government is in favor of, or will it duplicate NATO in Europe as the French government's intentions seem to be. The U.S. administration will definitely oppose French-style autonomy. Nevertheless, in line with the historically cemented paradigm of German foreign policy, Scholz will push back against any tendencies to frame a more 'sovereign' Europe as standing apart, or even against the U.S. A more united Europe would have to unquestionably remain an integral part of the U.S.-led Western alliance. A dispute between France and the EU can be seen on the horizon.

Crucial negotiations will take place in Brussels over the next year and a half, including over the reform of fiscal rules (officially the Stability and Growth Pact), the long-term viability of EU's €750 billion recovery fund,

and the huge investments needed to decarbonize and digitize the entire economy. All of this offers Olaf Scholz a rare opportunity to set EU's long-term agenda alongside like-minded European leaders, at least on paper. However, Scholz will also encounter fierce resistance should a disciplined fiscal policy à la Merkel anger the heavily indebted southern member states in particular.

A Value-Oriented Foreign Policy versus Realpolitik?

During the election campaign, the Green candidate for chancellor, Annalena Baerbock, underscored her political stance that the guiding principles of foreign policy in the next federal government will consist of a value-oriented policy with a focus on human rights and democratic standards, combined with the international dimension of climate policy. The crucial question is whether Baerbock can reconcile her values-based foreign policy with Germany's significant economic and trade interests. It will be a difficult balancing act, if not impossible. What appears to be a clear commitment by all three parties in the traffic light coalition to work harder for a value-based foreign policy will reach its limits with Russia and China. Chancellor Scholz's statement on bilateral relations with Russia and China confirms the limits of values-based politics and opens a wide window to Realpolitik.

On Russia, Scholz said that the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which is pas-

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sionately opposed by Baerbock as a geostrategic weapon of Russia against Germany and the EU, is not a political project, but a private one and that it would be up to the authorities to approve it or not.²

With regard to China, Scholz assured the Chinese leadership as early as mid-October 2021 that Germany's attitude towards China would not change significantly. Scholz put the German economic interests ahead of values.³ The crucial question is whether Scholz, like his predecessor Merkel, is pushing for a more independent European policy towards Beijing instead of supporting the more combative U.S. strategy. Another question is whether Scholz will avoid policies that would isolate China? In any case, Scholz's first steps towards Russia and China are a slap in the face to the Greens and the FDP, who had to force a passage into the coalition agreement that expressly mentions China's human rights violations in Hong Kong.⁴

Schröder's capitulation to Greece has contributed to the fact that relations between Turkey and the EU have continued to deteriorate to this day

Even within the EU, the federal government will not be able to consistently challenge Poland and Hungary for violating 'European values.' Otherwise, both countries have instruments of retaliation in other areas of European politics.

The new government's crusade for 'Western values,' led by Foreign Minister Baerbock and driven primarily by the Greens, will be overtaken by reality when Germany remains silent on France's brutal and disastrous Africa policy, which systematically violates human rights and international law. Germany will not dare call France what it is: a country that operates as a rogue state in Rwanda, Mali, and other former French colonies in Africa, by labeling it as common European foreign and security policy under the 2007 Lisbon Treaty. Even though the new German government will not continue to support France in Mali with a military contingent.

There is a German saying: *Papier ist geduldig* (paper is patient, means lack of implementation concerning the coalition agreement). It seems that the essential content of the coalition

agreement won't be followed extensively, but only partially with the exclusion of stringent implementation of normative values for all countries Germany maintains diplomatic relations.

German Foreign Policy: Who Is in Charge? Chef or Waiter?

Right at the beginning of the new government, the SPD and the Greens got into a dispute over who should direct German foreign policy. Rolf Mützenich, the powerful chair of the SPD parliamentary group in the Bundestag, triggered the dispute by saying that foreign policy is mainly controlled in the chancellery. Omid Nouripour, designated co-chair of the Greens, immediately responded with a tit-for-tat response. He warned his coalition partner, the SPD, that such a cut in the foreign ministry was traditional Koch-Kellner logic. It was former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder who described the decision-making process in the red-green government from 1998-2005 in terms of Koch-Kellner logic. Schröder was Chancellor and Joschka Fischer was Foreign Minister. Scholz could at least temporarily stop the escalation by declaring that the government is working together for the country and will also act together on foreign or European policy issues. Despite the de-escalation, Baerbock has been warned and seems determined to push through her political agenda.

The fact is that Scholz as Chancellor determines and is responsible for the

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general guidelines of government policy according to Article 65 of the German Basic Law, including foreign policy matters. This power to determine policy guidelines (*Richtlinienkompetenz des Bundeskanzler*) includes setting the framework for government action that the individual Federal Ministers then flesh out with content. Further foreign policy disputes, therefore, seem inevitable.

Turkish-German-European Trilateral Roller Coaster Ride

For understandable reasons, the diverse Turkish-German bilateral relations have increasingly been dominated by the European dimension over the past three decades. ‘Candidate for accession,’ ‘Customs Union,’ ‘start of accession talks,’ ‘privileged partnership’ or ‘migration deal’ are

prominent keywords underlining the European dimension of the bilateral ties. The process of integrating the EU into a complex supranational organization takes its toll on the transfer of national competencies from the member states to Brussels. Every third country in bilateral relations with EU member states has the EU as a partner on the other side of the table. The Turkish-German relations are no exception, even if the bilateral relations can be described as strategically relevant. It, therefore, makes sense to assess bilateral relations in the context of the European dimension.

Undoubtedly, Turkey’s EU accession process is a critical factor in Turkish-German bilateral relations. As an economic power, Germany is a key player in shaping EU policy towards Turkey. Since the formalization of the institutional framework of EU-Tur-

From L to R: Lindner of the German Free Democrats (FDP), Scholz of the German Social Democrats (SPD), Baerbock and Habeck of the Greens Party and Walter-Borjan and Esken of the SPD, present their mutually-agreed on coalition contract to the media on November 24, 2021, in Berlin, Germany.

ABDÜLHAMID HOŞBAŞ / AA

Immediately after taking office, the new Federal Chancellor, Scholz, promised the continuity of Merkel's policy, stating that he would stick to Merkel's 'Northeast German mentality' and that 'not much will change on this front'

key relations with the Ankara Agreement of 1963, almost all German governments, starting with Chancellor Adenauer, have supported deepening cooperation with Turkey at the European level with the credo: A partner, the one should keep close and not isolated. The strategy was/is to keep Turkey on a lower level than full EU membership, although the Ankara Agreement foresees EU membership at the end of the rapprochement process. It was former Chancellor Helmut Kohl who pushed through the Turkey-EU Customs Union (CU) at the EU level in 1995, through which Turkey achieved closer institutional ties below the accession negotiations with the EU.

His successor, former chancellor Gerhard Schröder, emphatically helped bring about EU's decision to start accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005. This event is the most significant step forward in Turkey's EU relations to date. As is well known, Turkish-German relations flourished

under the Schröder government. And yet it was the Schröder government that in 2004 agreed to the EU membership of the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus (GASC) due to the blackmail of Greece who had threatened to veto the eastward enlargement of the EU if the GASC did not become part of the enlargement package. In the end, it was a victory for Greece. Schröder's capitulation to Greece has contributed to the fact that relations between Turkey and the EU have continued to deteriorate to this day.

When Angela Merkel became Chancellor in 2005, she favored in concert with the former French President Sarkozy an alternative model of cooperation, the so-called privileged partnership instead of a full EU membership for Turkey. As expected, Erdoğan as Prime Minister strictly turned down an offer that would have meant a demotion for Turkey. Although Merkel was not able to assert herself with her alternative offer, she was able to weaken the dynamic of the EU accession process. In the following years, Merkel supported the accession negotiations according to the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* with the reservation that negotiations are open-ended but are being led fairly. On the other hand, as a tactical move, Merkel never interfered when usual suspect EU member states blocked the accession process by vetoing the opening of chapters for political reasons.

The years that followed in the trilateral relationship between Turkey, Germany, and the EU were marked

by frustration, disappointment, and mutual verbal attacks. Here are some specific examples of contentious issues: Armenian resolution in the German Parliament in 2016, German and European insensitive handling of the failed July 15, 2016 coup d'état in Turkey, lack of cooperation for the extradition of suspected terrorists (PKK, FETÖ) to Turkey, conflict over AK Party political rallies in Germany in the run-up to the Turkish constitutional referendum in 2017 and the presidential elections in 2018, the permanent anti-Turkey initiatives of Greece and GASC, one-sided critics regarding democratic standards in Turkey, disagreement in regional conflicts (Syria, Libya), Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

Turkey-EU migration pact in 2016, orchestrated by Merkel on behalf of the EU, demonstrated Turkey's crucial geostrategic key role in dealing with the EU's existential crisis arising from the influx of irregular migrants to Europe. In return, the EU's commitments to grant Turkish citizens visa-free travel and to start negotiations with Ankara on updating the EU-Turkey CU remain unfulfilled. With the migration pact, a very active channel of communication between Merkel and Erdoğan henceforth led to consultations on regional crises (Libya, Syria). Merkel's mediating role during the Eastern Mediterranean crisis as an honest mediator with a conciliatory approach underlines the intense Berlin-Ankara consultation channel.

As an interim conclusion, it can be stated that German-Turkish relations

in the era of the Schröder government began with a spirit of optimism and a positive agenda, which culminated in the decision to start Turkey's EU accession negotiations. Federal Chancellor Schröder made a decisive effort to achieve this at the European level. However, the cordial relationship between Erdoğan and Schröder was clouded by the disagreement over EU membership in the GASC. With this, a line of conflict that is still acute and burdensome to this day was included in Turkey-EU relations. Nevertheless, the personal friendship between Erdoğan and Schröder has remained to this day.

With Merkel, it was the other way around. Her decision to oppose Turkey's EU membership was not motivated by ideology. In the early stages of her chancellery, she had no power base within the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), and at that time, the vast majority of CDU politicians were against Turkey's EU membership. That is why she accepted a dispute with Turkey in order to not endanger her position of power within the CDU. As described above, it took around 10 years to build up comprehensive, trusting cooperation between Erdoğan and Merkel. The turning point was the Turkey-EU migration pact in 2016.

Immediately after taking office, the new Federal Chancellor, Scholz, promised the continuity of Merkel's policy, stating that he would stick to Merkel's 'Northeast German mentality' and that 'not much will change on this front.' During the election

campaign, Scholz even posed with his hands folded in a rhombus – a characteristic pose of Merkel.⁵ But beyond the election campaign, the proof in office has yet to be provided. Still, his initial reserved and reactive political style resembles Merkel. As Chancellor, will he flatter the mood in politics and the public in times of challenges and conflicts like Merkel? Will he successfully lead Germany onto the international stage, which is undergoing systemic change due to the crisis of the ‘old-fashioned’ rule-based world order? This state of affairs requires a new type of political leadership from Scholz and an end to Germany’s long tradition of invoking historical reasons to simply focus on exports and avoid thorny political and military disputes around the world. And that is a coalition in which the coalition partners do not quite agree on critical issues. Relations with Turkey will most likely be one of these policy areas.

From the Election Manifesto to the Coalition Agreement: A Sharp Shift in Bilateral Relations with Turkey?

The election manifestos of political parties are an important indicator for analyzing the political views of political actors. The coalition parties’ election manifesto mentions Turkey on several issues, including Turkey-EU relations, irregular migration, and security policy. A closer look at the election manifesto of all three coalition parties and the resulting coalition agreement gives the impression

that the new German government intends to change the course of bilateral relations with Turkey, especially in the area of the European dimension of bilateral relations. Is this to be understood as a break in the continuity of the German position, which has so far stuck to accession negotiations, albeit with an open outcome?

The election manifesto of the SPD has only one passage with only three sentences referring to Turkey. In summary, the SPD is concerned about the domestic and foreign policy of the Turkish government, calls for respect for the rule of law, democracy, and international law, and according to the SPD, the forum to address all these issues is the EU, not exclusively the bilateral platform. There is no reference to Turkey’s EU accession process. Whereas the 2017 SPD election program was critical of Turkey but committed to the accession process.

The Greens election manifesto includes an extensive reference to Turkey by touching on the importance of common points between Turkey, Germany, and Europe with a conciliatory tone, switching abruptly to a harsh tone by denouncing the violation of human rights and the rule of law and demanding a return to political dialogue and the peace process in the Kurdish question. Regarding Turkey-EU relations the Greens conditional offer is the resumption of EU accession talks provided that Turkey makes a turnaround back to democracy and the rule of law. Greens also demand the termination of the EU-Turkey deal on irregular

migration with the argument that it undermines the international law on asylum.

The FDP remains true to its line in its election manifesto. The major demand, as it did in, 2017 is to terminate the EU accession negotiations with Turkey in their prior format. FDP offers a relationship on a new basis of close cooperation in the economic and especially security field by stating that Turkey is a very important, ‘indispensable’ partner in NATO. With the rude addition, “a Turkey ruled in an authoritarian fashion by President Erdoğan” cannot, in the eyes of the Free Democrats, be a candidate for membership.⁶ However, FDP leaves the door open for the resumption of EU accession talks by stating that there will be a Turkey after President Erdoğan. Apparently, the FDP is pursuing a regime-change policy for Turkey.

Now, coming to the coalition agreement, the relevant passage on Turkey policy reads as follows:

For us, Turkey remains an important neighbor of the EU and a partner in NATO, despite worrying domestic developments and external tensions. A large number of people with biographical roots in Turkey creates a special closeness between our countries and is of course part of German society.” [...] “Democracy, the rule of law and human, women and minority rights in Turkey have been massively dismantled. We will therefore not close any chapters in the accession negotiations and will not open any

The position of the new German government most likely reflects the now widespread narrative in Brussels that envisages a strategic partnership with Turkey below full membership

new ones. We will breathe life into the EU-Turkey dialogue agenda and expand exchanges with civil society and youth exchange programs.⁷

The statement about Turkey can be interpreted as follows:

- Turkey is a strategically important security partner;
- The state of human rights and the rule of law in Turkey is worryingly bad;
- The Turkish diaspora in Germany is part of Germany;
- Germany will directly and/or via the EU financially support civil society groups actively opposing the Turkish government;
- The standstill in the Turkey EU accession talks will continue.

All three parties have tried to push through as many of their policies as possible into the coalition agreement and in the end, the outcome is a compromise on the lowest common denominator. A coalition agreement has far more political weight than the election manifesto of a political party due to the binding manner of the pol-



Foreign Minister of Turkey, Çavuşoğlu (L) and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Borrell (R) hold a joint press conference. Brussels, Belgium, January 21, 2021. DURSUN AYDEMİR / AA

icies they intend to implement in the coming legislature.

According to the coalition agreement, the new German government is making Turkey an offer of cooperation on the Turkey-EU track. This is a conditional offer based on a disproportionately harsh assessment of political developments in Turkey, which the Turkish government does not share. The position of the new German government most likely reflects the now widespread narrative in Brussels that envisages a strategic partnership with Turkey below full membership.

Areas of Cooperation and Lines of Conflict

While Turkey's EU membership is not on the table for the foreseeable future, the need for close coopera-

tion and dialogue between the EU and Turkey is also apparent in areas such as security and defense, migration, economy, and climate. It is not very likely that the German government led by the SPD will make itself as strong at the EU level for Turkey as the former SPD-led federal government under Chancellor Schröder. Nonetheless, both the EU and Turkey are doomed to cooperate for the benefit of mutual interests.

Security and Defense

Until the accession of the GASC to the EU, Turkey, as a non-EU-NATO member, participated in EU missions using NATO infrastructure. Turkey's contributions to nine EU-led missions and operations with troops and personnel were crucial, making it the largest contributor after France, Germany, and the UK. GASC used its right of veto to exclude Turkey from

cooperation in the EU's security and defense structure. With the establishment of the Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO) in 2017, which potentially offers also non-EU countries to integrate further in defense there is a window of opportunity to revive the Turkey-EU cooperation in security and defense. Turkey officially requested to be involved in PESCO as well as the European Defense Fund (EDF). The inclusion of Turkey in PESCO and EDF is not an end in itself but promotes the deepening of security and defense cooperation between NATO and EU as well as in crisis regions, some of which are geographically close to the EU. To name a few specific trouble spots: the Black Sea region, Syria, Afghanistan, and Libya. No one will question the statement that the European Union needs Turkey on security and defense issues and vice versa.

Migration

When the collapse of the state order in Syria due to a civil war led to the refugee crisis in 2015 with mass flows of refugees to Europe, especially to Germany, former Chancellor Angela Merkel called it the biggest challenge she has seen in European affairs in her time as Chancellor. In 2015, almost 1 million refugees arrived in Europe, particularly in Germany. Leaders across Europe perceived it as a crisis of epic proportions. Public pressure and the rise of far-right extremist political movements pushed the EU to enter into a landmark agreement with Turkey in 2016, the migration pact. The agreement was intended to limit the influx of irregu-

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lar migrants entering the EU through Turkey. The implementation has led to a lower number of arrivals on the European mainland in the following years and has thereby proven its worth. The crisis in Afghanistan has fueled the danger of further migrant flows in the public European debate and thus overshadowed the discussion about the extension of the refugee agreement with Turkey. Turkey has vehemently opposed further acceptance of Afghan refugees into the country. There is political will in Europe and Turkey to renew the migration pact in a way that takes into account all the critical aspects that contained shortcomings in the first agreement. From the financial factors (amount and mechanism of payment) to ensuring compliance with international agreements (UN Refugee Convention, asylum law). In this way, a rule-based new agreement can be achieved.

Turkey-EU Customs Union

For 26 years, the CU has been a cornerstone of EU-Turkey trade relations, particularly in the post-pandemic period when Turkey stands as

Turkey will continue to pursue a positive European agenda while also taking account of its national interests

a prime location for new supply chain investments and at the forefront of potential hub locations. The existing CU is outdated, particularly given the numerous new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that the EU has concluded or is negotiating with other major economic partners. The CU, therefore, has enormous shortcomings that have become increasingly evident in recent years. Consequently, Turkey is calling for the modernization of the CU, arguing that a revised CU would accelerate Turkey's further adjustment to the EU economy and thus increase the momentum of the country's accession process. The failure to modernize the CU is already a step backward in EU-Turkey relations; its suspension would be economically damaging to both parties. Therefore, with the modernization of the CU, the correction of the contractual weaknesses of the CU could be an important positive impetus for the medium-term improvement of bilateral economic relations between the EU and Turkey.

Core elements of the modernization of the CU are as follows:

- Including trade in services and trade in agricultural and fishery goods;

- Deregulation of the road freight transport of goods;
- Revision of the existing dispute settlement mechanism;
- Abolition of travel restrictions (visa requirements) for Turkish business people;
- Common rules for public procurement – access to public procurement by tender on both sides;
- Solving the asymmetry problem due to new FTAs between the EU and third parties to include Turkey in these FTAs.

Without the modernization of the CU to achieve the above-mentioned improvements, economic relations between Turkey and the EU will be hampered by regulatory hurdles. In the midst of the pandemic crisis, the EU is trying to strengthen its resilience by achieving strategic autonomy in its trade and foreign policies. Turkey, with its business community already well integrated into the EU, can undoubtedly make an enormous contribution to building Europe's resilience and the struggle for strategic autonomy by modifying the CU. As in the field of security and defense, the initiative to modernize the CU stands and falls with the improvement of the political climate in Turkey-EU relations.

Green Deal: Fighting Climate Change

The Green Deal, a set of EU policy initiatives to make Europe climate neutral by 2050, can create trusting cooperation between the EU and Turkey to work towards the same goals by aligning Turkey with the Green Deal. Moreover, it is even im-

perative that both sides cooperate; because the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is a crucial component of the Green Deal and will affect trade between Turkey and the EU in one way or another.

The CBAM system will work as follows: EU importers will buy carbon certificates corresponding to the carbon price that would have been paid, had the goods been produced under the EU's carbon pricing rules. Conversely, once a non-EU producer – a company in Turkey exporting goods into the EU for example – can show that they have already paid a price for the carbon used in the production of the imported goods in a third country, the corresponding cost can be fully deducted for the EU importer. The CBAM will help reduce the risk of carbon leakage by encouraging producers in non-EU countries to green their production processes.

According to the decision of the EU Commission, the Green Deal will be extended to Turkey and will be an essential part of the high-level dialogue between the parties in the coming months and years. Turkey is already working on setting up its own emissions trading system, which will result in CO₂ having a price. This process should sensibly be accompanied by intensive involvement of Turkey in EU programs and participation in consultation and coordination.

Such a move could help ease prevailing political tensions and move towards more collaborative, inclusive, and rules-based frameworks. The

new German government, which has dubbed itself a climate government, will provide strong and sustained support for institutional cooperation between Turkey and the EU.

Conclusion

This commentary attempted to compare the course of the Turkish-German bilateral path since the turn of the millennium with a symbolic roller coaster ride to explain the ups and downs in the area of foreign and security policy. Based on this the commentary assesses future bilateral relations with the new German government. For this, I have thrown the election programs and the resulting coalition agreement into the balance.

It has emerged that bilateral relations are dominated by European policy issues. Not only because Turkey is in the process of accession negotiations with the EU even if the negotiations have currently been stopped due to the deterioration in Turkey-EU relations, but also because the new German government will align its foreign and security policy more closely with the EU, with the vision of an autonomous EU, which has so far been very vaguely conceived, as a global player in times of crisis in the rule-based world order.

It can be assumed that the new federal government will take a much more critical stance towards Turkey, at least rhetorically, which is to be supported by so-called value-based principles. The critical question in this context is

whether the previous interest-based foreign policy must give way to value orientation. Regarding relations with Russia and China, I have proposed that national interests will continue to be the guiding principles of the new German government. Apart from the statements about Turkey in the coalition agreement, which sound disproportionately critical and sometimes one-sided, the new German government currently has no concrete position on its Turkey policy.

It can be expected that in the coming months and years the agenda in bilateral relations will mainly be dominated by European issues. Turkey will continue to pursue a positive European agenda while also taking account of its national interests. This will result in opportunities for cooperation, such as modernizing the CU and combating climate change. As long as Turkey-EU relations are navigating calm waters, the new federal government will support Turkey in particular in combating climate change. In the event of possible tension in the Eastern Mediterranean, the new German government will have a similar, albeit less confrontational stance, like France. Moreover, Chancellor Scholz is not expected to

play a mediating role in a possible crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean, unlike his predecessor Merkel. ■

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