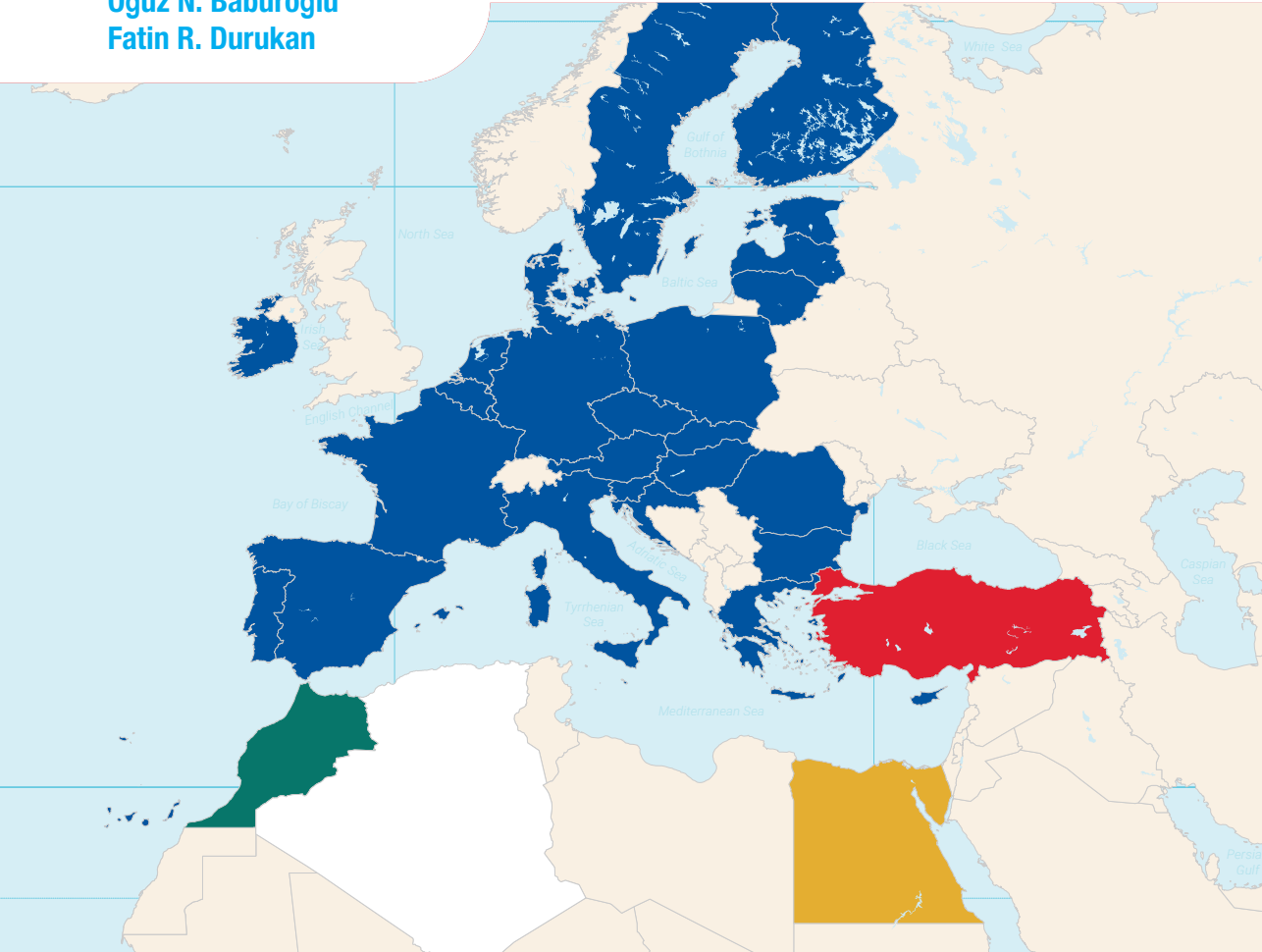


# A new formula for collaboration: Turkey, the EU & North Africa

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Sabancı & Clingendael Report



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# Abbreviations

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement
AfDB	African Development Bank
Africa CDC	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
AU	African Union
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BDI	Voice of German Industry
CEIF	Clean Energy Industrial Forum
CEOE	Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations
CGEA	General Confederation of Algerian Enterprises
CGEM	General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises
CIDOB	Barcelona Centre for International Affairs
CONFINDUSTRIA	General Confederation of Italian Industry
COPA and COGECA	United Voice of Farmers and Agri-cooperatives in the EU
CSP	Concentrated Solar Power
DEİK	Foreign Economic Relations Board
EastMed	Eastern Mediterranean
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIP	Economic Investment Plan
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESCMID	European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases
ESTELA	European Solar Thermal Electricity Association
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEI	Federation of Egyptian Industries
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
IEA	International Energy Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPCC	UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JAES	Joint Africa-EU Strategy
MASEN	Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy
MEDEF	Movement of the Enterprises of France
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOERE	Egyptian Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NREA	Egyptian New and Renewable Energy Authority

PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Public and private partnerships
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TİM	Turkish Exporters Assembly
TMB	Turkey Contractors Union
TOBB	Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TUSIAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association
UN	United Nations
UNECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	UN Environmental Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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# Executive summary

Over recent years, relations between Turkey and the European Union (EU) have been difficult and driven more by crisis management rather than equal partnership. Yet, despite this downward spiral, both blocs remain key partners on domains such as trade, migration and counterterrorism and repeatedly express their interest in developing a more cooperative and constructive relationship. This report is a product of the ‘Searching for a New Formula for collaboration between Turkey and the EU in/with North Africa’ project, which investigated the extent to which Turkey and the EU could collaborate in and with North Africa, more specifically, Morocco, Egypt and Algeria. North Africa was chosen because it offers an underexplored area of research for Turkey-EU relations; Morocco, Egypt and Algeria were selected for specific study as they are the countries with which both Turkey and the EU have the highest trade volumes in the region. Moreover, there are currently no joint projects between Turkey and the EU in Morocco, Algeria or Egypt, although the region is an area of strategic importance for both Turkey and the EU. The recent war in Ukraine has also increased the value of North Africa as a provider of agricultural products and gas for the region. Libya and Tunisia were excluded from the research to narrow the scope of the project.

To avoid the traps of reproducing ‘neo-colonial’ or ‘neo-Ottoman’ discourses and of following a top-down approach, this study used action research as a democratic, participatory and collaborative research methodology. It engaged diverse participants from Turkey, the EU and North Africa in semi-structured in-depth interviews, conferences and a survey. Through a cyclical process, the study devised a tripartite collaborative model and concrete project ideas under five major policy options in which cooperation between Turkey, the EU, Morocco, Algeria and Egypt could be actionable.

1. The first policy option is *cooperation on education with a focus on educational mobility*, calls attention to the need for improvement of education infrastructure in North Africa, especially in Algeria. As this is a collaboration model, it was suggested that the existing EU framework (the Bologna Process) be enlarged to include North Africa. Turkey could use its experience and lead the process of adapting North African countries to the EU framework – and North African countries could be the project owners. Potential risks for such collaboration could be the pandemic, visa barriers, irregular migration, political manipulation, and the rise of xenophobia.
2. The second policy option, *economic cooperation on construction with a focus on public infrastructure*, demonstrates that although North African countries have relatively good access to capital markets to boost economic growth, the region is nevertheless in need of substantial investments in public infrastructure. In a

collaboration model, Turkey could implement the projects with its high-quality and cost-effective skills in the construction sector. While the EU could develop the project with its technical capacity to design complex infrastructure projects and green technologies, North African countries could own the projects. Such a collaboration model would form an alternative to the Chinese approach. The European Fund for Sustainable Development+ (EFSD+) and the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement are mechanisms that could be utilized for such collaboration. Potential risks for collaboration could be the restrictions against foreign investors in North Africa, bureaucratic delays in project approvals, especially in Algeria, the dominance of the army over Egypt's construction industry, the tension between the governments of Turkey and Egypt, China's potential growth in the region, geopolitical uncertainties, and competition between Turkey and the EU.

3. In the third policy option, *cooperation on health with a focus on post-Covid recovery*, two areas for collaboration came to the fore: developing local vaccine manufacturing hubs in North Africa and creating research collaboration schemes. The EU's know-how and technologies and its promise to allocate one billion euros to develop several regional manufacturing vaccine hubs, Turkey's health capacity and its robust pandemic diplomacy, and North African countries' ownership of the projects could be the basis of a tripartite collaboration model. The Team Europe initiative on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies in Africa, and the High-Level Dialogue in the Field of Health between EU-Turkey are some of the mechanisms that could be utilized. Potential risks for collaboration might be the reluctance of Brussels to back a proposed waiver on vaccine patents, the emergence of other international priorities such as the war in Ukraine which has already moved the Covid down the agenda, and clashes with China and Russia due to their initiatives for promoting their own vaccines.
4. The fourth policy option, *cooperation on the green deal with a focus on renewable energy*, acknowledges that Morocco and Egypt have taken promising steps on solar energy. In a potential tripartite collaboration model, while the two northern African countries could share their know-how, Turkey could bring in its strong business community and the EU could contribute with its cutting-edge technology and experienced human resources, as well as its extensive funds. The Green Deal, the Agenda for the Southern Mediterranean, and the High-Level Climate Dialogue between the EU and Turkey are mechanisms that could be utilized. Potential risks for collaboration might be the inability of the EU and Turkey to implement the Green Deal and reach carbon emission goals, rising consumption of coal because of the increase in oil and gas prices due to developments such as the war in Ukraine, reluctance on the part of North African countries regarding Turkey's involvement due to its lack of experience in this domain, and geopolitical tensions in the Mediterranean.

5. The fifth policy option, *cooperation on agriculture with a focus on food security*, is related to agriculture, a pivotal sector in the Mediterranean region. In a possible tripartite collaboration model, Turkey could share its technical and training capacities on sustainable agriculture, and the EU could contribute with funding as well as with its capacities on technological facilities and green transformation in agricultural projects owned by North African countries. Horizon Europe, as an extension of Cluster 6 of the Green Deal, could be utilized as a mechanism. Environmental implications of climate change such as forest fires, drought, and famine and competition between Turkey and North African countries on agriculture exports to the EU might pose potential risks.

This report gives a detailed account of the abovementioned tripartite collaborative model and the subsequent project ideas which were designed to be mutually beneficial for all three blocs –Turkey, the EU and North Africa. It should, nevertheless, be mentioned that current geopolitical uncertainties in the wider region could challenge the implementation of these projects. The civil war in Libya, the political tension between Turkey and Egypt or Morocco and Algeria, and the influence of China and Russia in the region could pose potential risks for collaboration. However, we maintain that such uncertainties make it even more timely to seek opportunities for a future collaborative environment in the Mediterranean as, ‘if the Mediterranean is weak, all Mediterranean countries are weak’.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Anonymous European expert 1, interview by Nienke van Heukelingen and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 1 December 2021.

# 1 Introduction

Relations between Turkey and the European Union (EU) have been fluctuating in recent years and driven more by crisis management than by equal partnership. The Cyprus issue, which has been a source of dispute ever since the beginning of Turkey's accession process in 1999, the refugee crisis triggered by the eruption of the Syrian civil war in 2010, the deterioration of freedom and democracy in Turkey, and the rising tensions between Turkey and Greece have been sources of contention. These developments have resulted in a restrained relationship.

But despite these strains, Turkey and the EU remain partners on many dimensions such as trade, migration and security, and cooperation largely continues on the technical level.<sup>2</sup> As such, it is a timely endeavour to search for new areas for cooperation that could offer opportunities for improvements in Turkey-EU relations. This report is a product of the 'Searching for a New Formula for collaboration between Turkey and the EU in/with North Africa' project, which investigated the extent to which Turkey and the EU could collaborate in and with North Africa, more specifically Morocco, Egypt and Algeria. North Africa was chosen because it offers an underexplored area of research for Turkey-EU relations; Morocco, Egypt and Algeria were selected for specific study as they are the countries with which both Turkey and the EU have the highest trade volumes in the region.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there are currently no joint projects between Turkey and the EU in Morocco, Algeria or Egypt,<sup>4</sup> although the region is an area of strategic importance for both Turkey and the EU. The recent war in Ukraine has also increased the value of North Africa as a provider of agricultural products and gas for the region. Libya and Tunisia were excluded from the research to narrow the scope of the project.

Africa might form an interesting area of collaboration for several reasons. After decades of marginalisation, the continent's strategic importance has increased in the past few years. It has rich human and natural resources, and the youngest population in the world.<sup>5</sup> In addition, emerging powers such as China, India, Brazil and Russia are expanding and deepening their presence in Africa – fuelling competition on the

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2 In various strategic documents, the European Commission highlights the importance of Turkey to the European Union and the fact that it remains a 'key partner' in multiple areas, for example: The European Commission, "Commission staff working document: Turkey report 2020", Brussels, October 2020, 3.

3 See Appendix 1 for a list of major agreements between Turkey, EU, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt.

4 Information from the EU Delegations in Egypt, Morocco and Algeria.

5 OECD, Active with Africa, October 2017, <http://www.oecd.org/africa/Active-with-Africa.pdf>, 3.

continent.<sup>6</sup> These developments have led Turkey and the EU into a process of revising existing policies towards the continent – policies in which Egypt, Algeria and Morocco play pivotal roles. North Africa is also crucial as it is situated at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa.

There are criticisms in the literature that conventional studies on Africa often describe its history and politics through a colonial or Eurocentric point of view.<sup>7</sup> Scholars also argue that current Western interventions in Africa are simply new forms of exploitation through ‘neo-colonial’ ambitions that use corporate intervention, aid and cultural imperialism as instruments of hegemony.<sup>8</sup> Despite their benevolent self-image, emerging powers are not free from similar criticisms. While China is frequently accused of extracting Africa’s resources through debt trap, Turkey is criticised for legitimising its ‘neo-Ottoman’ ambitions in Africa by ‘othering’<sup>9</sup> the EU, leveraging its own cultural and religious ties with Africa, and drawing parallels between the continent’s experience of colonialism and its own history of ‘oppression’ by Europe.<sup>10</sup>

To avoid the traps of reproducing ‘neo-colonial’ or ‘neo-Ottoman’ discourses and of following a top-down approach, this study used action research as a democratic, participatory and collaborative research methodology and engaged diverse participants from Turkey, the EU and North Africa as active agents of research. As also elaborated in the ‘Research methods’ section of this report, participants worked together in a series of workshops and identified the main research parameters through a collaborative effort. The researchers involved in this project made genuine efforts to ensure that data was co-generated with participants and iteratively developed through a cyclical enquiry shifting from reflection to action. The research team, therefore, considered it a moral obligation to align the research outputs with the actual needs and objectives of the respective North African countries to prevent the reconstruction of an asymmetric relationship of power.

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6 Elling N. Tjønneland, “Rising powers in Africa: What does this mean for the African peace and security agenda?”, NOREF, Report in External Series, March 2014; Denis M. Tull, “China and Africa,” in Gudrun Wacker (Ed.), *China’s Rise: The Return of Geopolitics?*, SWP Research Paper, Berlin, February 2006. Also see, Pınar Akpınar, “Turkey’s ‘Novel’ Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy and Africa”, in Joost Jongerden, *Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, Routledge, 2021, 495.

7 Prashad Vijay, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World*. New York: The New Press, 2007. 231.

8 Mark Langan, *Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of “Development” in Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan Series, Cham: Springer, 2018.

9 Mark Langan, “Virtuous power Turkey in sub-Saharan Africa: the ‘Neo-Ottoman’ challenge to the European Union”, *Third World Quarterly* 38, no.6 (2017): 1404.

10 Akpınar, “Turkey’s ‘Novel’ Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy and Africa”, 495.

Moreover, this research was conducted in the difficult circumstances of geopolitical uncertainty, the crises in the eastern Mediterranean, Libya, Tunisia, and the Sahel, the Covid pandemic, and the tensions between Turkey and Egypt as well as between Morocco and Algeria. However, as the research team, we maintain that such crises make it even more timely to seek opportunities for a future collaborative environment in the Mediterranean. Despite the geopolitical difficulties, by taking 'reciprocity' as a departure point the study identified the objectives and interests of the EU and Turkey in Algeria, Morocco and Egypt and searched for possible key areas of mutual strategic interests.<sup>11</sup>

North African countries are in a very different position from other African countries in terms of their historical and geostrategic background. These countries are positioned as the southern neighbourhood of the EU and considered under the Middle East and North Africa department of the Turkish Foreign Ministry. These countries have very different dynamics from each other, therefore Turkey has separate cooperation plans for each country, as does the EU.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, it should be underlined that as this report focuses on EU-Turkey cooperation with Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt no special attention is given to individual EU member states.

Following a detailed focus on the research methodology, the report briefly describes the dynamics of Turkey's and the EU's relations with North Africa. It then discusses the five policy options that were identified through three conferences, one survey, and 24 interviews with experts from Turkey, the EU and North Africa. The five policy options are:

1. Cooperation on education with a focus on **educational mobility**
2. Economic cooperation on construction with a focus on **public infrastructure**
3. Cooperation on health with a focus on **post-Covid recovery**
4. Cooperation on the European Green Deal with a focus on **renewable energy**
5. Cooperation on agriculture with a focus on **food security**.

Each policy option section is organised by offering: i) background on the topic, ii) the current context in Turkey, the EU, Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt, iii) the potentials and parameters for a tripartite collaboration model for each policy option, and iv) specific project ideas with an outline of their impact, probability of success, actionability and purposefulness. As such, the report aims to give concrete policy recommendations to relevant stakeholders on how collaboration could be achieved based on actionable project ideas.

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11 Wulf Reiners and Ebru Turhan, "Current Trends and Future Prospects for EU-Turkey Relations: Conditions for a Cooperative Relationship", in *EU-Turkey Relations Theories, Institutions, and Policies*, eds. Wulf Reiners and Ebru Turhan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 410.

12 Anonymous Turkish expert 2, interview by Pinar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 29 November 2021.

## 2 Research methods

This research built on action research methodology where data was gathered through qualitative and quantitative research methods. The concept of ‘action research’ was first introduced in 1946 by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in his study on minority problems where he identified it as ‘comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action’.<sup>13</sup> Action research rests on the cycle of planning, acting, collecting and analysing data, reflecting, and re-planning a new action. In this sense, the researcher is not a passive observer but a subject aiming for social and systemic change and transformation.

The data was co-generated and iteratively developed through means of three online search conferences with the participation of around 20 experts in each search conference, 24 semi-structured in-depth interviews, and a survey prior to the third conference. We also analysed secondary data gathered through the review of literature such as books, journal articles, reports, policy papers/briefs, press releases and news articles. Interviewees and search conference participants included experts, officials, academics, businesspeople, civil society and media representatives from the EU, Turkey and North Africa. The first two conferences focused on Turkey-EU relations and Turkey-North Africa relations; this was followed by a grand conference where participants from all three blocs discussed opportunities for tripartite collaboration. Participants were selected according to their expertise and their representation of the abovementioned professional groups and country blocs, with attention given to ensuring a gender balance.<sup>14</sup>

A search conference is a democratic and participatory action research method in which a diverse set of stakeholders are brought together to work towards a desired future in a series of brainstorming sessions structured around a set of predetermined questions.<sup>15</sup> The conferences were held online through Zoom; they were not recorded, and participants remained anonymous. Background information was given to participants before each conference as fact-files regarding the current relations between the relevant parties (i.e., EU-Turkey, Turkey-North Africa, EU-North Africa).

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13 Kurt Lewin, “Action Research and Minority Problems”, *Journal of Social Issues* 2, no.4 (1946): 35.

14 See Appendix 2 for the full list of interviews.

15 Oğuz N. Babüroğlu and M.A. Garr, “Search Conference Methodology For Practitioners” in *Discovering Common Ground*, ed. Weisbord, M. R. (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc, 1993); Oğuz N. Babüroğlu, “Tracking the Development of the Emery-Trist Systems Paradigm (ETSP)”, *Systems Practice* 5, no.3 (1992): 273.

During the conferences, output matrixes were created by combining the views and opinions offered by participants.

Questions for the first two conferences were as follows: What are the future trends, driving forces and desirable scenarios in EU-Turkey, Turkey-North Africa, EU-North Africa relations? And what are possible policy options based on these scenarios?

Sixteen policy options/priorities were identified following the two conferences and the preliminary interviews. A survey was sent to experts before the third conference to rank options and priorities. Experts were asked to rate the 'impact – mutual benefit', 'probability of success', 'actionability (ease of implementation)', and 'purposefulness' of the 16 policy options for collaboration between Turkey and the EU in North Africa, based on Thomas Saaty's analytical hierarchy process approach,<sup>16</sup> which is a method for measuring and prioritising alternatives based on how they weigh up to multiple criteria.

**Stage 1:** Sixteen policy options were identified:

- A1 Economic cooperation on construction with a focus on public infrastructure
- A2 Economic cooperation on textile industry
- A3 Cooperation on education with a focus on educational mobility
- A4 Cooperation on education with a focus on capacity building
- A5 Cooperation on migration with a focus on border management
- A6 Cooperation on migration with a focus on aid
- A7 Cooperation on the European Green Deal with a focus on renewable energy
- A8 Cooperation on agriculture with a focus on food security
- A9 Cooperation on natural resources with a focus on water management
- A10 Cooperation on digitalization with a focus on e-government
- A11 Cooperation on health with a focus on post-Covid recovery
- A12 Cooperation on financial sector with a focus on digital banking
- A13 Cooperation on good governance with a focus on local governance
- A14 Cooperation on women's rights
- A15 Military cooperation with a focus on capacity building
- A16 Military cooperation with a focus on military equipment

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16 Thomas Saaty, "The Analytic Hierarchy Process – What It Is and How It Is Used", *Mathematical Modelling* 9, no.3-5 (1987): 161-176.



**Stage 2:** Experts were asked to rate the 16 policy options/priorities for collaboration between Turkey and the EU in North Africa based on four evaluation criteria in the following ranking order:

- C1 Impact – Mutual Benefit (29.17%)
- C2 Probability of success (29.17%)
- C3 Actionability (ease of implementation) (21.67%)
- C4 Purposefulness (20%)

**Stage 3:** Rank order method based on the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) to convert the criteria rankings given by experts to the importance of criteria was used.

**Stage 4:** Weighted Average method and Manhattan distance-based normalisation were used to reveal normalised weights.<sup>17</sup>

According to the survey outcomes, the 16 policy options were ranked in the order shown in Appendix 3; the top five were scrutinised to identify solid project ideas in the third conference.<sup>18</sup> The data gathered was then verified iteratively in the follow-up interviews. Therefore, interviews were held before and after the conferences. Consent forms were signed by interviewees and data was used either anonymously or with citations based on the preference of each participant. As a general note, all Turkish and EU officials chose to remain anonymous. This report focuses on the top five priorities identified through the collaborative effort of research participants.

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17 K. Paul Yoon and Ching-Lai Hwang, *Multiple attribute decision making: An introduction* (London: Sage, 1995).

18 See Appendix 3 for the global scores of the policy options.

# 3 Turkey's relations with North Africa

Africa has gained an important role in Turkey's foreign policy in recent years and become one of the main priorities of its 'enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy',<sup>19</sup> which highlights 'the proactive and dynamic nature of Turkish foreign policy that combines elements of hard and soft power' and underpins 'the peace and development nexus of Turkey's foreign policy'.<sup>20</sup> Turkey's Africa policy was superseded in 2013 with its *African Initiative Policy*, a multi-track policy that aims 'to contribute to the peace [through humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and mediation], stability, economic and social development [through investing in sustainable growth and education] of the Continent and develop bilateral relations on the basis of equal partnership and mutual benefit'.<sup>21</sup> According to Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Turkey's Africa policy is fully compatible with the founding principles of the African Union, which are based 'on a holistic, inclusive, equal partnership on the basis of mutual respect and win-win strategy'.<sup>22</sup> He also claimed that Turkey is committed to Africa's future through Agenda 2063<sup>23</sup> and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Turkish presence in northern Africa was first established in 1517 when the Ottoman Empire gained control of Egypt from the Mamluk Sultanate. Later in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the empire expanded its territory to the rest of North Africa by conquering Algeria and Morocco. As such, north-west Africa, or the Maghreb, has been the main orientation of Turkey's Africa policy for around five centuries.<sup>24</sup> In fact, upon the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey's first embassy in Africa was opened in Cairo in 1925. As of 2021, Turkey has 43 diplomatic representations in Africa, with Somalia hosting its largest embassy and forward military base in the world. Turkey's Africa policy has

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19 Akpınar, "Turkey's 'Novel' Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy and Africa", 495.

20 Ibid.

21 Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, "Union with Africa is now more essential than ever", published in various African media outlets on the Day of Africa, 25 May 2020, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu-nun-afrika-gunu-makalesi.en.mfa>, last accessed 1 August 2021.

22 Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website, "Article by Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu published on the occasion of 25 May Africa Day", <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-bakanimizin-yirmibes-mayis-afrika-gunu-makalesi.en.mfa>, last accessed 1 December 2021.

23 Agenda 2063 refers to initiatives proposed and implemented by the African Union.

24 Numan Hazar, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Afrika ve Türkiye-Afrika İlişkileri* (Ankara: USAK Yayınları 2011), 110-119.

continued to be important during the Covid-19 pandemic; in fact, 44 of the 157 countries to which Turkey has extended medical supplies are in Africa.<sup>25</sup>

The top three countries with whom Turkey enjoys its highest trade volume in Africa are Egypt (\$5.2 billion), Algeria (\$3.1 billion) and Morocco (\$2.7 billion).<sup>26</sup> The total value of Turkey's direct investments in Africa exceeded \$6 billion in 2021 and Turkish entrepreneurs are implementing more than 1,150 projects throughout the continent. Turkey supports the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA), which is a project of Agenda 2063. Turkish companies are expanding their trade relations with African countries and creating employment in the region.<sup>27</sup> In addition, business organisations such as the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), organise high-level meetings, and occasional meetings are organised by chambers of commerce to improve trade relations between the two sides.

Of the three North African countries studied, Turkey is most focused on Algeria, particularly through construction and development projects. The textile industry is at the core of Turkey's relationship with Egypt, despite political tensions. Turkish textile companies choose Egypt as a production base in their trade with the United States. Indeed, the free trade agreement (FTA) between Egypt and the United States is more inclusive than the FTA between Turkey and the United States.<sup>28</sup>

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25 Akpınar, "Turkey's 'Novel' Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy and Africa", 495. Also see, Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı. Asrın Küresel Salgını: Türkiye'nin Koronavirüsle Başarılı Mücadelesi, Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı Yayınları: Ankara, 2021, 372.

26 "Invest in: Sustainable Future Together: Turkey-Africa", DEİK. <https://www.deik.org.tr/uploads/deik-africa-presentation-11-05-rvz.pdf>, last accessed 8 June 2020.

27 Anonymous Turkish official 1, interview by Pınar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 10 May 2021.

28 Mustafa Denizer, Board Member of DİKTAS, interview by Pınar Akpınar, Fatin Reşat Durukan, 3 July 2021.

## 4 The EU's relations with North Africa

The European Union and the African continent work together through the Africa-EU Partnership, established at the first African Union (AU)-EU Summit in 2000 and guided by the *Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES)*, adopted in 2007.<sup>29</sup> Since then, however, the fundamentals that defined the partnership have changed. Not only has Africa boomed in terms of population size and economy, but new challenges have arisen, such as climate change, migration, health issues and a lack of preparation around digital transformation.

Therefore, on taking office, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the ambition to work towards a renewed partnership with Africa, making the continent one of the Commission's priorities.<sup>30</sup> In March 2020, her geopolitical European Commission proposed the foundation of a new joint strategy with Africa – *Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa*.<sup>31</sup> Among the strategy's key elements were five proposed partnerships: i) green transition and energy access, ii) digital transformation, iii) sustainable growth and jobs, iiiii) peace and governance and iv) migration and mobility.<sup>32</sup> The EU's new Africa strategy was meant to provide a starting point for EU negotiation with the AU as well as with African leaders, with a view to agreeing a more 'equal' partnership at the EU-Africa Summit in October 2020. However, not long after publication of the strategy, Covid-19 hit, not only adding new health priorities such as epidemic responses, investments in biotech, and mask diplomacy to the debate, but also postponing the October summit – and thus the decision on a new partnership – to 2022.<sup>33</sup>

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29 "The Africa-EU Partnership", African Union, accessed 15 May 2021, <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en>.

30 "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions", European Commission, 29 January 2021, 7. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar%3A7ae642ea-4340-11ea-b81b-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar%3A7ae642ea-4340-11ea-b81b-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF).

31 "Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council", European Commission, 9 March 2020. [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-joint-2020-4-final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-joint-2020-4-final_en.pdf).

32 Ibid, 2.

33 Chloe Teevan, "Great Expectations: The EU-Africa Partnership against the Backdrop of Covid-19", *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2020*, <https://www.iemed.org/publication/great-expectations-the-eu-africa-partnership-against-the-backdrop-of-covid-19/>.

Morocco, Egypt, and Algeria are covered by the Africa-EU Partnership. However, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) forms the main architecture of EU engagement with the region.<sup>34</sup> The ENP governs EU relations with 16 of the Union's closest eastern and southern neighbours,<sup>35</sup> whose political and economic stability are naturally of great importance to Europe. Specifically for North Africa, one sees a region that has become ever more volatile since the Arab uprisings, characterised by increasing risks of political instability, social unrest and terrorism.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the region remains an important trade partner for many EU member states, is rich in terms of resources of oil and natural gas<sup>37</sup> and is considered a crucial partner in migration cooperation.<sup>38</sup>

In order to better address the above issues and re-launch its strategic partnership, in February 2021, the European Commission proposed *A new Agenda for the Mediterranean*, which will guide future EU cooperation with, among others, Morocco, Egypt and Algeria.<sup>39</sup> The priorities are in line with those of the EU-Africa Strategy, namely i) human development, ii) good governance and the rule of law, iii) resilience, prosperity and digital transition, iv) peace and security, v) migration and mobility, and vi) green transition.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the agenda includes an *Economic and Investment Plan* to spur socio-economic recovery in the Southern Neighbourhood (with up to 7 billion euros allocated for the period 2021-27).<sup>41</sup>

Finally, there are the EU's bilateral relations with Morocco, Egypt and Algeria. Under the umbrella of 'bilateral partnerships', the EU cooperates with the three countries on the priority areas of their partnerships, which are as follows:

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34 "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations", European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy_en).

35 Ibid.

36 Abdelkarim Skouri, "North Africa: Opportunities and challenges on Europe's doorstep", *International Development Research Network*, April 2021. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e8ce9ff629cbb272fd0406f/t/6066e1ba1faa5458f0996e9f/1617355206493/North+Africa%3A+Opportunities+and+challenges+on+Europe%E2%80%99s+doorstep.pdf>.

37 Spain, for example, gets 52% of its natural gas from Algeria.

38 Skouri, "North Africa: Opportunities and challenges on Europe's doorstep".

39 "Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood", European Commission, 9 February 2021. [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint\\_communication\\_renewed\\_partnership\\_southern\\_neighbourhood.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf).

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

- The EU-Morocco partnership is legally based on the Association Agreement which entered into force in 2000.<sup>42</sup> In 2008, Morocco was granted 'advanced status'. Current priorities are i) economic development, ii) innovation, iii) climate change, iv) justice and security, v) mobility and migration, and vi) good governance.<sup>43</sup> Politically, Morocco is considered one of the EU's most important partners in North Africa, albeit not without challenges. Since April 2021, tensions between Morocco and certain EU member states (especially Spain) have been running particularly high due to the long-running conflict over Western Sahara and a surge in migrants to Spanish enclaves in Morocco (e.g., Ceuta).
- The EU-Algeria partnership is legally based on the Association Agreement which entered into force in 2005. Current priorities are i) political dialogue, governance, rule of law and promotion of fundamental rights, ii) cooperation in socio-economic development, trade and access to the European single market, iii) energy partnership, environment and sustainable development, iv) strategic and security dialogue, and v) human dimension, migration and mobility.<sup>44</sup> Politically, and compared to its North African neighbours, the process of Algerian-European integration has been somewhat sluggish – primarily due to reluctance on the part of Algeria.<sup>45</sup>
- The EU-Egypt partnership is legally based on the Association Agreement which entered into force in 2004. Current priorities are i) poverty alleviation, local socio-economic development and social protection, ii) business environment, governance and transparency, and iii) quality of life and environment. Initially, Egypt's transition after 2011 seemed to create an opportunity for improving EU-Egypt relations, but due to Egypt's reversion to authoritarianism and regional conflicts, the EU went back to its previous model of engagement with the country, which was grounded in realpolitik.<sup>46</sup>

On a final note, over the past 50 years, EU relations with North Africa have been moulded not only by geographical proximity but also by colonial heritage. The fact that some EU member states – France in particular – have perceived parts of the African

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42 European Commission, "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Morocco", [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/morocco\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/morocco_en).

43 Ibid.

44 "Association between the EU and Algeria", European Commission, 7 March 2017. [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint\\_communication\\_renewed\\_partnership\\_southern\\_neighbourhood.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf).

45 Alex Walsh, "Algeria-Europe economic integration: Where are we now and where do we go?", Middle East Institute, 17 March 2020. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/algeria-europe-economic-integration-where-are-we-now-and-where-do-we-go>.

46 Adel Abdel Ghafar, "Egypt - Mapping European leverage in the MENA region", ECFR. [https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping\\_eu\\_leverage\\_mena/egypt](https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_eu_leverage_mena/egypt).

continent as a *domain réservé*, has, for a long time, hampered a more common European policy.<sup>47</sup> That is something which might potentially stand in the way of more cooperation with Turkey in North Africa, as France and Turkey have, in the recent past, clashed over strategic interests in Libya. However, some experts argue that nowadays, Brussels has more room to manoeuvre due to the fact that an Africa policy, among others, is a less divisive issue than relations with (emerging) global powers such as China and Russia.<sup>48</sup> In addition, at both collective and member state level, there is an increasing desire to keep North Africa within the European sphere of influence (and not 'lose' the countries to other global powers). Turkey and the EU have a similar view on that.

Bilateral ties between (certain) EU member states and Northern African countries will, undeniably, continue to play an important role. However, as this report focuses on EU-Turkey cooperation with Morocco, Egypt and Algeria and the available EU structures and instruments to strengthen this form of cooperation, no special attention is being given to EU member states and their objectives in relation to North Africa.

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47 Eduard Soler i Lecha, "The Maghreb and the European bid for Africa", *CIDOB notes internacionals*, no. 228, March 2020, [https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication\\_series/notes\\_internacionals/n1\\_228/the\\_maghreb\\_and\\_the\\_european\\_bid\\_for\\_africa](https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/notes_internacionals/n1_228/the_maghreb_and_the_european_bid_for_africa).

48 Ibid.

# 5 Selected policy options for collaboration

## 5.1 Cooperation on education with a focus on educational mobility

Educational mobility refers to education that is gained through mobility programmes such as exchange programmes including Erasmus, Socrates, Mevlana, joint summer schools or vocational training programmes. The growing number of students studying abroad has a major impact on universities and host countries, but also on students themselves.<sup>49</sup> Money spent by international students on housing, food, entertainment and tuition fees contributes greatly to the economy of host countries.<sup>50</sup> Given the proficiency of Turkey and the EU in the education sector and the need for further development in this sector in Morocco, Algeria and Egypt, educational mobility comes to the fore as a mutually beneficial area for collaboration between these actors, and it was the most recommended policy priority during this research.

Education is a significant soft power asset for Turkey and the EU, both of which are important educational destinations. While four EU countries are listed among the 10 most popular countries to study abroad,<sup>51</sup> Turkey is 10th in the world for recruitment of international students and is part of the Bologna Process, which includes ERASMUS, Marie Curie and Socrates, among others, and is therefore well integrated into the EU framework.<sup>52</sup> In terms of higher education, Turkey and EU member states have gained significant experience through the Bologna Process – a mechanism which promotes ‘intergovernmental cooperation between 48 European countries in the field of higher education’.<sup>53</sup> According to the Erasmus+ programme, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco are considered as southern Mediterranean countries (region 3). Their involvement in

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49 Sabrina Tomasi, Gigliola Paviotti, and Alessio Cavicchi, “Educational Tourism and Local Development: The Role of Universities”, *Sustainability* 12, no. 17: 6766, August 2020.

50 “International Mobility of the Highly Skilled”, OECD, June 2020. <http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/internationalmobilityofthehighlyskilled.htm>.

51 “10 most popular countries for international students”, Studee. <https://studee.com/guides/10-most-popular-countries-for-international-students/#otherdestinations>.

52 Adeb Saadeh, “Why Turkey is favorite destination for international students”, Medutur, 5 January 2021. <https://medutur.com/2021/01/05/why-turkey-is-favorite-destination-for-international-students/>.

53 “The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area”, European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/bologna-process-and-european-higher-education-area\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/bologna-process-and-european-higher-education-area_en).



the programme is limited under certain conditions.<sup>54</sup> The education sector in these countries is relatively less developed than in the EU and Turkey, marked by low levels of education and high levels of unemployment.<sup>55</sup> For instance, it was only in 2015 that Algeria participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests resulting with poor outcomes.<sup>56</sup>

Burak Arıkan, Founder and Senior Consultant at EBA Consulting, indicated that Turkey's inclusion in Bologna and Erasmus has played a major role in making it an educational destination and that one needs to think about how this capacity could be transferred to North African countries.<sup>57</sup> He notes that, 'Taking students from these countries brings benefits to Turkey, but it would be great if Turkey would lead the process of adapting these countries with the EU'.<sup>58</sup> In this view, the EU can use Turkey's educational capacity to help North African countries achieve goals envisaged by the EU. North Africa, and Africa in general, will experience a great transformation over the next 50 years and Turkey should take advantage of it since it already enjoys a comparative advantage due to its existing cultural alliances. Arıkan posits that Turkey's hosting of Muslim students creates a win-win-win model, as parents are happy that their children go to a Muslim country, students are happy, and schools are happy.<sup>59</sup> Institutional capacities could also be developed to support educational mobility in North African countries and international student recruitment. Turkish and European businesses have emphasised the importance of educational mobility. Seval İskender, Director of EU Affairs at TOBB Brussels Representative, emphasised that the African countries should benefit more from the Erasmus+ programme and stated that 'European businesspeople have sent a proposal to the European Commission to create Erasmus + for Africa'.<sup>60</sup>

By referring to the asymmetry between North African countries and the EU, anonymous EU official 3 pointed out that there are exchange programmes between Europe and the three African countries, but it is very much a one-way street where Tunisian, Moroccan

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54 "Erasmus+ EU programme for education, training, youth and sport", European Commission.

[https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/eligible-countries#footnote7\\_r8kl6ys](https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/eligible-countries#footnote7_r8kl6ys).

55 Ghada Barsoum, Sarah Wahby, Aditya Sarkar, "Youth and Employment in North Africa: A Regional Overview (A Report Prepared for the Conference on Youth and Employment in North Africa)", International Labour Organization, September 2017. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-abidjan/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_577306.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-abidjan/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_577306.pdf).

56 "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Africa", International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_737670.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_737670.pdf), p.2.

57 Burak Arıkan, Founder and Senior Consultant at EBA Consulting, interview by Pınar Akpınar and Fatın Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 4 October 2021.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Seval İskender, Director of EU Affairs at TOBB Brussels interview by Pınar Akpınar, Nienke van Heukelingen, Fatın Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 26 October 2021.

and Egyptian students come to Europe. He further suggests that as Turkey has good universities, bringing it in could be possible but only with the condition that the process would not be manipulated by the political agenda.<sup>61</sup> In a similar vein, anonymous Turkish expert 1 referred to the asymmetric distribution of funds by indicating that Turkey's share in EU mobility funds is relatively small,<sup>62</sup> and budgets for exchange programmes cater to a limited number of students. Extending the outreach and increasing funds could be beneficial for more efficient regional collaboration.<sup>63</sup>

In a potential tripartite collaborative model for educational mobility, Turkey could play a leadership role in the process of adapting North African countries to the EU framework and assist them in achieving goals envisaged by the EU.<sup>64</sup> In such a model, while the EU could play the role of developer through its extensive funds and mechanisms, the North African countries would be project owners. This would also create a win-win model catering to the needs of North Africa by contributing to the development of its education sector and the expansion of its inclusion in EU mobility funds. Both Turkey and the EU have an established physical and online education system and infrastructure that would be beneficial to North Africa. In terms of collaborative advantages, while both Turkey and the EU are experienced in educational mobility, the fact that Turkey is well integrated into the EU's education system through the Bologna Process is another important asset. Moreover, Turkey has a cultural affinity with North Africa and is more economical than the EU.<sup>65</sup>

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61 Anonymous EU official 3, interview by Pınar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 11 October 2021.

62 Anonymous Turkish expert 1, interview by Pınar Akpınar, Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 6 October 2021.

63 Ibid.

64 Anonymous EU official 3, interview by Akpınar and Durukan; Anonymous EU official 4, interview by Pınar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 12 October 2021; Heba Raouf Ezzat, Assist. Prof. at Ibn Haldun University, interview by Pınar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, 26 November 2021.

65 See Table 1.

**Table 1** Tripartite collaborative model for educational mobility

<b>Needs</b>	<p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development in the education sector.</li> <li>• Enlargement of EU mobility funds.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlargement of EU mobility funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacities</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established education system and infrastructure including physical and online.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established education system and infrastructure including physical and online.</li> <li>• Extensive funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Roles</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the process of adapting North African countries to the EU framework.</li> <li>• Assist North African countries to achieve goals envisaged by the EU.</li> <li>• Developer and implementer.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund projects.</li> <li>• Developer and implementer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Morocco, Algeria, Egypt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project owners.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative advantages</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in educational mobility.</li> <li>• Integrated into the EU's education system through the Bologna Process.</li> <li>• Cultural affinity with North Africa.</li> <li>• More economical than the EU.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experienced in educational mobility.</li> <li>• Extensive funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Conveners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities, ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of education, and business associations of all blocs.</li> <li>• International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO).</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turkish National Agency, Turkish Higher Education Council, Mevlana Exchange Programme, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, Turkish companies.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Commission (Erasmus Mundus), The EU-Africa Partnership, European companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The enlargement of the existing EU mechanisms.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pandemic, visa barriers, irregular migration, political manipulation, and the rise of xenophobia.</li> </ul>

## Recommended project ideas:

### Joint summer schools

Experts suggested that joint summer schools be established in the region for students from Turkey, the EU and North Africa which could boost confidence. An alumni network could be established to promote affinity and create a platform for future collaboration. Owners of the project could be stakeholders such as universities, the EU, ministries of foreign affairs or ministries of education of respective countries. As a ballpark figure, 75-100,000 euros for 30 students was estimated as the project budget, the recommended duration of a summer school could be three to four weeks, and the first cycle of the project could last for three years. The summer schools could be held in North Africa, Turkey or Europe. For instance, in those held in North Africa, the EU could fund them and Turkey could develop and implement the projects and the respective North African countries could host them.

As an example, Koç University conducts service-learning programmes abroad with local partners where students can carry out their own projects with local counterparts. According to Nilüfer Akpınar Şahin, International Projects and Education Programs Team Leader at Koç University, the university collaborates with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who know the local context and local authorities and can also organise the media. These projects usually last no longer than two weeks, as students consider them to be tourist activities, have limited time and must pay. The projects can be for credit or a certificate and are handed over to local partners before departure to promote local ownership and sustainability; there may also be funding opportunities. Koç University runs a scholarship scheme called *Anatolia Scholarship* funded by private companies around Turkey such as Pegasus. It was also emphasised that cultural differences regarding eating habits, health and hygiene conditions, and vaccinations are important aspects that affect students' choices.<sup>66</sup>

### Vocational training programme

There is a major demand for vocational training in North Africa, as it has the highest level of unemployment in the world at around 57.4% for women and 37.7% for men (2021 estimate). The rate of unemployment, however, is expected to fall across Africa

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66 Nilüfer Akpınar Şahin, International Projects and Education Programs Team Leader, Koç University, interview by Pınar Akpınar and Fatın Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 8 October 2021.

as a whole in the upcoming years.<sup>67</sup> Morocco (2018),<sup>68</sup> Algeria (2017)<sup>69</sup> and Egypt (2018)<sup>70</sup> all have new strategies for vocational educational training. In Algeria, demand for vocational training and education has almost doubled since 2000, with management and administration, construction and service-related jobs being at the top of the list of preferences (2017 estimate).<sup>71</sup> In Morocco, while management and commerce top the list, they are followed by metalworking and mechanics, construction, and information and communications technologies.<sup>72</sup> In Egypt, industrial, commercial, agricultural and hospitality schools are the most preferred.<sup>73</sup> There is also a constant demand for skilled labourers in these countries. The exclusion of women and young people is notable.<sup>74</sup>

To address these demands, a collaboration scheme on vocational training programmes was proposed as a project idea. It was suggested that project owners could be private companies with potential collaboration from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and business associations.<sup>75</sup> A monthly allowance of 400 euros per student could be provided by the companies offering the internships or by the institutions supporting the project, for example the EU or the ministries of education in Turkey, Morocco, Egypt or Algeria. The recommended duration of the project is six months for each internship.

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67 "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Africa", International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_737670.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_737670.pdf), 2; "New Vocational, Education and Training Toolbox will support Africans to develop skills for the job market", European Commission, 8 June 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/new-vocational-education-and-training-toolbox-will-support-africans-develop-skills-job-market\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/new-vocational-education-and-training-toolbox-will-support-africans-develop-skills-job-market_en).

68 "Morocco - Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", European Training Foundation, September 2019. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-09/morocco\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-09/morocco_2018_en.pdf), 3.

69 "Algeria- Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", European Training Foundation, September 2019. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-09/algeria\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-09/algeria_2018_en.pdf), 7.

70 "Egypt- Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", European Training Foundation, September 2019. <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-03/Egypt%202018.pdf>, 3.

71 "Algeria- Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", 7.

72 "Morocco - Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", 3.

73 "Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) mapping for refugees, asylum seekers and host communities in Egypt", ILO, 2021. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---ddg\\_p/documents/publication/wcms\\_806890.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---ddg_p/documents/publication/wcms_806890.pdf), 37.

74 "Algeria- Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", 9; "Morocco - Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", 8; "Egypt- Education, Training and Employment Developments 2018", 10.

75 Anonymous Turkish official 2, interview by Pınar Akpınar, Nienke van Heukelingen and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 21 October 2021.

Turkey already offers vocational training to several African countries including Somalia, Uganda, Cameroon and Sudan, among others.<sup>76</sup> Turkish institutions such as universities, TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) and hospitals are part of the framework. For instance, doctors from these countries are brought to Turkey or trained by Turkish counterparts in host institutions. Turkey also provides vocational training as part of its development aid agenda in industries such as 'agriculture, husbandry, forestry, construction, industry, tourism, transportation, communications'.<sup>77</sup>

The EU is also active in this field. It recently announced VET Toolbox 2, a new pilot project that aims to address the skills mismatch in 11 sub-Saharan countries. European Agencies, EU delegations and local stakeholders will be partners in the programme to map the local vocational needs, contribute to human development and address the issue of unemployment.<sup>78</sup>

### Trilateral exchange scheme

This project idea is based on a three-stage educational mobility model wherein, each year, students study in a different city within the network. For example, an undergraduate programme could be offered for one year in Istanbul, one year in Cairo and one year in Paris. The projects could imitate elements of Erasmus or other EU programmes. Potential collaborators could be universities, ministries, business associations and development agencies in the respective countries. The project budget is expected to be in accordance with EU projects, such as Erasmus+. However, this project would provide a two-year exchange within one cycle of study, whereas in Erasmus+ the cycle of study is one year.<sup>79</sup> The recommended duration of the project is three to four years.

### Digital networking platform

It was suggested by experts that by creating an online networking platform after each project, students and alumni would be able to connect with local professional associations, municipalities, among others. The budget for such a project would be around 50-100,000 euros and the owners would be the EU, municipalities, universities, companies or ministries of education in Turkey, Morocco, Egypt and Algeria.

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76 "An Education Initiative in Africa by Turkey", TİKA, 23 March 2018. [https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/an\\_education\\_initiative\\_in\\_africa\\_by\\_turkey-42443](https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/an_education_initiative_in_africa_by_turkey-42443).

77 "TİKA 2019 Annual Report", TİKA, 2019. <https://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/sayfa/publication/2019/TIKAFaaliyet2019ENGWebKapakli.pdf>.

78 "New Vocational, Education and Training Toolbox will support Africans to develop skills for the job market", European Commission, 8 June 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/new-vocational-education-and-training-toolbox-will-support-africans-develop-skills-job-market\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/new-vocational-education-and-training-toolbox-will-support-africans-develop-skills-job-market_en).

79 "Studying abroad", European Commission. <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/individuals/students/studying-abroad>.

## 5.2 Economic cooperation on construction with a focus on public infrastructure

Public infrastructure is infrastructure that is available for use by the public, such as roads and bridges but also wind turbines, public hospitals and public universities. The construction sector plays a key role in the economic growth of (lower) middle-income countries, including the countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.<sup>80</sup> It is also one of the main industries in Turkey, the EU, Morocco and Egypt, and is expanding rapidly in Algeria.

Construction is one of Turkey's main industries, accounting for 7.1% of its GDP (2019 estimate) and providing employment for nearly two million people.<sup>81</sup> According to the Turkey Contractors Union (TMB), Turkish construction companies undertook projects abroad worth \$6.5 billion in the first half of 2021.<sup>82</sup> In 2020, Turkey ranked second after China for the number of contracting companies building projects across the world.<sup>83</sup> Africa accounts for 17.4% of Turkey's construction projects abroad, which include, among others, housing, water treatment facilities and airports.<sup>84</sup> For North Africa specifically, the Turkish government encourages Turkish companies to initiate new projects in order to assume an active role in the development of the region's construction sector.<sup>85</sup> Turkish-led construction projects are particularly visible in Algeria and Libya,<sup>86</sup> but one can also see a growing presence of Turkish companies in Morocco.<sup>87</sup>

As in Turkey, the construction industry forms an important aspect of the EU economy, providing 18 million direct jobs.<sup>88</sup> North Africa accounted for 18.4% (71 projects) of the

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80 Hasan Murat Ertuğrul, Burak Pirgaip, "The construction industry and economic growth in MENA countries", The Economic Research Forum, 12 April 2021 (accessed 8 November 2021).

81 Michaël Tanchum, "Turkey's Maghreb-West Africa Economic Architecture: Opportunities and Challenges", *Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS)*, Working Paper N. 03, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, June 2021; "Turkish International Contracting Services", TIM, March 2021. <https://www.tmb.org.tr/files/doc/1623914018902-ydmh-en.pdf>. "Annual Gross Domestic Product", TUIK, August 2021. 2019 <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Yillik-Gayrisafi-Yurt-Ici-Hasila-2019-33671>.

82 "Turkish contractors undertake projects worth \$6.5B in 6 months", *Daily Sabah*, 12 July 2021. <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/turkish-contractors-undertake-projects-worth-65b-in-6-months>.

83 "Turkish contractors rank 2nd in number after Chinese", *Daily Sabah*, 25 August 2020. <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/turkish-contractors-rank-2nd-in-number-after-chinese>.

84 Tanchum, "Turkey's Maghreb-West Africa Economic Architecture".

85 "Algeria is one of Turkey's strategic partners in North Africa", *DEİK*, January 2020. <https://www.deik.org.tr/basin-aciklamalari-erdogan-cezayir-turkiye-nin-kuzey-afrika-daki-stratejik-ortaklarindan-biri>.

86 Anonymous Turkish official 1, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

87 "Relations between Turkey and Morocco", Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-morocco.en.mfa>, accessed 16 November 2021.

88 "Construction Sector", European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/construction\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/construction_en), accessed 16 November 2021.

total number of EU construction projects on the African continent in 2020, representing a total value of \$111 billion.<sup>89</sup> In her State of the Union address in September 2021, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the launch of the 'Global Gateway', with the plans being unveiled on 1 December 2021.<sup>90</sup> With the Global Gateway, the Commission aims to mobilise up to 300 billion euros between 2021 and 2027 in investments to support infrastructure development around the world,<sup>91</sup> thereby forming an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The infrastructure sector is characterised by a competitive environment in North Africa. Although most countries have relatively good access to capital markets, the region is still in need of substantial investments in infrastructure in order to boost sustained economic growth.<sup>92</sup> In recent years, China has been ramping up engagement with North African countries in the infrastructure sector, carrying out 121 projects in 2020 – 31.4% of all infrastructure projects in the region.<sup>93</sup> In addition, China has declared its desire to make North Africa an integrated part of its BRI. During the China Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASC) in 2014, President Xi Jinping highlighted his aim to increase the volume of trade between China and MENA countries.<sup>94</sup>

Both Turkey and EU experts expressed their concerns regarding China's increasing presence in infrastructure projects in North Africa, referring particularly to how the country operates by 'penetrating Africa'.<sup>95</sup> However, as mentioned by an EU official, 'the pendulum could be swinging to Turkey's side in the future'.<sup>96</sup> The country has almost

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89 "Africa Construction Trends Report", Deloitte, 2021, <https://www2.deloitte.com/za/en/pages/energy-and-resources/articles/africa-construction-trends-2020.html>, accessed 15 October 2021.

90 "EU launches 'Global Gateway' to counter China's Belt and Road", Politico EU, 15 September 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-launches-global-gateway-to-counter-chinas-belt-and-road/>; "Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union's strategy to boost sustainable links around the world", European Commission, 1 December 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_6433](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6433).

91 "Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union's strategy to boost sustainable links around the world", European Commission, 1 December 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_6433](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6433).

92 "North Africa Regional Overview", AfDB. <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/north-africa/north-africa-overview>.

93 Followed by 111 projects (28.8%) carried out by private national companies, and 58 projects (15.1%) carried out by consortiums. Source: "Africa Construction Trends Report", Deloitte, 2021. <https://www2.deloitte.com/za/en/pages/energy-and-resources/articles/africa-construction-trends-2020.html>, accessed 15 October 2021.

94 "Expanding Sino-Maghreb Relations", Chatham House, 26 February 2020. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/02/expanding-sino-maghreb-relations/2-china-and-maghreb>.

95 Nurettin Akdeniz, General Manager at Nurol Construction, interview by Pinar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 7 October 2021.

96 Anonymous EU official 3, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.



as much experience in foreign infrastructure projects, but allegedly follows a different approach that could potentially be supported by the EU. According to experts, China's projects in the region will not only undermine climate change mitigation policies, but will also lead to a weakening of the partnership between the EU and North African countries on issues such as political reform and democratisation, which are of great importance to the EU.<sup>97</sup> The main difference between the Turkish and Chinese models is that Turkish companies continue to cooperate after the projects are completed.<sup>98</sup> Generally, Chinese companies complete their work on projects in Africa and then return to China.<sup>99</sup> In addition, Chinese companies bring in Chinese workers for the projects and thus do not involve the local workforce in any significant numbers.<sup>100</sup> According to the Anonymous Turkish expert 2, Turkish companies undertake cheaper and better-quality projects than China. In addition, they employ local people rather than Turkish workers, and when projects are completed, they continue to monitor them and provide support.<sup>101</sup>

Given its high-quality, cost-effective, and time-saving skills in the construction sector, and its experience in and cultural affinity with the North African region, Turkey could play an implementer role in a potential tripartite collaborative model.<sup>102</sup> Also, as evident from existing bilateral cooperation agreements, Turkey already enjoys long-standing relations with Algeria and Libya in the construction sector. Germany and Egypt have also recently signed a document to enhance cooperation in the construction sector, among others.<sup>103</sup> These frameworks, and the capacities of the public and private sector actors involved, could potentially provide solid ground for multilateral cooperation. In such a model of collaboration, while the EU could be the developer of the projects with its technical capacity to design complex infrastructure projects such as bridges, airports and railways, North African countries would be the project owners.

Construction industry is also significant because it can contribute to the green energy transition. Akdeniz highlights that in spite of its extensive experience in the construction sector, Turkey lags behind in green technologies to the extent that it has a 'dinosaur

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97 Amine Bennis, Power surge: How the European Green Deal can succeed in Morocco and Tunisia, ECFR, Policy Brief, 26 January 2021. <https://ecfr.eu/publication/power-surge-how-the-european-green-deal-can-succeed-in-morocco-and-tunisia/>.

98 Anonymous Turkish expert 2, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

99 Ibid.

100 Frangton Chiyemura, "Chinese firms – and African labor – are building Africa's infrastructure", *Washington Post*, 2 April 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/04/02/chinese-firms-african-labor-are-building-africas-infrastructure/>.

101 Anonymous Turkish expert 2, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

102 See Table 2.

103 "Egypt, Germany sign document on promoting economic partnership", *Egypt Today*, 4 February 2019. <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/64267/Egypt-Germany-sign-document-on-promoting-economic-partnership>.

sector<sup>104</sup>. The EU, in turn, aims to integrate climate and environmental actions across all policy areas and has made various funds available for this purpose,<sup>105</sup> such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,<sup>106</sup> as well as grants from the European Investment Bank (EIB), the IFC, and the EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development). There is also a cooperation mechanism between the AfDB (African Development Bank)<sup>107</sup> and the EBRD to release sustainable investment opportunities in Africa.<sup>108</sup>

In terms of cooperation, Algeria is preferable to other North African countries. The share of the construction sector in the country's economy is around 10 to 15%,<sup>109</sup> with many projects awaiting construction.<sup>110</sup> According to government regulations, at least 51% of large companies operating in Algeria must be owned by an Algerian citizen.<sup>111</sup> In recent years, the influence of China, Canada, France and Italy has been felt in Algeria; French Alstom, Chinese State Construction & Engineering Company, Sonatrach, Algerian Company for the realisation of industrial projects (SAPRI) and local companies such as COSIDER Spa and Groupe Batimétal all operate in the sector.<sup>112</sup> In addition, Turkish companies such as Tosalı Holding, Nurol Construction, ENKA, MAPA, Rönensans Holding, Makyol, Atlas, Dekinsan, Yapı Merkezi, Stafa and Özgün make up around 60-65% of the construction sector in Algeria, with projects including the construction of roads, hospitals and housing, among others.<sup>113</sup> In 2018, Tayal SPA, Africa's biggest textile factory, was constructed in Algeria in collaboration between Turkish Taypa Company and the Algerian government.<sup>114</sup>

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104 Anonymous Turkish official 2, interview by Akpınar, van Heukelingen and Durukan.

105 Anonymous EU official 3, interview by Akpınar, Durukan.

106 "EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa", European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/north-africa\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/north-africa_en).

107 The African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) agreement establishes the world's largest free trade area comprising 1.3 billion people across 55 countries with a combined GDP of \$3.4 trillion. See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/trade/publication/the-african-continental-free-trade-area>.

108 Nibal Zgheib, "AfDB and EBRD partner to unlock sustainable investment opportunities in Africa", European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 17 May 2021. <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/afdb-and-ebrd-partner-to-unlock-sustainable-investment-opportunities-in-africa.html>.

109 Anonymous EU official 3, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

110 Ibid.

111 Doğu Bozkurt, Sales Chief at Tosalı Holding Algeria, interview by Pinar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 22 November 2021.

112 "Algeria Construction Sector Report", *Global Business Development*, 14 October 2020. <https://ods.danismanlik.com/tr/makaleler/cezayir-insaat-sektoru-sektor-raporlari/>.

113 Bozkurt, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

114 "The largest textile factory in Africa opened in a Turkish-Algerian partnership", Anadolu Agency, 15 January 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/turk-cezayir-ortakliginda-afrikanin-en-buyuk-tekstil-tesis-acildi/1030969#:~:text=Cezayir%20h%C3%BCk%C3%BCmeti%20ile%20T%C3%BCrk%20Tay,5%20milyar%20dolara%20mal%20oldu>, accessed 29 November 2021.

On the EU side, the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement signed between the EU and Algeria in 2002 supports the possibility of cooperation. Priority areas of cooperation covered by this agreement are ‘the modernization of road, rail, port and airport infrastructure on major trans-European routes of mutual interest and on routes of regional interest, as well as aids to navigation’.<sup>115</sup> Experts emphasise that the country provides an easy investment opportunity for Turkish and European companies, apart from the lengthy bureaucratic procedures.<sup>116</sup> Turkey has many workers in these North African countries and EU countries could seek some level of cooperation in bringing their technology under the Green Deal as part of the new construction standards.

**Table 2 Tripartite collaborative model for construction with a focus on public infrastructure**

<b>Needs</b>	<p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of public infrastructure and the construction sector.</li> <li>• Capacity building in the construction sector.</li> <li>• Financial assistance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation from the EU in the field of green technology transformation.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be more active in North Africa and increase EU leverage against China.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacities</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality, cost-effective and time-saving construction skills and experienced contractors.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical capacity to design complex infrastructure projects such as bridges, airports, railways.</li> <li>• Engineering know-how.</li> <li>• Capacity in cutting-edge green technologies.</li> <li>• Financial capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Roles</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementer of the projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developer of the projects.</li> <li>• Provider of funds.</li> </ul> <p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners of projects.</li> </ul>

115 “EU-Algeria Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement”, Council of the European Union, 12 April 2002. <https://investmentpolicy.unctad.org/international-investment-agreements/treaty-files/2643/download>.

116 Akdeniz, interview by Akpınar and Durukan, Zoom.

<b>Collaborative advantages</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural advantage vis-a-vis the EU and China in North Africa.</li> <li>• Alternative approach to the Chinese model.</li> <li>• Experience of working in the region, particularly in Algeria.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technological advantage.</li> </ul>
<b>Conveners</b>	<p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North African government agencies, CGEA, CGEM, FEI.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEIK, TUSIAD, TOBB, TIM, TIKA, Ministry of Commerce, Turkish construction companies.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund, EBRD, EIB, BusinessMed, MEDEF, BDI, CONFINDUSTRIA, CEOE, European consulting and construction companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The European Fund for Sustainable Development+ (EFSD+) and the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The restrictions against foreign investors in North Africa.</li> <li>• Bureaucratic delays in project approvals, especially in Algeria.</li> <li>• The dominance of the army over Egypt's construction industry.</li> <li>• The tension between the governments of Turkey and Egypt.</li> <li>• China's potential growth in the region.</li> <li>• Geopolitical uncertainties.</li> <li>• Competition between Turkey and the EU in the construction sector.</li> </ul>

**Recommended project idea:**

**Building multilateral approaches to development**

This project idea refers to cooperation between Turkey, the EU and North African countries on conducting collaborative research into comparative examples from the Chinese and Turkish models in order to create an alternative to the Chinese model. In this regard, the project aims to find an economic model adapted to the conditions of North Africa and consistent with the objectives of the EU and Turkey. In addition, it would provide assistance to North African countries in adopting a legal framework to promote this business model. Cases from African countries such as Djibouti, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Somalia and Ethiopia could be studied where both China and Turkey manage public infrastructure projects. The project could be a way for Turkey and the EU to work together with the region's stakeholders in a win-win approach on public infrastructure projects.

Several Turkish and European companies have expressed an interest in combining their capabilities to cooperate in the field of public infrastructure in North African countries.<sup>117</sup> Government support for collaboration is substantial, but the involvement of the business community is crucial for cost-benefit analyses for all parties. Significant and comprehensive value added could provide good cooperation with local companies.<sup>118</sup> This will promote the development of the construction sector in the region. In addition, projects that include green transformation in public procurement, and especially some parameters and regulations of the EU Green Deal, could also be implemented.<sup>119</sup>

Potential project partners could be DEİK, the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD), the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), TİKA, BusinessMed, ministries of trade and economy, the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund, the African Development Bank, TİM, Turkish energy companies, universities and think tanks. Potential funders might be the Turkish Ministry of Trade, the European Commission, UNECA, and public and private partnerships (PPPs).

### 5.3 Cooperation on health with a focus on post-Covid recovery

The Covid-19 pandemic has put long-standing weaknesses of healthcare systems around the world under the spotlight, including in the EU, Turkey, and North Africa. Now, almost two years after the outbreak, countries are trying to get back on their feet, offering an opportunity to reflect on the insights gained during the pandemic and work towards health systems that are more resilient and sustainable. In this policy option, we therefore look at the opportunities for collaboration between Turkey and the EU on healthcare in Morocco, Algeria and Egypt, with a focus on post-Covid recovery.

More than once, Europe has been at the epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in widespread disruption of its healthcare systems: acute care for patients with Covid-19 was often prioritised over non-urgent care, preventive services were postponed and many long-term residential facilities were left poorly equipped and therefore unable to protect their vulnerable residents.<sup>120</sup> The EU responded to this disruption by announcing its largest-ever health programme in monetary terms: *EU4Health* (5.4 billion euros) is ultimately expected to pave the way to a European

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117 İskender, interview by Akpınar, van Heukelingen, Durukan; Bozkurt, interview by Akpınar and Durukan; Anonymous EU official 5, interview by Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 15 October 2021; Akdeniz, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

118 Anonymous EU official 5, interview by Durukan.

119 Anonymous Turkish official 2, interview by Akpınar, van Heukelingen and Durukan.

120 "Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic: Which EU funds can help?", European Public Health Alliance, October 2021. <https://epha.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/epha-health-systems-finance-vk.pdf>.

Health Union.<sup>121</sup> The framework aims to prepare EU member states for future health crises and long-term challenges, such as an ageing population.<sup>122</sup>

During the first year of the pandemic, the EU's debate was mainly focused on the effectiveness of national measures to cope with the pandemic. As of mid-2021, however, attention slowly shifted to the situation beyond its borders, including Africa.<sup>123</sup> In May, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced 1 billion euros to help create and enable an environment for local vaccine manufacturing in Africa, and in October EU leaders pledged to donate 450 million vaccine doses to poorer countries, most of which are in Africa, by mid-2022 through the COVAX facility.<sup>124</sup> However, as we enter 2022, public health experts point out that the COVAX facility has fallen woefully short and so far countries have struggled to deliver the promised vaccines.<sup>125</sup>

When looking at Turkey, one sees a different pattern. First, due to the comprehensive reform programme *Transformation in Health* (since 2003) as well as the deployment of early and stringent measures during the first wave, the rapid spread of infections did not overwhelm the Turkish healthcare system.<sup>126</sup> Turkey was among the first countries on the European continent to stop flights to and from China, employed targeted lockdowns for specific age groups and professions, and rapidly increased its daily testing capacity.<sup>127</sup> Once restrictions were lifted in favour of the economy, numbers spiked within a matter of months – turning hospitals into pandemic hospitals, prioritising acute care for patients

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121 Press Corner, European Commission, 28 May 2020. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA\\_20\\_956](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_956).

122 "Questions and Answers: EU4Health Programme 2021-2027", European Commission, 26 March 2021. [https://www.parlementairemonitor.nl/9353000/1/j9tvqajcor7dxyk\\_j9vvij5epmj1ey0/vlhfhgvqkx8?ctx=vq9pjpw5wsz1&v=1&start\\_tab0=80](https://www.parlementairemonitor.nl/9353000/1/j9tvqajcor7dxyk_j9vvij5epmj1ey0/vlhfhgvqkx8?ctx=vq9pjpw5wsz1&v=1&start_tab0=80).

123 "For a new health partnership with Africa", DGAP Online Commentary, 11 June 2021. <https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/new-health-partnership-africa>.

124 "€1 billion Team Europe initiative on manufacturing and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies in Africa", European Commission, 21 May 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_2594](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2594).

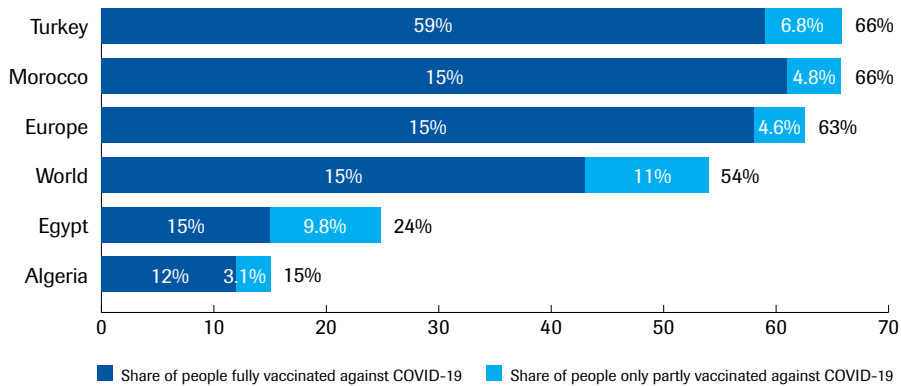
125 "The world has failed at vaccine equity. Will 2022 be different?", Al Jazeera, 22 December 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/22/will-low-income-countries-be-vaccinated-against-covid-in-2022>.

126 Evren Balta and Soli Özel, "The Post-Truth Phase Of Turkey's Pandemic Response", Institut Montaigne, 8 December 2020. <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/blog/post-truth-phase-turkeys-pandemic-response>.

127 "Turkey's response to COVID-19: first impressions", World Health Organization, 11 July 2020. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/335803/WHO-EURO-2020-1168-40914-55408-eng.pdf>; Balta and Özel, "The Post-Truth Phase Of Turkey's Pandemic Response".

with Covid-19 and postponing elective procedures,<sup>128</sup> yet the country allegedly managed to keep the death rate low.<sup>129</sup> Ankara also adopted a robust vaccination programme.<sup>130</sup> As of December 2021, the number of vaccinated people in Turkey is higher than the world average and the EU average as well as that of Morocco, Algeria and Egypt.<sup>131</sup>

**Figure 1 Percentage of populations vaccinated against Covid-19, as of 30 November 2021**



Alternative definitions of a full vaccination, e.g. having been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and having 1 dose of a 2-dose protocol, are ignored to maximize comparability between countries.

Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data. CC BY

Second, at the beginning of the pandemic Turkey began to pursue an active ‘pandemic diplomacy’ as part of its enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy.<sup>132</sup> Under the slogan ‘the fight [...] can only be won through international cooperation and solidarity’<sup>133</sup> Ankara provided masks and other medical equipment to 157 countries (44 of which are in Africa)<sup>134</sup> and recently promised to send 15 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to Africa. It makes Turkey the third largest provider of pandemic aid in the

128 Hakan Öğütü, “Turkey’s Response to COVID-19 in Terms of Mental Health”, *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* 37, no. 3 (2020): 222–225.

129 Some experts argue that Covid-19 statistics are being underreported in Turkey. See, Sezer Kısa and Adnan Kısa, “Under-reporting of COVID-19 cases in Turkey”, *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management* 35, no. 5 (2020): 1009–1013.

130 Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı. Asrın Küresel Salgını.

131 See Figure 1.

132 Akpınar, “Turkey’s ‘Novel’ Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy and Africa,” 500.

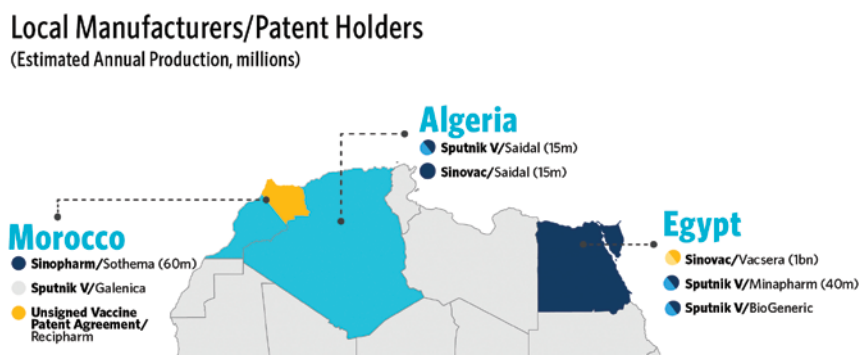
133 “Our Role and Vision During the Coronavirus Pandemic”, Turkish MFA. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/koronavirus-salginindaki-rol-ve-vizyonumuz-6-11-2020.en.mfa>

134 Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı. Asrın Küresel Salgını, 372.

world.<sup>135</sup> President Erdoğan recently criticised the current distribution of vaccines, stating that ‘while a majority of the population in developed countries has been vaccinated with at least one dose, this rate has not reached even 1% in sub-Saharan Africa’ [...] therefore ‘Turkey support[s] the initiatives for fair access to vaccines’.<sup>136</sup>

In sum, Turkey and the EU have taken different paths in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic domestically but share a similar vision when it comes to fighting the crisis internationally. For Africa specifically, that means helping the continent with fair access to vaccines and providing assistance in strengthening its health systems.<sup>137</sup> Morocco, Egypt and Algeria have failed to take effective measures against the pandemic.<sup>138</sup> New cases and deaths spiked between June and September 2021, putting their healthcare systems under unprecedented strain in the months that followed. The pandemic exposed major gaps in the countries’ healthcare systems.<sup>139</sup>

**Figure 2 Covid-19 vaccine production in Africa, as at September 2021<sup>140</sup>**



135 “Turkey assures solidarity with US in COVID-19 fight”, *Anadolu Agency*, 29 April 2020. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/latest-on-coronavirus-outbreak/turkey-assures-solidarity-with-us-in-covid-19-fight/1822400>.

136 Turkey’s President Erdoğan urges equal access to vaccines, *Anadolu Agency*, 21 May 2021. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/latest-on-coronavirus-outbreak/turkeys-president-erdogan-urges-equal-access-to-vaccines/2250373>.

137 See Figure 2.

138 “One year of COVID-19 in the Middle East and North Africa: The fate of the ‘best performers’”, Brookings, 22 March 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/03/22/one-year-of-covid-19-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-the-fate-of-the-best-performers/>.

139 Janel Siemplenski Lefort, “Fast Relief”, European Investment Bank, 2 December 2021. <https://www.eib.org/en/stories/morocco-health-system-covid-19>.

140 Usman and Ovadia, “Is There Any COVID-19 Vaccine Production in Africa?”.



In addition, and as mentioned above, Covid-19 vaccines have been slow to arrive in Africa,<sup>141</sup> and that specifically applies to Egypt and Algeria: those countries have a vaccination rate of 14% and 11% respectively.<sup>142</sup> One of the main reasons for the low percentages is the lack of available supplies.<sup>143</sup> Africa manufacturers not even 1% of all vaccines administered on the continent, and countries are relying heavily on programmes such as COVAX – which, as mentioned before, is experiencing severe supply shortages.<sup>144</sup> However, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria are among the six African countries currently setting up facilities to ramp up production of Covid-19 vaccines;<sup>145</sup> such facilities include Sinovac, Sputnik V and Sinopharm (see Figure 2). This lack of production has been partly due to the EU blocking a temporary waiver on Covid vaccine patent laws. However, a European Commission official recently stated that the EU ‘is now ready to go beyond’ its initial position.<sup>146</sup>

A number of experts who participated in this study agreed that, as with the European Green Deal, multi-country cooperation is necessary to ensure global health security. In July 2021, Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca and the EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides held a bilateral meeting on the initiation of the High-Level Dialogue in the Field of Health, which could potentially serve as a starting point for EU-Turkey cooperation on health.<sup>147</sup> Looking at the content of such collaboration, ‘vaccine supply’ and the need to increase the vaccination rate in Algeria and Egypt were often mentioned.<sup>148</sup> Turkey and the EU both aim to support initiatives for fair access to vaccines.<sup>149</sup> In addition, according to Dilek Aydın,<sup>150</sup> TÜSIAD EU Representative

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141 “Vaccines are finally arriving in Africa—but the rollout will be a challenge”, *The Economist*, 12 November 2021. <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/11/12/vaccines-are-finally-arriving-in-africa-but-the-rollout-will-be-a-challenge>.

142 “Coronavirus (covid-19) vaccinations”, Our World in Data. [https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID\\_WRL](https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID_WRL).

143 Zainab Usman and Juliette Ovidia, “Is There Any COVID-19 Vaccine Production in Africa?”, Carnegie, 13 September 2021. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/09/13/is-there-any-covid-19-vaccine-production-in-africa-pub-85320>.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid.

146 “EU, South Africa hold “intense talks” to break vaccine patent impasse”, *Reuters*, 15 October 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-south-africa-hold-intense-talks-break-vaccine-patent-impasse-2021-10-14/>.

147 “High Level Dialogue Meeting In the Field of Health”, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, 16 August 2021. <https://disab.saglik.gov.tr/EN-85031/high-level-dialogue-meeting-in-the-field-of-health.html>.

148 See Table 3.

149 Anonymous EU official 4, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

150 Dilek Aydın, TÜSIAD EU Representative, interview by Pınar Akpınar, Nienke van Heukelingen and Fatih Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 22 November 2021.

and anonymous Turkish official 2,<sup>151</sup> research may be another important element in EU-Turkey cooperation on health.

**Table 3 Tripartite collaborative model for health with a focus on post-covid recovery**

<b>Needs</b>	<p><b>Egypt and Algeria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local vaccines manufacturing.</li> <li>• Ramp up Covid-19 vaccination rates.</li> <li>• Improve their national health systems to be prepared for future pandemics (also applies to Morocco).</li> </ul>
<b>Capacities</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilient health sector and well-trained health personnel.</li> <li>• Established capacity in humanitarian and pandemic diplomacy.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive funds and an existing roadmap to develop regional vaccine manufacturing hubs.</li> <li>• Access to Covid-19 vaccine patents.</li> <li>• Cutting-edge technology in vaccine production.</li> </ul>
<b>Roles</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing healthcare capacity.</li> <li>• Project implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund projects.</li> <li>• Transferring vaccine and health systems know-how and technologies.</li> <li>• Involving its health researchers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Egypt, Algeria and Morocco</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project owners.</li> <li>• Involving its health researchers.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative advantages</b>	<p><b>Morocco</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advantage vis-a-vis other North African countries in coping with the pandemic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A resilient health sector.</li> <li>• Experience in pandemic and health diplomacy.</li> <li>• Good working relations with Algeria.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive funds allocated for the pandemic.</li> <li>• Extensive experience in vaccine production.</li> <li>• Existing roadmap for regional vaccine manufacturing hubs.</li> <li>• Established working relations with Egypt.</li> </ul>

151 Anonymous Turkish official 2, interview by Akpınar, van Heukelingen and Durukan.

<b>Conveners</b>	<p><b>Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), health ministries, African Union, universities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Health, TIKA, universities, The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID), European Commission’s DG SANTE, universities.</li> </ul>
<b>Mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Team Europe initiative on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies in Africa.</li> <li>• The High-Level Dialogue in the Field of Health between EU and Turkey.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reluctance of Brussels to back a proposed waiver on vaccine patents which could cause a further delay in the establishment of local COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing hubs.</li> <li>• Clashes with China and Russia due to their initiatives for promoting their own vaccines.</li> <li>• The emergence of other international priorities such as the war in Ukraine.</li> </ul>

### Recommended project ideas:

Following the above, two projects on health, with a focus on post-Covid recovery – one medium-term, one long-term – were proposed for collaboration between the EU and Turkey.

### Assisting in setting up vaccine production in North Africa

In order to give North Africa a long-term perspective and prevent its dependence on Chinese and Russian vaccines, it is important to go beyond the current commitment of a fixed number of vaccines through the COVAX facility.<sup>152</sup> This could be done by implementing an objective that both Turkey and the EU are pursuing, namely ‘supporting initiatives for fair access to vaccines’.

From that perspective, this policy option proposes a medium-term project, in which the EU and Turkey provide assistance to Algeria, Morocco and Egypt in setting up local vaccine production. In doing so, they would meet the African Union’s objective of producing 60% of vaccinations in Africa by 2040.<sup>153</sup> The EU has allocated one billion euros and drawn up a roadmap, in which they promise to ‘support technology transfer

152 “For a new health partnership with Africa”, DGAP Online Commentary, 11 June 2021.

<https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/new-health-partnership-africa>.

153 “Statement on the remarkable progress made by several African countries as part of the Partnerships for

African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM)”, Africa Union, 13 July 2021. <https://africacdc.org/news-item/statement-on-the-remarkable-progress-made-by-several-african-countries-as-part-of-the-partnerships-for-african-vaccine-manufacturing-pavm/>.

and develop a number of regional manufacturing hubs in alignment' with the African Union and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).<sup>154</sup> It could be interesting to explore the option of adding Turkey to that roadmap and to the 'core group' for two reasons. First, Turkey has followed a policy of robust pandemic diplomacy in the last two years, in which its well-trained health personnel have been closely involved. Moreover, Turkey is the third ranked country in the world for the highest number of vaccine studies, with 17 vaccine and medicine development projects.<sup>155</sup> Recently, it has also developed its own vaccine, the Turkovac.<sup>156</sup> Second, as also highlighted by EU official 4, Turkey's experience with switching between different types of vaccines could be an interesting example that might potentially be transported to North Africa.<sup>157</sup>

### Establishing a consortium of scientists and policy makers to collaborate on research and education projects

This policy option proposes a long-term project that envisages the organisation of search conferences and meetings with Turkish, European, Algerian and Moroccan leading scientists and policy makers. Together with a 'core team', search conferences and meetings could be organised to identify the main problems in the countries, assess potential future health risks, list the needs, and plan the priorities directed to education and research for the future.

Here too, the ESCMID could be a partner organisation, as it is already doing work on educational issues and postgraduate courses for doctors and PhD students to understand (future) health issues. In addition, universities and research councils of respective countries could be incorporated.

## 5.4 Cooperation on the Green Deal with a focus on renewable energy

Climate change is having a catastrophic impact on human life. The Sixth Assessment Report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has alarmingly called for a Red Code for humanity and made it clear that 'it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, oceans and land'. Temperature rise will not be

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154 "€1 billion Team Europe initiative on manufacturing and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies in Africa", European Commission, 21 May 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_2594](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2594).

155 "Erdoğan: En çok aşı projesi yürüten üçüncü ülke", *DW*, 28 January 2021, <https://www.dw.com/tr/erdo%C4%9Fan-en-%C3%A7ok-a%C5%9F%C4%B1-projesi-y%C3%BCr%C3%BCten-%C3%BC%C3%A7%C3%BCnc%C3%BC-%C3%BCkeyiz/a-56370811>, last accessed 23 December 2021.

156 "Turkey's Turkovac surpasses Chinese jab in terms of protection", *Daily Sabah*, 12 January 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/turkeys-turkovac-surpasses-chinese-jab-in-terms-of-protection/news>.

157 Anonymous EU official 4, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

halted at 1.5°C or 2°C if emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are not deeply reduced in the coming years.<sup>158</sup> The Mediterranean is one of the regions most affected by climate change. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the speed of warming in the Mediterranean is 20% higher than the global average.<sup>159</sup> In summer 2021 the region witnessed the highest temperatures and worst forest fires in the documented history of Europe. Countries in the region such as Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Algeria have been swept by wildfires, with dire consequences.<sup>160</sup>

The European Green Deal is the EU's roadmap for making the bloc the first climate neutral continent by 2050.<sup>161</sup> It sets out how the European Union plans to transform environmental and climate challenges into opportunities in various sectors. In that light, the energy sector – with a focus on renewable energy – plays a key role. The current production and use of energy account for more than 75% of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>162</sup> Decarbonising its energy system is therefore critical for reaching its climate objectives. However, according to the European Commission, 'this transition for Europe can only be fully effective, if the EU's immediate neighbourhood also takes effective action'.<sup>163</sup> It therefore established its 'EU green deal diplomacy', with which it aims to convince and support others to take on their share.<sup>164</sup> Work is underway on setting up a green agenda with the Western Balkans, and now the Commission is envisaging several energy partnerships with its Southern Neighbourhood, including Morocco, Algeria and Egypt.<sup>165</sup>

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158 IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press.

159 UNEP, "Climate change in the Mediterranean", <https://www.unep.org/unepmap/resources/factsheets/climate-change>.

160 UNDP Climate Change Adaptation, Turkey, <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/europe-and-central-asia/turkey>.

161 "A European Green Deal", European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en).

162 "Energy and the Green Deal", European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/energy-and-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/energy-and-green-deal_en).

163 "European Green Deal", European Commission, 11 December 2019. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640&from=ET>.

164 "Communication on The European Green Deal", European Commission, 11 December 2019. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF), p. 20.

165 Ibid.

In February 2021 the European Commission presented the *New Agenda for the Mediterranean*<sup>166</sup> and subsequent *Economic Investment Plan (EIP)*<sup>167</sup> in which it builds on that intention/promise. In its new strategy for its Southern Neighbourhood, the Commission identifies 'green transition' as one of the five key policies and proposes a series of investments and projects it is willing to finance.<sup>168</sup> More concretely, concerning Egypt it proposes to support the country's transition to a green economy. As for Algeria, it focuses on supporting the country's effort to exploit its largely untapped potential of renewable energy (solar and wind). Lastly, regarding Morocco, it proposes to expand its support to the country's effort to meet its ambitious renewable energy and energy efficiency targets and accelerate the production of green hydrogen.

Moving on to Turkey, the country seems to lag in terms of green policies. President Erdoğan's focus on mega-infrastructure projects has evoked criticism and Ankara has been referred to by some experts as a latecomer to action.<sup>169</sup> However, the floods and forest fires that ravaged Turkey last summer seem to have put the issue of 'climate change' higher up on the agenda, followed by concrete action.<sup>170</sup> In October, Turkey ratified the Paris Agreement, which can be seen as an important step. Furthermore, Turkey and the EU had their first High-Level Dialogue on Climate in September to 'strengthen [...] cooperation in combating climate change'.<sup>171</sup>

In both the High-Level Dialogue on Climate and the Paris Agreement, renewable energy plays a key role. At the same time, this priority is also reflected in *Turkey's International Energy Strategy* as well as its *National Energy Policy* (2017). Turkey has a 74% import dependency to meet its energy demand and has set itself the goal to strengthen the security of its energy supply by, among others, increasing renewable energy production.<sup>172</sup> Over the last five years, Turkey's renewable capacity grew by

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166 "Joint communication on Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood", European Commission, 9 February 2021. [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint\\_communication\\_renewed\\_partnership\\_southern\\_neighbourhood.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf).

167 Ibid.

168 Under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)1, and will only require part of the allocation for the Southern Neighbourhood.

169 Aslı Aydıntaşbaş and Susi Dennison, "New energies: How the European Green Deal can save the EU's relationship with Turkey", ECFR, 22 June 2021. <https://ecfr.eu/publication/new-energies-how-the-european-green-deal-can-save-the-eus-relationship-with-turkey/>.

170 Hilal Elver, "Paris iklim Anlaşması her şeyi değiştirecek: Türkiye'nin yeşil dönüşümüne kararlı adım", *FikirTuru*, 18 October 2021. <https://fikirturu.com/toplum/paris-iklim-anlasmasi-her-seyi-degistirecek-turkiyenin-yesil-donusumune-kararli-adim/>.

171 "The EU and Turkey discuss climate crisis and future cooperation", European Commission, 16 September 2021. [ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/eu-and-turkey-discuss-climate-crisis-and-future-cooperation-2021-09-16\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/eu-and-turkey-discuss-climate-crisis-and-future-cooperation-2021-09-16_en).

172 "Turkey's international energy strategy", Turkish MFA. [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy\\_en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy_en.mfa).

50%.<sup>173</sup> However, it should be noted that this figure also includes hydroelectric power plants, which are considered controversial by environmental organisations due to their hazardous construction process.<sup>174</sup> Another push comes from Turkey's business community, which has been trying to steer the government towards an environmentally friendly economic model for the past few years.<sup>175</sup> Aydın highlighted that, for instance, TUSIAD established a 'Green Deal task force' within a month of Ursula von der Leyen announcing the Green Deal.<sup>176</sup> While more cooperation between Turkey and the EU on renewable energy would fit the EU's Green Deal diplomacy and Turkey's energy strategies, such an intensified form of cooperation also needs to earn the endorsement of its counterparts in Morocco, Egypt and Algeria.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the three countries that span North Africa have different circumstances that influence their energy transition pathways.<sup>177</sup> The region includes large hydrocarbon producers and exporters (Algeria and Egypt), as well as countries that are heavily dependent on imports to meet domestic energy demand (Morocco). At the same time, *all* countries have significant potential when it comes to renewable resources and their governments are trying – to a greater or lesser extent – to work towards more sustainable energy systems. From that perspective, Morocco can be seen as the frontrunner: the country is responsible for 75% of growth in renewable electricity production in the region.<sup>178</sup> This achievement has also been evident in government policy target to produce 60% of its energy from renewables by 2030.<sup>179</sup> Egypt's progress is also worth noting. The country reached 25% surplus of electricity between 2015 and 2019,<sup>180</sup> and in its *Integrated Sustainable Energy Strategy 2035* it sets itself a target for renewables to make up almost half of the energy mix by 2035.<sup>181</sup> The 4th largest solar park in the world, the Benban Solar Park, is located in the country.<sup>182</sup>

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173 "Turkey's success in renewables is helping diversify its energy mix and increase its energy security", IEA, Paris, 11 March 2021. <https://www.iea.org/news/turkey-s-success-in-renewables-is-helping-diversify-its-energy-mix-and-increase-its-energy-security>.

174 "Yenilenebilir Enerjinin Sürdürülebilirliği ve HES'ler", WWF. [https://www.wwf.org.tr/ne\\_yapiyoruz/ayak\\_izinin\\_azaltilmasi/su\\_yenilenebilir\\_enerjinin\\_surdurulebilirligi/](https://www.wwf.org.tr/ne_yapiyoruz/ayak_izinin_azaltilmasi/su_yenilenebilir_enerjinin_surdurulebilirligi/).

175 Aydıntaşbaş and Dennison, "New energies". <https://ecfr.eu/publication/new-energies-how-the-european-green-deal-can-save-the-eus-relationship-with-turkey/>.

176 Aydın, interview by Akpınar, van Heukelingen and Durukan.

177 "Clean Energy Transitions in North Africa", IEA, Paris, 2020. [https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/b9c395df-97f1-4982-8839-79f0fdc8c1c3/Clean\\_Energy\\_Transitions\\_in\\_North\\_Africa.pdf](https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/b9c395df-97f1-4982-8839-79f0fdc8c1c3/Clean_Energy_Transitions_in_North_Africa.pdf), p. 19.

178 North Africa's pathways to clean energy transitions, IEA, Paris, 2020. <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/north-africa-s-pathways-to-clean-energy-transitions>.

179 Ibid.

180 Ibid.

181 "Renewable energy outlook - Egypt", IRENA, 2018. [https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2018/Oct/IRENA\\_Outlook\\_Egypt\\_2018\\_En\\_summary.pdf?la=en&hash=58DBAA614BE0675F66D3B4A2AC68833FF78700A0](https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2018/Oct/IRENA_Outlook_Egypt_2018_En_summary.pdf?la=en&hash=58DBAA614BE0675F66D3B4A2AC68833FF78700A0).

182 Ezzat, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

Given the growing threat of climate change and the need for adaptation to the Green Deal to ensure further integration into EU markets, there is a clear need in North Africa for further investment in renewable energy sectors. Similarly, Turkey also needs to ensure its energy security and increase its green technologies capacities. The EU has pledged to become the first climate neutral continent by 2050 and is in the process of diversifying its capacities of renewable energies. As such, tripartite collaboration between the three blocs could be timely and beneficial. In such a collaborative model, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria could lead the collaboration on North Africa’s green energy transition and share lessons learned, while Turkey could transfer the know-how and capacity of Turkish companies, especially on wind energy. Such collaboration could also enable it to use North Africa’s and the EU’s know-how to increase its green technologies capacities. In this model, the EU could facilitate access to technologies and research for Turkey and North Africa as well as providing national and regional grants.<sup>183</sup>

**Table 4 Tripartite collaborative model for green deal with a focus on renewable energy**

<b>Needs</b>	<p><b>Egypt and Morocco</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further (foreign) investment in renewable energy sectors.</li> <li>• Coping with climate change.</li> <li>• Adaptation to the Green Deal to ensure further integration into EU markets.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing its energy security.</li> <li>• Coping with climate change.</li> <li>• Increasing its green technologies capacities.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050.</li> <li>• Coping with climate change.</li> <li>• Diversifying its renewable energy capacities.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacities</b>	<p><b>Egypt and Morocco</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant potential for renewable resources.</li> <li>• Know-how on technologies for solar energy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong business community that pursues an environmentally friendly economic model.</li> <li>• Significant potential for renewable resources.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive funds allocated for Green Deal.</li> <li>• Cutting-edge technology for renewable energy production.</li> <li>• Experienced human resources.</li> </ul>

183 See Table 4.



<b>Roles</b>	<p><b>Egypt, Morocco and Algeria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead tripartite collaboration on North Africa’s green energy transition.</li> <li>• Share lessons learned.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer know-how and capacity of Turkish companies, especially on wind energy.</li> <li>• Use the lessons learned to increase its green technologies capacities.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing international cooperation to facilitate access to technologies and research.</li> <li>• Providing national and regional grants.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative advantages</b>	<p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of Egypt and Morocco in renewable energies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active business community.</li> <li>• Recently initiated high-level dialogue on climate change between Turkey and the EU.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Green Partnership with Morocco.</li> <li>• Extensive funds allocated for Green Deal.</li> </ul>
<b>Conveners</b>	<p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy (MASEN), Moroccan Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, Egyptian Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy (MOERE), the Egyptian New and Renewable Energy Authority (NREA) and ACWA Power.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Turkish Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change, Turkish companies.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar Thermal Electricity Association (ESTELA), Clean Energy Industrial Forum (CEIF), European Commission’s DG CLIMA.</li> </ul>
<b>Mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Green Deal.</li> <li>• The Agenda for the Southern Mediterranean.</li> <li>• The High-Level Climate Dialogue between the EU and Turkey.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inability of the EU and Turkey to implement the Green Deal and reach carbon emission goals.</li> <li>• Rising consumption of coal because of the increase in oil and gas prices due to developments such as the war in Ukraine.</li> <li>• Reluctance on the part of North African countries regarding Turkey’s involvement due to its lack of experience in this domain.</li> <li>• Geopolitical tensions in the Mediterranean.</li> </ul>

## Recommended project ideas:

### Setting up a cross-border project on solar energy

In line with its ambitious renewable energy strategy, the Moroccan government has scaled up its solar power generation in the last few years. Among other things, it built the world's largest concentrated solar power (CSP) facility: the Noor Ouarzazate plant, which produces electricity for 1.3 million people.<sup>184</sup> Building on the CSP experience, it would be interesting to explore the possibilities for a cross-border solar energy project between the EU, Turkey and Morocco, with the latter in the lead. Morocco shown its ability to develop large-scale CSP renewable projects, and according to experts, CSP is one of the most promising and economically attractive technologies for power generation in regions with a significant potential for solar electricity generation, such as the Mediterranean.<sup>185</sup>

Cooperation could potentially take place within the new 'Green Partnership' between Morocco and the EU: the first initiative with a partner country in which the external dimension of the European Green Deal is being advanced through action on the ground.<sup>186</sup> Turkey could be added as an 'external partner', with the added advantage of learning from Moroccan's progress in terms of solar energy. Potential collaborators could be, among others, the European Solar Thermal Electricity Association (ESTELA), the Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy (MASEN), Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the European Commission, and relevant ministries in the four blocs.

### Involve the big companies by creating a forum for exchange/cooperation

An energy transition demands cooperation and coordination between parties from the public and private sectors. Therefore, it is recommended that leaders from companies and institutions in the renewable energy industry are included. Such an initiative already exists at European level: the Clean Energy Industrial Forum (CEIF). The Forum is led by the European Commission and includes 30 CEOs and leaders

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184 Oliver Ristau, "Solar power from the desert", KfW Development Bank. <https://www.kfw.de/stories/environment/renewable-energy/solarstrom-aus-der-wueste/>.

185 Mokhtar Benasla, Denis Hess, Tayeb Allaoui, Mostefa Brahami, Mouloud Denai, "The transition towards a sustainable energy system in Europe: What role can North Africa's solar resources play?", *Energy Strategy Reviews* 24 (2019): 1-13. For this reason, some initiatives, such as the Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP), DESERTEC and MEDGRID, have been launched to promote the deployment of cross-Mediterranean HVDC links to enable the transfer of electricity from [renewable energy sources](#) between North-Africa and Europe. But so far, little has been achieved on the ground. Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211467X19300069>.

186 In June 2021 The European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco today announced their intention to establish a Green Partnership: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/eu-and-morocco-form-green-partnership-energy-climate-and-environment-ahead-cop-26-2021-06-28\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/eu-and-morocco-form-green-partnership-energy-climate-and-environment-ahead-cop-26-2021-06-28_en).

from institutions and companies across Europe's renewable energy industry.<sup>187</sup> During their high-level meetings, discussions have included a focus on ways to improve the industrial underpinning for renewables in the EU. Learning from that structure, it would be interesting to explore the possibility of creating a Mediterranean Clean Energy Industrial Forum. This could serve as a platform for exchange as well as further strengthening institutional support for the green energy transition across the southern Mediterranean.

## 5.5 Cooperation on agriculture with a focus on food security

Food security is defined as 'a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'.<sup>188</sup> The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines the four main dimensions of food security as: 'physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, use of food, stability of the other three dimensions over time'.<sup>189</sup> Sustainable food systems, agriculture and rural development are some of the flagships of the European Commission's *Investment and Economic Development Plan for the Southern Neighbours*, which is part of *A new agenda for the Mediterranean*.<sup>190</sup> The EU provides support for the development of sustainable agriculture. Agriculture and food security are also critical issues for the UN, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2) aims to 'eliminate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture'.<sup>191</sup>

While the absolute number of severely food insecure people peaked in the years 2016-2018 and declined in 2017-19, uncertainty about food access continues to increase in the region.<sup>192</sup> The main challenges to food security for North African countries are: volatility of agricultural production; agricultural research and development; nutritional standards; and agricultural import tariffs.<sup>193</sup> According to the 2020 Global Food Security

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187 "Clean Energy Industrial Forum", European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-annual-events/clean-energy-industrial-forum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-annual-events/clean-energy-industrial-forum_en).

188 "Food Security Information for Action", the EC - FAO Food Security Programme, 2008. <http://www.fao.org/3/al936e/al936e.pdf>, last accessed 28 July 2021.

189 Ibid.

190 EEAS, Joint communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, February 2021. [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint\\_communication\\_renewed\\_partnership\\_southern\\_neighbourhood.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf).

191 "Goals 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal2>.

192 "Near East and North Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2020", FAO, 2020. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb4902en/cb4902en.pdf>, 10.

193 Ibid.

Index, the top 20 ranking contains 11 EU member states. Turkey is ranked 48, Algeria 54, Morocco 57 and Egypt 62 out of 113 countries. The performance of countries over the last 10 years shows that Algeria ranks third among countries that have improved food security – with an increase of 10.3 points.<sup>194</sup>

Agriculture is one of the main industries in Turkey, the EU and North African. Morocco, Algeria and Egypt have an agricultural export market with the EU of about 7 million euros. Among the North African countries, Morocco is the country that exports the most agricultural products to the EU, totalling 2.5 billion.<sup>195</sup> While Turkey exports 3 million euros of agricultural products to the EU, it imports 4.6 million euros of agricultural products from the EU.<sup>196</sup> Turkey has an export volume of \$357 million with North African countries and an import volume of \$230 million.<sup>197</sup> However, while Algeria is the country to which Turkey exports the most in the field of agriculture, Egypt is the country from which it imports the most. Experts<sup>198</sup> fear that relations between Egypt and Turkey may affect the idea of cooperation in the agricultural sector, but the trade figures are not affected. On the contrary, due to its level of agricultural infrastructure and its close relationship with the EU, Morocco may offer better options for cooperation.

While the ratio of the agriculture sector in the overall economy remains slightly higher for North African countries, their industries remain rather underdeveloped.<sup>199</sup> Food security, the impact on farmers' and farm workers' incomes, employment opportunities, and export revenues for governments contribute to the development level of these countries.<sup>200</sup> In 2020, the agricultural industry accounted for 1.3% of the EU GDP, 6.6% of Turkey's GDP, 12.2% of Morocco's, 11.5% of Egypt's and 14.2% of Algeria's.<sup>201</sup> As such, the industry provides a valuable employment opportunity for North Africa, especially for Morocco and Egypt. The share of agriculture in total employment amounts to 4% for EU countries, 18% for Turkey, 33% for Morocco, 21% for Egypt and 10% for Algeria.<sup>202</sup>

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194 "Performance of countries based on their 2021 food security score" Global Food Security Index, September 2021. <https://foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/Index>.

195 "Agri-Food Trade Statistical Factsheet", European Commission, March 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/agrifood-morocco\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/agrifood-morocco_en.pdf), last accessed 10 November 2021.

196 Ibid.

197 Food and Drink Industry Associations of Turkey Federation (October 2021). Data on Turkey's foreign trade in the food and beverage sector, <https://www.tgdf.org.tr/turkiye-gida-ve-icecek-sektorleri-dis-ticaret-verileri-ots/>, last accessed 10 November 2021.

198 Anonymous EU official 5, interview by Durukan.

199 "Agriculture", OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/25507214.pdf>, last accessed 13 October 2021.

200 Ibid.

201 World Bank Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=DZ-MA-EG>.

202 World Bank Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=DZ-MA-EG-TR-EU>.

On the Turkish side, the country's agricultural policy mainly includes a requirement to meet the food security of a growing population.<sup>203</sup> The policy also refers to raising the level of self-sufficiency and to the fight against climate change.<sup>204</sup> The development of rural areas and harmonisation of the country's rural development policies and institutions with the EU are among the main objectives.<sup>205</sup> As the customs union agreement applies exclusively to industrial and processed agricultural products,<sup>206</sup> Turkey hopes that its modernisation will be an opportunity to fully exploit the trade potential through the measures taken, with the strengthening of 'preferential trade relations in agriculture, services, e-commerce and public procurement'.<sup>207</sup>

In a potential tripartite collaborative model for agriculture with a focus on food security, Turkey and the EU could contribute their technical and training capacities on sustainable agriculture.<sup>208</sup> The EU could also contribute with its capacity on technological facilities and green transformation as well as offering extensive funds. While Turkey and the EU would develop and implement the projects, North African countries could own and host them. Such collaboration would benefit all parties involved: as Hilal Elver, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2014-2020), noted North Africa is considered the 'orchard of the EU' and there is a growing demand for sustainable food systems in the region for all three blocs.<sup>209</sup>

Turkey's experience in agriculture and operating projects abroad could be seen as collaborative advantages in such a tripartite collaboration model. Moreover, the country also enjoys cultural affinity with North Africa. In such a model, the EU has advantages such as its extensive funds and its commitment to fight against climate change and support the Paris Agreement goals.

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203 "Turkey at a glance", FAO. <https://www.fao.org/turkey/fao-in-turkey/turkey-at-a-glance/en/>.

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid.

206 "Customs Union", Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate for EU Affairs, 12 July 2019. [https://www.ab.gov.tr/gumruk-birligi\\_46234.html](https://www.ab.gov.tr/gumruk-birligi_46234.html).

207 Samuel Doveri Vesterbye, Sait Akman, "A Modernized EU-Turkey Customs Union", European Neighbourhood Council, 2017. [https://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1491836076-0.A\\_Modernized\\_EU\\_Turkey\\_Customs\\_Union.pdf](https://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1491836076-0.A_Modernized_EU_Turkey_Customs_Union.pdf).

208 See Table 5.

209 Hilal Elver, Former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food at United Nations Human Rights Council (2014-2020), interview by Pinar Akpınar and Fatin Reşat Durukan, Zoom, 5 October 2021.

**Table 5 Tripartite collaborative model for agriculture with a focus on food security**

<b>Needs</b>	<p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring its food security.</li> <li>• Support for local farmers.</li> <li>• Improvement of wages and labour rights.</li> <li>• Technical assistance on sustainable agriculture.</li> <li>• Financial assistance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the volume of trade with North African countries.</li> <li>• Modernisation of Customs Union.</li> <li>• Ensuring its food security.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the volume of trade with North African countries.</li> <li>• Ensuring its food security.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacities</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical capacities on sustainable agriculture.</li> <li>• Training capacity on agroecology.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical capacities on sustainable agriculture.</li> <li>• Capacity on technological facilities and green transformation.</li> <li>• Extensive funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Roles</b>	<p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developer and implementer of projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developer and implementer of projects.</li> <li>• Providing funds.</li> <li>• Transferring technical capacities and technology.</li> </ul> <p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects owners.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative advantages</b>	<p><b>North Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being the orchard of Europe.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural affinity with North Africa.</li> <li>• Experience in operating projects abroad.</li> <li>• Experience in agriculture.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive funds.</li> <li>• Fight against climate change and supporting the Paris Agreement goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Conveners</b>	<p>WTO, FAO, Ministries of Agriculture and Trade, universities of respective countries</p> <p><b>Turkey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Agricultural Credit Cooperatives of Turkey.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Commission, Copa and Cogeca.</li> </ul>
<b>Mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizon Europe, as an extension of Cluster 6 of the Green Deal.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental implications of climate change such as forest fires, drought, and famine.</li> <li>• Competition between Turkey and North African countries on agriculture exports to the EU.</li> </ul>

## Recommended project ideas:

### Regional agricultural import and export network among Turkey, EU and North Africa

A regional agricultural import and export network between Turkey, the EU and North Africa could potentially improve infrastructure logistics, regulate trade, optimise value chain, and promote smallholder farmers in the market. With the addition of agriculture to the customs union between Turkey and the EU, trade with third countries is expected to gain more advantageous ground. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the region has a 'weak trade performance', which is 'influenced by the existence of high average tariffs and non-tariff barriers'.<sup>210</sup>

Elver argues that if North African countries competed with each other, they would have to reduce prices, and thus cooperation may be a better option.<sup>211</sup> It was suggested that Turkey and North Africa could establish an agricultural platform and export their products to the EU. Elver also highlighted that 'The EU could benefit from such trilateral collaboration since it has the Customs Union with Turkey and could prefer to use the latter as a bridge'.<sup>212</sup>

The project owners could be institutions and entrepreneurs. Potential collaborators could include international organisations such as the FAO and World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as civil societies. The duration of the project is expected to be two years.

### Training of agricultural sector on climate change, especially on agroecology and other production methods

The northern African agricultural sector faces serious threats, including from land degradation, with more than 150,000 hectares of salinized land in Morocco, Libya and Egypt.<sup>213</sup> According to experts, the countries could (partly) adapt to this with the use of 'agroecological technologies'.<sup>214</sup> Agroecology is an approach and a social movement that offers sustainable alternatives for transitioning to a food system in which safe and nutritious food is produced using ecological methods that are accessible to all.<sup>215</sup>

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210 "NENA Rural Poverty Assessment Report" IFAD, 2003. <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39135645/na-na.pdf/e749f42c-bbac-43f5-a3b7-30ecd56c088e>, p. 3.

211 Elver, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

212 Ibid.

213 Tharcisse Guedegbe, Tudal Sinsin, Mohammed Rachid Doukkali, "Is Land Degradation Neutrality in Africa Possible?", Policy Center for the New South, Policy Brief, PB-18/31, September 2018. <https://www.policycenter.ma/publications/land-degradation-neutrality-africa-possible>.

214 Zainab Usman, Olumide Abimbola and Imeh Ituen, "What does the European Green Deal mean for Africa?", Carnegie, 18 October 2021.

215 "Agroecology", FAO, <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/home/en/>.

With offering technological assistance as well as providing agroecological training, Turkey and the EU could potentially complement Africa's efforts in this regard.<sup>216</sup> In addition, the European Association for Agroecology at EU level points out that the European Green Deal can be implemented through agroecology, and because it is people-oriented it provides employment opportunities for women and young people.<sup>217</sup>

Turkey has already been providing training on agroecology in some African countries.<sup>218</sup> It is also collaborating with some EU countries on agroecological training. For instance, Bugday Association for Supporting Ecological Living, a prominent Turkish environmental NGO, is collaborating with NGOs from Italy, France, Serbia, Croatia, and Portugal on a project called MedCaravan. This project is supported by Erasmus+ and involves the establishment of an online platform that brings together data and experiences on agroecology from around the Mediterranean to convert them into educational material.<sup>219</sup> A similar project could be realised with the inclusion of North African countries. Universities, scientific institutions and civil society could be involved in this project.

### Obesity in the cities and malnutrition in rural areas

Urbanisation is the primary factor in the high prevalence of obesity.<sup>220</sup> Nutrition, overweight and obesity are considered critical factors in the SDGs for health goals.<sup>221</sup> Approximately 52 million people in the MENA region are experiencing serious malnutrition.<sup>222</sup> Obesity and malnutrition affects Turkey as well:<sup>223</sup> it has the highest obesity rate in Europe. According to Elver, it might be worthwhile to explore options for setting up a project with North African countries, Turkey and the EU on food systems.<sup>224</sup> In that light, the 'HealthyFoodAfrica' forms an interesting EU project with a similar objective – working towards resilient food systems – and could potentially serve

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216 Elver, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

217 "Agroecology initiatives in European countries", Agroecology Europe, Brussels, October 2020. <https://www.agroecology-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Mapping-report-key-findings-and-recommendations-final-for-circulation.pdf>.

218 Elver, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.

219 "Mediterranean Agroecology Caravan - MedCaravan", Bugday Association, 15 April 2021. <https://www.bugday.org/blog/medcaravan/>.

220 Stefania Toselli, Emanuela Gualdi-Russo, Dina N. K. Boulos, Wagida A. Anwar, Chérifa Lakhoua, Imen Jaouadi, Meriem Khyatti, Kari Hemminki, "Prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults from North Africa", *European Journal of Public Health*, Volume 24, August 2014, Pages 31–39.

221 "Nutrition, overweight and obesity: factsheet on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): health targets", World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe, 2021.

222 "Around 52 million in Near East, North Africa, suffering chronic undernourishment, new UN food agency report reveals", United Nations, 8 May 2019. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/05/1038111>.

223 Anonymous Turkish official 2, interview by Akpınar, van Heukelingen and Durukan.

224 Elver, interview by Akpınar and Durukan.



as a framework for cooperation.<sup>225</sup> It brings together social entrepreneurs, farmers, activists, businesses and policy makers to tackle specific challenges.

The project could include training programmes, collaboration with the school food system, access to healthy food, and regulation of the food environment and the media. Project conveners might be WHO, FAO, or ministries of agriculture, while potential collaborators could include associations such as Copa and Cogeca, the Agricultural Credit Cooperatives of Turkey, the food industry, official development assistance agencies and the media. The project could be developed and implemented by Turkey and the EU and could last approximately for three years.

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225 HealthyFoodAfrica Project. <https://healthyfoodafrica.eu/>.

## 6 Conclusion: Towards enhanced EU-Turkey cooperation in North Africa

This report examined the extent to which North Africa, and more specifically, Morocco, Egypt and Algeria, could offer a venue for potential collaboration between Turkey and the EU. The report posits that despite the difficulties between Turkey and the EU and a *de facto* frozen accession process, their partnership continues through a number of projects and engagements, and bilateral relations continue to function through the structures of the Association Agreement and other ad hoc structures.<sup>226</sup> That specifically applies to trade relations, which have increased between 2010 and 2020.<sup>227</sup>

To be able to explore the potential for collaboration, the report focused on five policy options that, according to the experts consulted for this project, have the greatest potential for future collaboration. These are:

- Cooperation on education with a focus on educational mobility
- Economic cooperation on construction with a focus on public infrastructure
- Cooperation on health with a focus on post-Covid recovery
- Cooperation on the European Green Deal with a focus on renewable energy
- Cooperation on agriculture with a focus on food security

A tripartite collaboration model was developed for each policy option followed by specific project ideas by outlining their impact, probability of success, actionability and purposefulness. In that respect, this report is an attempt to give concrete policy recommendations to relevant stakeholders on how collaboration could be achieved based on actionable project ideas.

Focusing on the five policy options, the study posits that the EU and Turkey have an established relationship in at least one domain (educational mobility) and are making progress – or at least have the aim to make progress – in two other domains

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226 "The effects of a suspension of Turkey's EU accession process", Stiftung Mercator, 2019.

[https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/content/uploads/2020/12/The\\_effects\\_of\\_a\\_suspension\\_of\\_turkey\\_s\\_EU\\_accession\\_process\\_study-1.pdf](https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/content/uploads/2020/12/The_effects_of_a_suspension_of_turkey_s_EU_accession_process_study-1.pdf).

227 "Turkey-EU - international trade in goods", Eurostat, March 2021. [statisticshttps://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Turkey-EU\\_-\\_international\\_trade\\_in\\_goods\\_statistics&oldid=522125](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Turkey-EU_-_international_trade_in_goods_statistics&oldid=522125).

(public health and climate change). Since 2004, Turkey has been an important partner in the EU's Erasmus Programme<sup>228</sup> and was recently granted 'association status' to EU programmes for the period 2021-2027.<sup>229</sup> For public health and climate, new high-level dialogue meetings were announced in June 2021, in which both blocs aim to discuss areas where they could advance their cooperation.<sup>230</sup> For the last two domains (construction and agriculture), the EU and Turkey each have their own expertise, but have not (yet) expressed a desire to collaborate.

This report investigated future opportunities in each domain and devised the following tripartite collaborative models for each policy option:

*Educational mobility* was noted as the most favourable and actionable area of the five policy options. While Turkey and the EU both enjoy established education systems and a well-established form of cooperation, there is a need for improvements in education infrastructure in North Africa, especially in Algeria. The existing EU framework could be enlarged by including North Africa, and Turkey could contribute significant experience and play a leadership role. Potential risks for such collaboration could be the pandemic, visa barriers, irregular migration due to visa violation by students, political manipulation, and the rise of xenophobia. While the risk of the pandemic could be overcome through the creation of a safe zone between collaborating countries, the other risks would need to be overcome through diplomacy and effective publicity.

With respect to the *construction* sector, it was emphasised that there is already a certain degree of competition between Turkey and the EU. A potential tripartite collaboration could, nevertheless, be established between the three blocs through a model where Turkey would implement the projects, the EU would develop and fund them, and North African countries would own them. Turkey's capacity in the construction sector and the EU's green technologies provide a good opportunity for cooperation. Such collaboration could create an alternative approach to the Chinese model and curb public infrastructure development in North Africa. The European Fund for Sustainable Development+ (EFSD+) and the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement are mechanisms that could be utilized for such collaboration. Potential risks for collaboration could be the restrictions against foreign investors in North Africa, bureaucratic delays in project approvals, especially in Algeria, the dominance of the army over Egypt's construction industry, the tension between the governments of Turkey and Egypt,

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228 "Erasmus Programme", Delegation of the EU to Turkey. <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/erasmus-programme-189>.

229 Ibid.

230 "The EU and Turkey discuss climate crisis and future cooperation", European Commission, 16 September 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/eu-and-turkey-discuss-climate-crisis-and-future-cooperation-2021-09-16\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/eu-and-turkey-discuss-climate-crisis-and-future-cooperation-2021-09-16_en).

China's potential growth in the region, geopolitical uncertainties, and competition between Turkey and the EU.

Of the five priorities, *health* is the domain where both Turkey and the EU have identified cooperation with Africa as 'key', especially in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic – Turkey via its pandemic diplomacy and the EU via its focus on vaccine supply. The EU's know-how and technologies and its promise to allocate one billion euros to develop several regional manufacturing vaccine hubs, Turkey's health capacity and its robust pandemic diplomacy, and North African countries' ownership of the projects could create a tripartite collaboration model. The High-Level Dialogue in the Field of Health, the Team Europe initiative on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies in Africa, and the High-Level Dialogue in the Field of Health between EU-Turkey are some of the mechanisms that could be utilized. Potential risks for collaboration might be the reluctance of Brussels to back a proposed waiver on vaccine patents, the emergence of other international priorities such as the war in Ukraine which has already moved the Covid down the agenda, and clashes with China or Russia due to their initiatives for promoting their own vaccines.

The *European Green Deal* is a cross-border priority, in which Morocco and Egypt have made promising steps in recent years – especially regarding solar energy. Tackling climate change and ensuring energy security are common needs for all three blocs. In a potential tripartite collaboration model, while Egypt and Morocco could share their know-how on solar energy technologies, Turkey could bring in its strong business community and the EU could contribute its extensive funds, cutting-edge technology and experienced human resources. The Green Deal, the Agenda for the Southern Mediterranean, and the High-Level Climate Dialogue between the EU and Turkey are mechanisms that could be utilized. Potential risks for collaboration might be the inability of the EU and Turkey to implement the Green Deal and reach carbon emission goals, rising consumption of coal because of the increase in oil and gas prices due to developments such as the war in Ukraine, reluctance on the part of North African countries regarding Turkey's involvement due to its lack of experience in this domain, and geopolitical tensions in the Mediterranean.

Sustainable *agriculture* and food security will be pivotal sectors with great potential in the Mediterranean area. However, emphasis should be placed on fair and equitable collaboration, as North Africa is considered to be the orchard of Europe. Local governments are crucial in this sector because of their ability to engage with the grassroots and act more quickly. As Turkey-EU cooperation takes competition to a more equitable point, it may be possible to bring small farmers, including women farmers, to the forefront with the support of local governments. In a possible tripartite collaboration model, while Turkey could share its technical and training capacities on sustainable agriculture, the EU could contribute funding as well as its capacities on technological facilities and green transformation in agricultural projects owned by North African

countries. Horizon Europe, as an extension of Cluster 6 of the Green Deal, could be utilized as a mechanism. Environmental implications of climate change such as forest fires, drought, and famine and competition between Turkey and North African countries on agriculture exports to the EU might pose potential risks.

Overall, it could be argued that the five priorities recommended in this report are all mutually beneficial. In addition, substantial funds are available for almost all priorities suggested here, including the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan (1 trillion euros), the Initiative on manufacturing and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies in Africa (1 billion euros) and Global Gateway (300 billion euros).<sup>231</sup> Of course, the funds cover a broader area than Morocco, Egypt and Algeria, but they could be used for the project ideas mentioned in this report.

To address possible challenges, this study has taken into account – on top of the political difficulties between Turkey and the EU – the geopolitical uncertainties in the wider region such as the civil war in Libya, current political turmoil in Tunisia, uprisings in the Sahel and the tension between Turkey and Egypt as well as between Morocco and Algeria. There is also a significant gap between the general population and the ruling elites in North African countries, which leads to problems of corruption and transparency. These issues could stand in the way of future cooperation, or at least make it more challenging. However, as also stressed by an expert, ‘things are moving fast in the North African countries. We cannot predict what will happen in three months, but a strong Mediterranean is important. If the Mediterranean is weak, all Mediterranean countries are weak. It is therefore very important to keep looking for ways to cooperate.’<sup>232</sup>

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231 “The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism explained”, European Commission, 14 January 2020. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_24/](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_24/); “€1 billion Team Europe initiative on manufacturing and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies in Africa”, European Commission, 21 May 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_2594/](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2594/); “Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union’s strategy to boost sustainable links around the world”, European Commission, 1 December 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_6433](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6433).

232 Anonymous European expert 1, interview by van Heukelingen and Durukan.

# Appendix 1: Major agreements between Turkey, EU, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt<sup>233</sup>

Agreement	Parties	Date signed	Type of agreement
<b>Barcelona Process or the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership</b>	EU-TR-Algeria-Egypt-Morocco	November 2005	Political, economic and social partnership
<b>Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements</b>	EU-Algeria	April 2002 September 2005 (EIF)	Euro-Mediterranean partnership: Political, economic and social agreement
	EU-Egypt	June 2001 June 2004 (EIF)	
	EU-Morocco	February 1996 March 2000 (EIF)	
<b>Customs Union</b>	EU-TR	March 1995 January 1996 (EIF)	Trade agreement
<b>Free Trade Agreement</b>	TR-Egypt	December 2005 March 2007 (EIF)	FTA
<b>Free Trade Agreement</b>	TR-Morocco	April 2004 January 2006 (EIF)	FTA
<b>Friendship and Cooperation Agreement</b>	TR-Algeria		Political agreement

233 Carmela Lutmar, "Is the Barcelona Process Working? – Empirical Assessment of the State of Democracy, Human Rights, and Quality of Governance in the League of Arab States", The Political Economy of International Organization Conference, January 2011, Zurich; Doruk Arbay, "The Modernization of the European Union's Customs Union with Turkey, Turkey's Pro-Customs Union Rhetoric and Recent Approach of Turkish Political and Business Decision-Makers", Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) | WP NR. 05, September 2020; Nergiz Dincer, Ayca Tekin-Koru, Pinar Yasar, "Costs of a missing FTA: the case of Turkey and Algeria", *Empirica* 45, 2018; <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/02/egypt-turkey-trade-agreement-assess-political-tensions.html>.

## Appendix 2: List of interviews

Interviewee	Affiliation	Date	Interviewers
Anonymous Turkish official 1		10 May 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Nacho Sánchez Amor	EP Turkey rapporteur	21 May 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan
Anonymous EU official 1		21 May 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan
Anonymous EU official 2		21 May 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan
Mustafa Denizer	Board member of DİKTAŞ	3 July 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Eduard Soler Lecha	Senior Research Fellow at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)	17 Sept 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan
Burak Ankan	Founder, Senior Consultant at EBA Consulting	4 October 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Hilal Elver	Former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food at United Nations Human Rights Council (2014-2020)	5 October 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Anonymous Turkish expert 1		6 October 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Nurettin Akdeniz	General Manager at Nurol Construction and Trading Co Inc	7 October 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Nilüfer Akpınar Şahin	International Projects and Education Programs Team Leader, Koç University	8 October 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Anonymous EU official 3		11 October 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Anonymous EU official 4		12 October 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Anonymous EU official 5		15 October 21	Durukan
Anonymous EU official 6		19 October 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan
Anonymous Turkish official 2		20 October 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan

Interviewee	Affiliation	Date	Interviewers
Seval Iskender	Director of EU Affairs at TOBB Brussels	26 October 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan
Alp Turan	New Markets and Projects Unit Manager, Abdi Ibrahim	3 November 21	Durukan
Dilek Aydın	TÜSIAD EU Representative	22 November 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan
Doğru Bozkurt	Sales Chief, Tosyalı Holding Algeria	22 November 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Heba Raouf Ezzat	Ibni Haldun University	26 November 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Anonymous Turkish expert 1		29 November 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Shaimaa Magued	Academic, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University	30 November 21	Akpınar, Durukan
Anonymous European expert 1		1 December 21	Akpınar, Heukelingen, Durukan



## Appendix 3: Global scores of the policy options

Policy options	Score
<b>A3 - Cooperation on education with a focus on educational mobility</b>	<b>3.4167</b>
<b>A1 - Economic cooperation on construction with a focus on public infrastructure</b>	<b>3.3313</b>
<b>A11 - Cooperation on health with a focus on post-Covid recovery</b>	<b>3.1742</b>
<b>A7 - Cooperation on the European Green Deal with a focus on renewable energy</b>	<b>3.1138</b>
<b>A8 - Cooperation on agriculture with a focus on food security</b>	<b>3.1129</b>
A9 - Cooperation on natural resources with a focus on water management	3.0883
A4 - Cooperation on education with a focus on capacity building	3.0783
A6 - Cooperation on migration with a focus on aid	3.0542
A5 - Cooperation on migration with a focus on border management	2.9946
A16 - Military cooperation with a focus on military equipment	2.9654
A15 - Military cooperation with a focus on capacity building	2.9400
A2 - Economic cooperation on textile industry	2.9263
A10 - Cooperation on digitalization with a focus on e-government	2.9142
A12 - Cooperation on financial sector with a focus on digital banking	2.8796
A14 - Cooperation on women's rights	2.7971
A13 - Cooperation on good governance with a focus on local governance	2.7579