

Türkiye-EU and the Cyprus Problem

Does Türkiye need the EU or does the EU need Türkiye more?

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Despite all the initiatives and pressures of the Greeks and Greek Cypriots, the European Union (EU) avoided addressing EU-Türkiye relations at the December and March summits. At the April Special Summit of EU Heads of State and Government held in Brussels on 17-18 April, the issue was reluctantly discussed within the scope of "strategic discussion" due to the pressure from Greece and Greek Cypriots.

While EU state and government leaders decided to initiate the necessary work to improve relations with Ankara, they added the following sentence:

"Negotiations should be restarted for the solution of the Cyprus problem, which has been expressed for 50 years, within the framework of the United Nations (UN) parameters."

However, whether this sentence is in the final declaration of the April summit or not, nothing changes.

When the negotiations, which the Greeks and Greek Cypriots had neglected and stretched as much as possible in order not to make the Turkish Cypriots partners in the newly established state, collapsed due to their maximalist demands, suddenly these UN Parameters, which they had never paid attention to, became valuable. They are trying to add this recommendation to the queue of statements made after every meeting in the Atlantic alliance, even though it has been talked about for the last fifty years and has not been implemented.

It is debatable whether the EU's recommendations, decisions and other statements are

valid. If these UN parameters were valid, they would have been implemented by the Greeks and Greek Cypriots long ago and the Cyprus issue would have been resolved. After doing their best to make the island of Cyprus Greek territory and reduce the Turkish Cypriots to a second-class minority, they saw that Türkiye was in a position where pressure could not be exerted in the region. The promise of EU membership will not work; Then it was necessary to highlight the UN parameters that they had avoided implementing for 50 years.

Let's come to the section on Türkiye in the final declaration of the April summit of EU heads of state and government. The confusing joint declaration, which also touches on EU-Türkiye relations, was prepared by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and the EU Commission.

In the section regarding the recommendations in the Joint Declaration, there is no concrete decision, no financial restrictions, no implementation, no embargo, no trade restrictions, no economic sanctions. Apparently, the EU did not dare to put pressure on Türkiye and confront it, and they added a recommendation of "questionable validity" to the final declaration, saying let's do something to shut the mouths of the Greeks and Greek Cypriots.

Although Greek leader Hristodulidis tried to make his people believe this paragraph about EU-Türkiye relations in the final declaration with a sentence containing words such as "I linked EU-Türkiye relations to the Cyprus issue and we won victory", the truth is not like that.

In the declaration, which I have read at least ten times in a row, in addition to the recommendation for the solution of the Cyprus problem within the framework of the UN parameters, which has been voiced for 50 years, it clearly states that "the European Union is committed to a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Türkiye." It has a strategic interest in its development. "Türkiye's constructive participation will help develop the various areas of cooperation identified in the joint declaration."

Apparently, the balance of interests has shifted in favor of Türkiye as we enter the second quarter of the 21st century. The answer to the question "Which side's desire will be more dominant in the solution of the Cyprus problem?" seems to be given more clearly in the coming years!

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