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# SHIFTS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND TURKEY

Prof. Dr. Emel Parlar Dal



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### International Organizations (IOs)

- This survey reveals that more than 40% of the respondents (45,9%) consider IOs are important for Turkish foreign policy while only 11% find them unimportant. When asked about the role of IOs in solving global issues, 54,7% of the respondents say that they are incapable of solving global problems.
- 35,5% of the respondents prioritize bilateralism over multilateralism. This shows that in the eyes of Turkish citizens, bilateralism still matters in Turkish foreign policy despite the fact that Turkish people overwhelmingly favor multilateralism over bilateralism. This reveals that the Turkish people are still attached to multilateralism despite harsh public rhetoric from governing authorities about the possibility for Turkey to follow its own path alone when deemed necessary.
- Despite their reservations, Turks still give credibility to international organizations, particularly in specific policy areas such as human rights, economics and trade, democracy and rule of law, humanitarian assistance, health as well as environment and climate change.

### The United Nations (UN)

- Findings clearly show that the UN is mainly identified with human rights and democracy related issues and is considered as an active and indispensable actor in global issues, such as human rights, refugees, security and disarmament. More than half of the respondents perceive the UN as an IO mostly controlled by great powers. This perception once again brings up question of the legitimacy and representativeness of the UN and the Turkish political decision-makers' growing calls for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- Turkish people's skepticism against the UN is also a natural consequence of the influence of Turkish governing authorities' increasing order challenging and anti-conformist discourses on public opinion.
- Another interesting finding of the 2021 survey is about the increasing percentage of participants indicating that the UN is useful to developing countries (15,9 % in 2018 versus 32,9 % in 2021). Similarly, in 2021 the percentage of respondents holding the view that the UN is reliable increased to 19,3 from 7,2 in 2018.
- The majority of the respondents (%76,1) agree with the idea of humanitarian intervention in case of grave violations of human rights. 61.3% of respondents oppose the idea of sending troops for UN Peacekeeping operations. Another interesting finding is about the Turkish compliance with the UNSC decisions: 60,1% of Turkish citizens consider that Turkey and other countries should not comply with the decisions of the UNSC which are not in their favor.

## International Organizations and Turkish Foreign Policy

- When asked about the role of IOs in Turkish Foreign Policy, the public opinion tends to lean more on multilateralism over bilateralism. 45,9 % of the respondents state that IOs are important for Turkish foreign policy. Similarly, 36,5% of the respondents think that IOs should occupy a larger place in Turkish foreign policy. 35,9% of the respondents believe that Turkey may preserve its national interests without international organizations. In a similar vein, 35,3% of the respondents think that Turkey's bilateral relations are more important than its relations with IOs. Only 11% of the Turkish people claim that IOs are not important for Turkish foreign policy.
- 51,6% of the respondents think that Turkey should not request help from IOs while 48,3% of Turks believe the opposite. These findings reveal the suspicion of Turkish people about the role, legitimacy and importance of IOs for Turkey and the increasing perception among Turkish people that Turkey should follow its own path and secure its own interests by itself.
- Regarding Turkey's international humanitarian aid policy, 68,1 % of the respondents indicate that Turkey should reduce its international humanitarian aid to focus more on national issues and needs. Only, 32,1% of the respondents state that Turkey should increase its humanitarian aid whilst 45,2% of the respondents prefer that Turkey's humanitarian assistance should continue in the same rhythm. This result shows that most of the respondents favor national priorities over humanitarian aid that Turkey attributes to the third countries.
- When asked about in which areas Turkey should request help from IOs, economy and trade ranks first and is followed respectively by human rights, humanitarian assistance, democracy and rule of law, climate change and environment, corruption and security and disarmament. The highest ranking of economics and trade may be linked to the current economic crisis in Turkey and to the feeling among many Turkish people that the current government cannot singlehandedly overcome the crisis and should prioritize multilateral ways of solving the crisis.

## Economic Global Governance

- The survey confirms the recent rise and support of protectionist economic policies in Turkey in parallel to the emerging trends in the current global political economy. The fact that more than half of the respondents hold a negative view about existing international financial and trade rules is also a sign of rising nationalism versus internationalism in the country. This finding also highlights the increasing skepticism of Turkish citizens against the Western-led international order and its existing rules and mechanisms in financial global governance.
- Despite this skepticism, the Turkish citizens are more familiar with the activities of the World Bank (76,8%), World Trade Organization (67,2%), International Monetary Fund (IMF) (65.8%), G20 (64%), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (53,9 %) than any other institutions.

- 46,6 % of the respondents agree with the suggestion that “goods produced in Turkey should not be imported even if it is cheaper”. 80,1% of the participants agree with the statement for the reason of the need to increase local production, 37,3% to prevent monetary outflows, and 25,2% to protect domestic employment.
- The majority of participants hold negative views of international financial and economic institutions and the existing rules and norms deriving from these institutions.
- The survey also shows that Turkish people do not totally reject or ignore the benefits of economic liberalization for Turkey, as corroborated by the positive view that most of the respondents hold on the link between trade liberalization and economic growth on one hand and trade liberalization and democracy on the other hand.
- The OECD ranks 1st among financial global governance organizations with the most appropriate activities with 43,7% although its activities are the less known by respondents. The OECD is followed by the World Bank with 40,6% and by the G20 with 39,7% which is probably the result of positive coverage in media and flattering political rhetoric in Turkish political circle towards these institutions. Compared to the findings of the 2018 survey, in 2021 the positive perception about the G20 has slightly decreased. This is particularly important since it also verifies the gradual degrading of the place of informal IOs or status clubs in the Turkish people’s perception of global governance.
- Despite the negative views of the IMF and its activities, Turks still see borrowing from the IMF as a proper option when needed. Contrary to the popular assumption that the IMF has a negative image in Turkey, it is clear that in 2021 more than 40% of the participants don’t oppose borrowing from the IMF. Only 6,7% and 4,3% of the Turkish public prefer a loan from Russia and China, respectively. Turks prefer borrowing from the West over the East.
- 66,5% of the respondents think that the liberalization of global trade has helped the Turkish economy and 64,6 % of them agree that it has strengthened individual freedoms and encouraged democratic practices. The survey has also demonstrated the increasing awareness of the Turkish public in recent years on climate change. 82,9% of the respondents think that Turkey should also contribute to combating climate change.

## International Law

- 72,3 % of the respondents think that in case of conflict with Turkey’s national interests Turkey is not under an obligation to comply with the provisions of international treaties. 38,8% of the respondents consider that Turkey should comply with the fundamental provisions under international law and consider them binding on all national practices. 27,6 % of the respondents indicate that national sovereignty can be transferred to a supranational authority if stipulated by international treaties and conventions.
- More than half of the respondents prioritizing national interests over international law is an important finding in terms of assessing the Turkish public’s perception of international law and accepted international norms. The fact that more than 65 % of the respondents are in favor of complying with the clauses of international treaties including those of an international treaty obliging the state to transfer its national sovereignty to a supranational authority is a clear indication of Turkish citizens’ respect for international norms and organizations.

- Despite the rise of nationalism in Turkey, Turkey has an increasing trust/interest in Western institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights.
- More than half of the survey participants (62,8%) prioritize compliance with European Court of Human Rights over that of the national courts (37,1%). While 65,9 % of respondents think that political, military and economic sanctions should be imposed on states in case of their non-compliance with international commitments, 34 % of respondents take the opposite view.
- More than half of the respondents (55,9%) say that Turkey must strictly obey human rights criteria of organizations such as the EU, the Council of Europe, and the UN in case they comply with Turkey's interests. 42% of the participants indicate that Turkey should always comply with the human rights criteria imposed by the EU, Council of Europe and the UN. This clearly shows that despite the prioritization of national over international courts, Turks acknowledge Western institutions as defenders of human rights and believe that Turkey must comply with their decisions in the key areas of human rights abuses.
- Turks think that international norms and agreements must be fairly applied to all states and should not be unduly influenced by major powers. This last statement is also a clear example of how governing authorities may shift their citizens' view on human rights related IOs in their favor. While in 2018 23,6 % of the respondents state that human rights criteria have been imposed on Turkey by major powers, in 2021 a significant increase has been observed in the percentage of the respondents holding this view (41,1 %).
- While 34 % of the respondents state that there is a Turkish judge, 37,4% think that the ECHR does not have any Turkish judge in its composition. 28,5% of the participants indicate that they have no idea about this question. While 42% of the respondents think that the ECHR can take its decisions independently from the European governments, 47,8% of them do not share this view.

## CSOs, Environment and Climate Change

- Compared to 2018, the percentage of the respondents stating that the CSOs operating in Turkey such as Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace should give their opinions on human rights and corruption related issues almost doubled in 2021. The increase of the percentage of respondents holding the view that these CSOs should be more involved in Turkey's decision-making, legislative, executive and judiciary processes is very striking in 2021. This clearly shows that the Turkish public has an increasing positive perception of the CSOs like Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace and their activities relevant to human rights and corruption in Turkey.
- 74,6% of the respondents think that the activities of international humanitarian organizations operating in Turkey in the field of refugees, education, disaster relief should be under strict control of the state. In a similar vein, 39,2% of the participants prefer that they should send financial

aid to Turkey rather than acting on the ground. Only 29,3% of the Turks claim that they should act more freely in Turkey.

- In the field of environment and climate change respondents state that they will not support the actions to help fight climate change if a) these restrictions increase their electricity bills (70%), b) decrease the competitiveness of Turkish industry (%86,1).
- 76,7% of the respondents state that they don't support the idea of Turkey joining the fight against climate change in the absence of actions taken by the industrialized countries such as the EU countries, the US and China while 78,7% state that Turkey has no obligation to contribute to the fight against climate change. It is also noteworthy that these findings support the assumed public perception in the developing world that the fight against climate change is first and foremost the obligation of industrialized countries
- The findings of the 2021 survey confirm the increased awareness of the Turkish public in recent years about the importance of the fight against climate change. 82,9% of the respondents think that Turkey has a responsibility to combat climate change. They even think that Turkey should take the necessary measures in climate action although this would harm Turkish industry.
- 63,4 % of the respondents indicate that the responsibility relevant to fight against climate change is on the Turkish state even though this would lead to the increasing of their electricity bill.
- 72,8% of the participants argue that Turkey should engage in climate action if only the industrialized actors like U.S., EU members and China implement the global climate change agenda. This is a clear sign of Turkish public's attachment to the principles of climate ethics.
- The survey results also show that the Turkish public acknowledges the importance of international cooperation, multilateral institutions and CSOs in climate action. More than 80% of the respondents believe that for combatting climate change IOs like the UN (84,1%) and CSOs (82,4%) like Greenpeace should play a more active role.
- The survey shows that in recent years Turkish public opinion has an increasing consciousness about the role of the state, CSOs and individuals in climate action and the multilateral character of climate adaptation.

## International Security and Cyber Governance

- Compared to 2018, in 2021 Turkish people are less distrustful of NATO. In 2021, 51,3% of the respondents think that NATO has an important role in Turkey's security. Similarly, 53% of the respondents say that Turkey needs NATO for its own security.
- 51,9% of the participants indicate that NATO does not restrict Turkey's independence. 51,3% of the respondents do not hold a positive view about NATO's role in international security while 17,6% see a positive role. 31% of the participants do not have any idea on NATO's contribution to international security. This last finding shows that NATO still remains as a less-known IO by the Turkish public.

- 22,6% of Turkish respondents welcome a search for alternative grounds for security cooperation with other non-NATO member countries even while preserving the country's NATO membership.
- The findings also show that only 22,5% of the respondents think that Turkey should completely withdraw from NATO. Only 2% of the respondents welcome security cooperation with Russia and 3,2% think that Turkey must be a member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization instead of being a NATO member. The overall results point to the fact that Turks do not give credibility to alternatives to NATO in the East, most specifically with Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2 % and 3,2%, respectively).
- The majority of Turks rejects government surveillance of the internet with 59,6 % (40,2% only accepts government surveillance). 47,1 % of the respondents think that government control of internet harms freedom of speech.
- The survey also reveals that the majority of Turks attach a role to the government for internet and network surveillance (56,4% support, 43,5% oppose) and 52 % say that government surveillance makes the internet safer. 55,9% of respondents state that an independently-managed technical organization is necessary for internet control.
- Another interesting finding is that approximately 83,7 % of Turks think that states must better inform their citizens about Internet surveillance law and policies restricting and limiting freedom of expression.

## Overall Assessment

- The overall assessment of the survey confirms recent trends in global governance such as the rise of nationalism and protectionism against the demise of internationalism and globalism and liberals-conservatives divide.
- Survey findings also justify the recent trends in Turkish foreign policy, such as the rise of nationalism, the pre-eminence of skepticism against the West and Western institutions and the increasing practices of autonomy in foreign policy. However, compared to the findings of the 2018 survey, it is clear that in 2021 Turks were less skeptical against the West and Western institutions. They are more supportive of multilateralism and cooperation with IOs.
- The survey findings allow us to understand the state elite-mass opinion linkage in the Turkish case. Today Turkish public opinion is very receptive to the messages coming from the ruling class

## Shifts in Global Governance and Turkey: A Systemic Approach

Turkey has always been an actor in global governance given its geopolitics and geographic location. Ankara's role and the strategies it pursued in formal and informal multilateral settings were of particular interest to many observers. Turkey's growing interest in global governance related issues since the mid-2000s cannot be assessed as a singular phenomenon which is totally independent from the changes occurring in the international system, especially in the context of the rise of the Global South vis-a-vis the Global North. In fact, Turkey's rise ran parallel to that of the so-called rising powers of the Global South in both material and institutional terms. The last decade has been marked by increasing levels of activism by rising powers in multiple settings of global governance. The ongoing power transitions from the West to the East accompanied by the significant expansion observed in rising states' material power led to the reshaping of the complex environment of global governance. This development inevitably generated multiple repercussions on the interplay between the West and the developing world in various areas.

In today's global governance, the emerging powers show both challenging and accommodating attitudes against major powers. They pursue more ambitious foreign policy agendas in formal and informal international institutions as a result of their status-seeking strategies towards both their superiors and peers. As part of their enhanced prestige and status, they have gradually become more engaged with and vocal in international organizations and other multilateral initiatives. One of the most important ideational commonalities around which emerging powers unite is their dissatisfaction with the existing international order and their call for reform in the major global governance institutions, mainly the UN and the two Bretton-Woods institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In this regard, Turkey follows a similar path with other emerging powers in its criticism of the international order, along with its call for a revision in the structures and decision-making mechanisms of these institutions. All these structural changes occurring in the international system over the last two decades made developing countries, including Turkey more vocal and reform-seeker in many global governance platforms. Rising powers' status-seeking policies in international organizations have also a dual effect in terms of both shaping major powers' global policy-making and influencing world public opinion in favor of their

preferences in global politics. In short, the ongoing structural

changes occurring in today's global governance architecture will certainly continue to affect

Turkey's approach to global governance at both state and societal levels.





## Turkish Characteristics of Global Governance: A State-centered Approach

One of the most important characteristics of Turkey's approach to global governance is the existence of a remarkable gap between its highly ambitious discourse and its actual practices. Turkey gives an impression of being a strongly motivated actor in assuming its global responsibilities in multilateral institutions despite the fact that its contribution to these institutions still remains limited in financial, personnel and ideational terms. Ankara is both an accommodating and challenging actor in the international order vis-a-vis major powers. This contradictory and somehow "dual" role gives it some leverage in acting autonomously in the current global governance architecture. Another important characteristic of Turkey's current position in the global governance outlook is the pre-eminence of informal global governance institutions in its foreign policy practices. The existence of flexible decision-making mechanisms and equal membership in these informal institutions give Turkey some leverage in constructing its status-seeking strategies. Turkey's long-standing demand for status mobility and its goal of upgrading its relatively lower status to a higher status by joining global governance institutions like the EU and G20 is also one of the reasons as to why the Turkish leadership sought a more active role in the fora of global governance.

Turkey's vision of world order is not totally different from its rising peers that seek "change and reform" in multilateral institutions for a more just and equitable international system. Despite the commonalities, differences also exist and are mainly ideologically driven. Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Ankara has generally followed a Western-oriented foreign policy, making it more closely engaged with Western institutions either in the form of membership or strong partnership as seen in the case of its relations with the EU. Turkey's Western orientation and its membership in Western collective security organizations such as NATO makes Turkey a different type of rising power among its peers which are more skeptical of the West in general. During and in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey was rather a reluctant actor in international politics mainly due to its domestic and economic challenges which made it hard for it to raise its material power at the global scale. In the first decade of the 2000s, Turkey's approach to global governance started to take a new turn at both perceptual and discursive levels. Ankara's increasing activism in foreign policy accompanied by its increasing material and soft power over this period have defined its global governance strategies and policies and turned Turkey into a higher status-seeking country in multilateral settings. This also led to the raising of consciousness of Turkish leaders about the positive impact and potentials that their more ambitious and challenging posture in global governance presented.

Another characteristic of Turkey in its policy towards global governance is that despite its leaders' changed rhetoric and increasing criticism in recent years of major global governance institutions' decision-making mechanisms, Turkey's contribution to these institutions - mainly the UN - remains limited in financial, personnel and ideational terms. The existence of such a motivation-contribution gap is a clear proof of Turkey's lack of a consistent and holistic global governance strategy.

Such an absence makes it hard for Turkey to affect a visible make rather than make discursive waves in global politics. Yet, Turkey's desire for upgrading its power status in major international institutions and its recent interest in joining new status clubs like BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization raise its profile. Accordingly, Turkish leaders reconfigure domestic policy by raising Turkish public opinion's expectations about Turkey's new international roles in these informal multilateral forums.

## The Power of Perceptions in Global Governance: A Survey-based Approach to Turkey's Global Governance Policies

Analyzing Turkey's global governance policies only from the window of systemic and state-level approach draws an incomplete picture of Turkey's approach to and understanding of global governance in many respects. First, it ignores the societal and political interactions between Turkish people and political leaders. In fact, there exists a continuous interplay between public opinion and politicians at the communicational level through the use of various media and social media channels. Second, Turkey's public and state elites are mutually dependent in the formulation of the country's foreign policy agenda and they continuously feed each other while constructing their self-perceptions and relative discourses. Third, a societal-level approach to Turkey's global governance policies will fill the void in such an analysis by bringing the human dimension and public opinion to the core and will serve as a bridge-builder between the systemic and state-level approaches. Traditional studies on public opinion reveal that the citizens influence the decisions and positions taken by the politicians. However, it has also been claimed by some scholars that politicians with strong influence on public opinion prefer shifting constituents' preferences closer to their own demands. Since the degree of political responsiveness and the capacity of the public opinion to be a force for good governance changes from one society to another depending on the liberal character of the political regimes and the extent to which politicians influence mass opinion, the results of public opinion surveys must also be elaborated by taking into consideration whether there exists an alignment between politicians' favored positions and the citizens' policy preferences. In illiberal societies for example, public opinion surveys reflect strongly the ruling classes' messages and views on their preferred policies.

Two public opinion surveys designed by Istanbul Economics Research and EDAM that were conducted in 2018 and 2021 and with face-to face interviews with 1500 people in 12 cities of Turkey reveal rich findings derived from the empirical data on the public's perceptions about the activities of IOs in which Turkey is a member.



and activism in IOs. Turkey is not an exception to that rule. To exert influence diplomatically and economically in many issue areas and multilateral platforms, states have to establish a minimum domestic consensus between political leadership and citizens. From this vantage point, this public opinion survey enables us to assess the existing consensus and divisions at both the public opinion and the political leadership levels and to analyse whether politicians are successful in shaping public opinion in accordance with their policy preferences and issue positions.

The results emanating from this survey also allow us to determine the specific characteristics of Turkish public opinion perceptions and thus to understand whether they comply with or diverge from the existing trends in the rising powers' changing global governance policies. The survey also measures Turkish public opinion perspectives about the role and performance of IOs in some specific issue areas related with global politics. Thus, it aims at assessing the converging and diverging angles between Turkish public opinion perceptions and state elites' rhetoric-laden global governance policies. To this end, the following sections will delve into a further assessment of Turkey's public opinion on global governance under six topics: 1) International Order and International Organizations: Turkish Perspectives, 2) Locating Turkey in Global Governance, 3) Economics and Trade, 4) International Law, 5) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Environment and Climate Change, 6) Cyber Governance and International Security.



## 1. INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: TURKISH PERSPECTIVES

### 1.1. IOs' Activities: Human Rights are at The Forefront of Concerns for Turkish Citizens

→ **Table 1:**  
*In which areas do you think international organizations should expand their activities?*

Area	2018(%)	2021(%)
Human rights	54,4	44,5
Economy and Trade	43,3	37,3
Humanitarian Assistance	40,7	30,8
Democracy and Rule of Law	40,4	29,5
Security and Disarmament	37,2	24,2
Corruption	35,9	26,1
Climate Change and Environment	29,9	28,4
None	1,9	8

The survey asks the respondents their preference on the seven global policy issues on which the international organizations need to expand their activities. Table 1 shows that the issue of human rights ranks at the top, with 44,5 % of the respondents indicating the necessity to expand the role and activities of IOs in the field of human rights. Economics and trade occupy the second, while humanitarian aid, democracy and rule of law, climate change and environment, corruption, security and disarmament occupy respectively the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and last places. These results could be the repercussion of the sensibility of Turkish people towards human rights, humanitarian assistance and democracy related issues as a result of the changing domestic and regional environment in the country in recent memory.

→ *Table 2:  
In which areas do you think  
international  
organizations should lessen  
their activities?*

	2021(%)
Human rights	7,4
Economy and Trade	17,4
Humanitarian Assistance	7,4
Democracy and Rule of Law	9,4
Security and Disarmament	43,2
Corruption	28,3
Climate Change and Environment	8,4
None	41,7

When asked about in which areas the international organizations should lessen their activities, 41,74 % of the respondents state none of the listed issues, which is compatible with the previous question's findings. However, interestingly security and disarmament and corruption, come second and third with 43,28 % and 28,36% respectively, which also coincides with the results of the 2018 survey That also validates our finding that Turkish people believe that IOs should function more in the field of human rights, humanitarian assistance, climate change and environment and democracy and rule of law, rather than disarmament, security and corruption.

## 1.2. International Organizations and Global Problems

→ Table 3:

*What do you think about the role of international organizations in solving global problems?*

	%
Not sufficient	54,7
I think it should be limited to certain areas	16,0
I think that international organizations are misleading	13,9
I find the bilateral relations of states more effective than international organizations	8,0
Sufficient	7,5

When asked about the role of IOs in solving global issues, 54,7% of the respondents think that the IOs are incapable of solving global problems. Only 7,5 % of the respondents find that IOs are sufficient in dealing with the issues of global governance, while 16% of respondents think that the role of the IOs should be restricted to specific policy areas. However, given the inability and failures of the major IOs such as the UN in addressing the recent international and regional crises, as well as the humanitarian disasters, this distrust has become more apparent. On the other hand, a very small percentage of respondents (%8) think that bilateral relations are more effective than multilateral ones in solving global problems.

In this analysis, one should also keep in mind the breakdown of the respondents who state that they know the activities of international organizations. As the education level increases in the society, the percentage of the level of knowledge about the organizations increase.

→ Table 4:  
*Breakdown – Knowledge about the activities of international organisations*

	Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)	Organization of Turkic States	Organization of Islamic Cooperation	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	World Trade Organization (WTO)	None
PhD	20%	20%	40%	40%	40%	0%
Elementary school graduate	9%	4%	10%	10%	9%	6%
Elementary school dropout	8%	8%	20%	16%	8%	12%
High school graduate	8%	7%	15%	17%	15%	3%
Illiterate	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	8%
Secondary school	6%	2%	11%	10%	9%	4%
Master's degree	10%	9%	14%	11%	15%	3%
University graduate	13%	6%	15%	16%	17%	3%

### 1.3. United Nations and its Role in Global Governance: Is the UN considered the epicenter of human rights?

→ **Table 5:**  
*In which issue areas  
do you think the  
United Nations should  
play an active role?*

Issue Areas	2018(%)	2021(%)
Human rights	62,0	60,5
Security	51,0	37,5
Disarmament	50,3	37,3
Refugees	43,7	40,7
Health	38,0	33,8
Social rights	37,2	28,6
Agriculture	35,0	30,4
Climate	34,4	33,7

As seen in the 2018 survey finding, Turkish public opinion prioritizes policy issues such as human rights, democracy, humanitarian assistance and would like to see the UN addressing these fundamental issues. A similar finding is visible in the 2021 survey when the respondents are asked about the role of the UN. As a response to the question “in which issue area should the UN play an active role?”, human rights again appear in the first place with 60,5% and is followed respectively by refugees (40,7%), security (37,5%), disarmament (37,3 %), health (33,8%) climate (33,7%), agriculture (30,4%), social rights (28,6%). This result clearly shows that in the eyes of Turkish people, the UN has mostly been identified with human rights, protection of refugees, security, disarmament, health and climate.



→ *Table 6:*  
*The UN...*

	2018(%)	2021(%)
Is under the control of great powers	57,7	69
Is weak and non-useful	26,9	31,6
Is useful	17,8	30,3
Is useful to developing countries	15,9	32,9
Is reliable	7,2	19,3
Offers equal opportunities to all members	5,9	17,2

As we can see in Table 6, in 2018 more than half of the respondents considered the UN to be an IO controlled by great powers, 26,9% saw it as inefficient/powerless and less than half of the respondents held a positive view of the UN (17,8%), useful for developing countries (15,9%), reliable (7,2%), and providing equal opportunities to all countries (5,9%). In 2021, the percentage of the respondents holding the view that the UN is under the control of great powers increased to 69% from 57,7%. The significant increase in the percentage of participants of the 2021 survey can be seen in their statements about the usefulness and non-usefulness of the UN. While in 2021 30,3 % of respondents think that the UN is useful, 31,6% states that the UN is weak/non-useful. Another interesting finding of the 2021 survey is about the increasing percentage of participants indicating that the UN is useful to developing countries. (15,9 % in 2018 versus 32,9 % in 2021). Similarly, in 2021 the percentage of respondents holding the view that the UN is reliable increased to 19,3% from 7,2% in 2018. The ambivalent findings of the 2021 survey are shaped by Turkish authorities' rising criticism of the unequal and unfair decision-making mechanisms of the UN. Only 17,2% of the Turkish public believes that the UN offers equal opportunities to all its members. In light of these findings, we can suggest that even though Turkish people (and authorities) acknowledge the importance of the UN as one of the most important multilateral organizations, without crucial reforms within the UN to make it more representative and effective, the negative view of the Turkish people about the UN is likely to persist in coming years.



→ **Table 7:**  
*Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

	Agree %	Disagree %
In case of major human rights violations such as genocide, states can use military force to prevent it	76,1	23,8
An armed force should be established within the United Nations to ensure international security	62,6	37,3
Turkey should continue its efforts to become a member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)	68,8	31,1
Turkey should send troops as a volunteer to the United Nations security forces in various regions of the world,	38,6	61,3
Turkey and other countries will have to comply with United Nations Security Council decisions which they did not like	39,8	60,1

The majority of the respondents (76,1%) agree with the idea of humanitarian intervention in case of grave violations of human rights. However, this public opinion probably is more informed by what happens in Syria. In a similar sense, 62,6% of the respondents agree on the establishment of an armed force within the UN to ensure international security. Regarding Turkish membership to the UNSC, again majority of the respondents with 68,8% think that Turkey should continue its efforts to get a seat at the UNSC. From this finding, we can suggest that the Turkish public consider the seat at the UNSC a status provider.

Probably one of the most interesting survey findings is the response given to the question whether Turkey should send troops to the UN Peacekeeping operations. 61,3% of respondents oppose the idea of sending troops for UN operations. Another remarkable finding is about the Turkish compliance with the UNSC decisions. 60,1% of Turkish citizens consider that Turkey and other countries should not comply with the decisions of the UNSC which are not in their favor. In this regard, the majority of the Turks seem to embrace the idea of criticizing the existing unequal decision mechanisms of the UNSC.

## 2. LOCATING TURKEY IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

### 2.1. Bilateralism versus Multilateralism

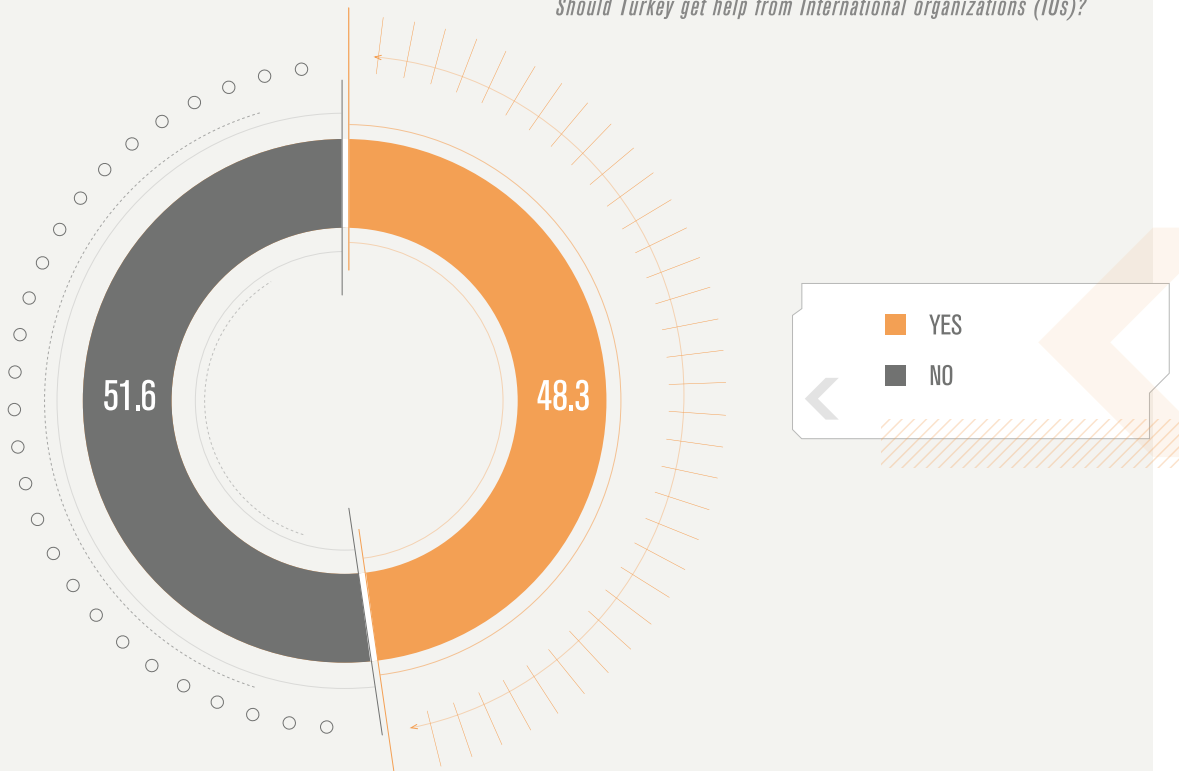
→ **Table 8:**  
*Are IOs important for  
Turkish foreign policy?*

	%
They are important.	45,9
They are not important.	11
Turkey can protect its national interests without IOs.	35,9
Turkey's bilateral relations with states are more important than its relations with IOs.	35,3
IOs should occupy a larger place in Turkish foreign policy.	36,5

When asked about the role of IOs in Turkish Foreign Policy, the public opinion tends to lean more on multilateralism over bilateralism. 45,9 % of the respondents state that IOs are important for Turkish foreign policy. Similarly, 36,5% of the respondents think that relations with the IOs should occupy a larger place in Turkish foreign policy. However, 35,9% of respondents believe that Turkey may preserve its national interests without international organizations. In a similar vein, 35,3% of the respondents think that Turkey's bilateral relations are more important than its relations with IOs. Only 11% of the Turkish people claim that IOs are not important for Turkish foreign policy. Here it must be reminded that the distrust in IOs is not a new phenomenon for Turkish public opinion. The results of this survey also show that in the eyes of Turkish citizens bilateralism still matters in Turkish foreign policy despite the fact that Turkish people overwhelmingly favor multilateralism over bilateralism.

→ Figure 1:

*Should Turkey get help from International organizations (IOs)?*



On the question about whether Turkey should request help from IOs, 51,6% of the respondents think that Turkey should not request help from IOs while 48,3% of Turks think exactly the opposite. In the 2018 survey, Turkish people stated that Turkey should not request help from IOs with a slightly higher percentage of 52,9% while 47,1 % of the respondents held a more optimistic view of IOs and their importance for Turkey. The breakdown demonstrates that as the education level increases, the percentage of respondents who think Turkey should request help from IOs also increases. Also, the survey reveals that 60 % of the respondents over 65 years of age, answered yes to this question, while the younger generations were more hesitant.



→ **Table 9:**  
*Breakdown - Should Turkey  
get help from International  
organizations (IOs)?*

Education Level	Yes	No
PhD	60%	40%
Elementary school graduate	32%	68%
Elementary school dropout	28%	72%
High school graduate	47%	53%
Illiterate	33%	67%
Secondary school	39%	61%
Master's degree	69%	31%
University graduate	60%	40%
Age	Yes	No
18-24	56%	44%
25-34	50%	50%
35-44	44%	56%
45-54	47%	53%
55-64	42%	58%
65 and over	60%	40%

Once again, these findings reveal the suspicion of Turkish people about the role, legitimacy and importance of IOs for Turkey and the increasing perception among Turkish people that Turkey should follow its own path and secure its own interests by itself. However, in the 2021 survey, a slowly decreasing trend has been observed in the pessimistic view of respondents stating that Turkey does not need to get help from IOs. The existence of a small gap between the optimistic and pessimistic views of the respondents about the IOs and their support to Turkey illustrates that IOs increasingly matter for Turks in our globalized world which calls on collective actions to tackle global issues for the benefit of all.

## 2.2. Humanitarian assistance: Is it useful for Turkey?

→ **Table 10:**  
*In which areas should  
Turkey receive assistance  
from international organizations?*

	%
I think that Turkey should reduce its international humanitarian aid. Rather it should transfer more financial resources for solving national problems.	68,1
I think that Turkey should continue with international humanitarian aid in the same manner.	45,2
I think that Turkey should further increase its international humanitarian aid	32,1

In another question of the survey is about Turkey's international humanitarian aid policy, Table 10 shows that 68,1% of the respondents indicate that Turkey should reduce its international humanitarian aid to focus more on national issues and needs. Only, 32,1% of respondents state that Turkey should increase its humanitarian aid whilst 45,2% of respondents prefer that Turkey's humanitarian assistance should continue in the same rhythm. This result shows that most of the respondents favor national priorities over humanitarian aid that Turkey attributes to the third countries. The current economic crisis and the hardening economic conditions of Turkish people in the last few years partly explain their concerns about Turkey's increasing humanitarian aid in the detriment of national priorities. This can also be the signal that international humanitarian aid policy of the Turkish government has not been largely shared by the Turkish people since this is not considered as an indication of Turkey's source of higher status in the international order.



→ *Table 11:*  
*In which areas Turkey*  
*should request help from IOs?*

	2018(%)	2021(%)
Humanitarian Assistance	46,6	40,1
Economy and Trade	45,6	52,2
Human Rights	42,2	48,2
Democracy and rule of law	34,2	39
Climate Change and Environment	29,7	34,1
Security and Disarmament	29,3	27,7
Corruption	27,3	29,4

When asked about in which areas Turkey should request help from IOs, an analysis of Table 12 indicates that whilst in the 2018 survey humanitarian assistance come at the first place and is followed by economy and trade, human rights, and democracy and rule of law, in the 2021 survey economy and trade ranks first and is followed respectively by human rights, humanitarian assistance, democracy and rule of law, climate change and environment, corruption and security and disarmament. In the 2021 survey, the highest ranking of economics and trade may be linked to the current economic crisis in Turkey and to the feeling among many Turkish people that the current government cannot singlehandedly overcome the crisis and should prioritize multilateral ways of solving the crisis. What is striking in the 2021 survey is that humanitarian assistance which was ranked as the first policy issue in the 2018 survey ranks third among the listed policy areas where Turkey is supposed to get assistance from IOs. In the 2021 survey, the issues of human rights were ranked as the second issue area where Turkish state elites should further collaborate with IOs. The rankings of human rights and democracy/rule of law as the second and fourth issue areas respectively can be read as a sign of Turkish people's dissatisfaction with the way human rights and democracy are working in the country. The ranking of humanitarian assistance as the third issue area suggests that humanitarian diplomacy is still viewed positively by many Turks. As seen in the above table other policy issues such as climate change and environment, security and disarmament, and corruption are way below. The ranking of security and disarmament as the last issue area in the above table reflects the view of Turkish people that Turkey can handle its security problems alone.

## 3. ECONOMICS AND TRADE

### 3.1. Protectionism vs Liberalism

	%
I strongly disagree	12,1
I don't agree	28,1
I agree	46,6
I could not agree more	13

→ Table 12:  
*Foreign goods should not be imported  
even if they are cheaper.  
Do you agree with this assumption?*

	%
This will increase unemployment	25,2
This will prevent financial flows beyond the country's borders	37,3
This will increase local production	80,1
This will decrease local prices	33,8
This is the best option for my household budget	38,1
This will promote local competition	58,9

→ Table 13:  
*Which of the following argument(s)  
best explain your assumption about  
whether foreign goods should  
not be imported even if they are cheaper?*

→ **Table 14:**  
*Do you agree with which of the following  
argument (s) relevant to international  
financial and trade regulations?*

	%
They defend foreign powers' interests	42,4
They are imposed by major powers	46
They are beneficial to Turkey	22,8
They are based on fair and equal principles	16,2
They increase income of certain groups in the society	49
They are disadvantageous to local companies	32,4

The survey also provides insights on the Turkish public's perception of the main dynamics of the international economy and Turkey's economic policies. The first question deals with the issue of imports. 46,6 % of the respondents agree with the suggestion that "foreign goods should not be imported even if they are cheaper". Due to the rise of protectionism, the emergence of resultant trade wars, and Turkey's current economic difficulties, this is not a surprising reaction by the public. Of these participants, 80,1% agree with the statement for the reason of the need to increase local production, 37,3% to prevent monetary outflows, and 25,2% to protect domestic employment. As seen in Table 19, public distrust in international financial and trade regulations is high in Turkey.

Regarding the rules and norms governing international finance and trade, in the 2018 survey 37,3% of respondents believed that these rules and norms reflected the view of strong states and 35% of them stated that these favored foreign powers. Only 9% shared the view that these norms and rules were based on the principles of fairness and equality among states and only a slightly larger 15,8% of respondents believed that these rules and norms are actually beneficial for Turkey. Moreover, in 2018 35,1% of respondents thought that these rules and norms were only beneficial to a small group of interests inside the country.

In the 2021 survey, for 49% of the respondents trade regulations seek to increase the income of a selected group of people in the society and for 46% those regulations are mostly imposed by major powers. Only 16,2% of the participants think that they are based on the principles of fairness and equality among states and 22,8% indicate that they are beneficial to Turkey. Interestingly, when one looks at the education levels of the respondents, the ones with a PhD degree, are the most suspicious ones when it comes to whether these institutions defend foreign powers' interests and are imposed by great powers.



	They defend foreign powers' interests	They are imposed by major powers	They are beneficial to Turkey	They are based on fair and equal principles	They increase income of certain groups in the society	They are disadvantageous to local companies
	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
PhD	60%	80%	20%	0%	40%	20%
Elementary school graduate	38%	40%	29%	19%	46%	30%
Elementary school dropout	28%	52%	24%	20%	28%	16%
High school graduate	47%	47%	20%	15%	50%	36%
Illiterate	50%	50%	25%	17%	25%	17%
Secondary school	40%	46%	25%	19%	48%	34%
Master's degree	46%	49%	24%	18%	53%	26%
University graduate	41%	47%	22%	14%	52%	32%

➔ Table 15:

*Breakdown - Do you agree with which of the following argument (s) relevant to international financial and trade regulations?*

The findings clearly show the rising tendency of protectionism in Turkish society in recent years. This finding is also a clear indication of the way the ongoing global debates on protectionism have influenced Turkish public opinion in the last few years. The public is more receptive to arguments favoring protectionist trade policies. In short, the majority of participants across all ages and education levels hold negative views of international financial and economic institutions and the existing rules and norms deriving from these institutions



### 3.2. Bretton Wood Institutions still matter...

→ **Table 16:**  
*Do you know the activities  
of the following institutions?*

	%
G-20	64
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	53,9
World Bank	76,8
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	65,8
World Trade Organization (WTO)	67,2
None	13,3

The survey also asks questions about the familiarity to the activities of major international institutions in the global economic and financial governance (Table 16). Not surprisingly, the Turkish public are more familiar with the activities of the World Bank (76.8%), World Trade Organization (67.2%), International Monetary Fund (IMF) (65.8%), G20 (64%), and the OECD (53.9 %) than any other institutions. 13.3% of respondents have no information on the activities of these institutions. Table 16 also shows that Turkish public opinion is more familiar with the activities of the G20 than those of the OECD, despite Turkey's relatively new membership to the G20 compared to the OECD. This may be partly explained by the larger media coverage of the G20 and its meetings in Turkey than that of the OECD.

→ **Table 17:**  
*Which of the following  
institutions' activities do you  
find to be most appropriate?*

	2021 (%)
G-20	39,7
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	43,7
World Bank	40,6
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	29
World Trade Organization (WTO)	36,9

The question about the appropriateness of these organizations' activities is also interesting. Here, the OECD comes first with 43,7% although its activities are the less known by respondents. The OECD is followed by the World Bank with 40,6% and by the G20 with 39,7% which is probably the result of positive coverage in media and flattering political rhetoric in Turkish political circle towards these institutions. When it comes to the WTO and the IMF only 36,9% and 29% of the respondents, respectively, found their activities appropriate.

### 3.3. West or East: Where to get a loan?

→ **Table 18:**  
*In case of need,  
from where should  
Turkey secure a loan?*

	2018 (%)	2021 (%)
Gulf Countries	26,4	17,5
IMF	25,3	42,9
European Countries	21,6	23,8
Russia	21,1	6,7
China	19,9	4,3
U.S.	3,0	4,5

Despite the negative views of the IMF and its activities, as seen in the above table Turks still see borrowing from it as a proper option when needed. However, although in the 2018 survey the public preferred a loan from Gulf countries over one from the IMF by a slight margin (26,4% to 25,3%, respectively), in the 2021 survey participants favor loans from the IMF with the highest percentage (42,9%). It is interesting to see that although in 2018 participants favor loans from Russia and Europe at almost equal percentages (21,6% and 21,1%, respectively), in 2021 only 6,7% of Turkish public prefer a loan from Russia. Yet, when looking at the overall picture, one can see that there is a huge decrease in the public's preference for Chinese and Russian loans in 2021. Whilst in 2018 the Turkish public was more in favor of borrowing from the East over the West, with those approving of loans from China at 19.9%, Russia at 21,6%, and Gulf countries at 26,4%, the 2021 survey results relative to loans have reversed the overall picture showing that the Turks prefer borrowing from the West over the East. Contrary to the popular assumption that the IMF has a negative image in Turkey, it is clear that in 2021 more than 40 % of the participants don't disfavor Turkey borrowing from the IMF. The decreasing trend observed in participants' preference for loans from China, Russia and Gulf countries may be respectively explained by a combination of various reasons such the increasing distrust of the Turkish public in China after the pandemic and possibly because of the treatment of the Uyghur minority, Turkish public's rising skepticism about Turkish-Russian S400 deal and its negative impact of on its relations with U.S. and the deterioration of Turkey's relations with UAE and Saudi Arabia in recent years, most specifically.



→ **Table 19:**  
*Which of the arguments  
below is correct?*

	I agree	I disagree
Liberalization of global trade contributed to the flourishing of Turkish economy.	66,5	33,4
Liberalization of global trade contributed to the strengthening of individual rights and democratic practices.	64,6	35,4
Turkey has responsibility to contribute to fight against climate change	82,9	17
Despite the fact that the fight against climate change decreases Turkish industry's competitiveness, Turkey should take necessary actions	83,3	16,6
Despite the fact that the measures to be taken to fight against climate change increases electricity bill, we should combat climate change	63,4	36,6
Turkey should take necessary measures to combat climate change if only the industrialized countries like U.S, EU and China implement climate criteria	72,8	27,1
In the fight against climate change IOs like UN should play a more active role	84,1	15,8
For combatting climate change international CSOs like Greenpeace should play a more active role	82,4	17,5

The survey also questions whether the liberalization of global trade is beneficial or not. On this issue, 66,5% of the respondents think that the liberalization of global trade has helped the Turkish economy and 64,6 % of them agree that it has strengthened individual freedoms and encouraged democratic practices. The survey has also demonstrated the increasing consciousness of the Turkish public in recent years about the fight against climate change. 82,9% of the respondents think that Turkey should also contribute to combatting climate change. They even think that Turkey should take the necessary measures in climate action although this would harm Turkish industry. In a similar vein, 63,4 % of the respondents indicate that the responsibility relevant to fight against climate change is on the Turkish state even though this would lead to the increasing of their electricity bill. However, 72,8% of the participants argue that Turkey should engage in climate action if only the industrialized actors like the U.S., EU members and China implement the global climate change agenda. This is a clear sign of the Turkish public's attachment to the principles of climate ethics. The survey results also show that the Turkish public acknowledges the importance of international cooperation, multilateral institutions and CSOs in climate action. More than 80% of the Turkish public believe that for combating climate change IOs like the UN (84,1%) and CSOs (82,4%) like Greenpeace should play a more active role.

## 4. INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TURKISH PUBLIC OPINION

### 4.1. International Law vs National sovereignty

→ **Table 20:**  
*Do you agree with which  
of the following statements?*

	%
In case of conflict with Turkish interests, Turkey should not comply with the provisions of international agreements	72,3
Turkey should comply without exception with the provisions of international agreements of which it is part	38,8
National sovereignty can be alienated with international agreements	27,6



Compliance with international law is one of the complex transferred topics of global governance. The survey has interesting results on this issue. 72,3 % of the respondents think that in case of conflict with Turkey's national interests Turkey is not under an obligation to comply with the provisions of international treaties. 38,8% of the respondents consider that Turkey should comply with the fundamental provisions under international law and consider them binding on all national practices. 27,6 % of the respondents indicate that national sovereignty can be transferred to a supranational authority if stipulated by international treaties and conventions. The fact that more than half of the respondents prioritize national interests over international law is an important finding in terms of assessing the Turkish public's perception of international law and accepted international norms. On the other hand, the fact that more than 65 % of the respondents are in favor of complying with the clauses of international treaties including those of an international treaty obliging the state to transfer its national sovereignty to a supranational authority is a clear indication of Turkish citizens' respect for international norms and organizations.



## 4.2. The Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights

→ *Table 21:*  
*About human rights criteria*  
*of the Council of Europe.*

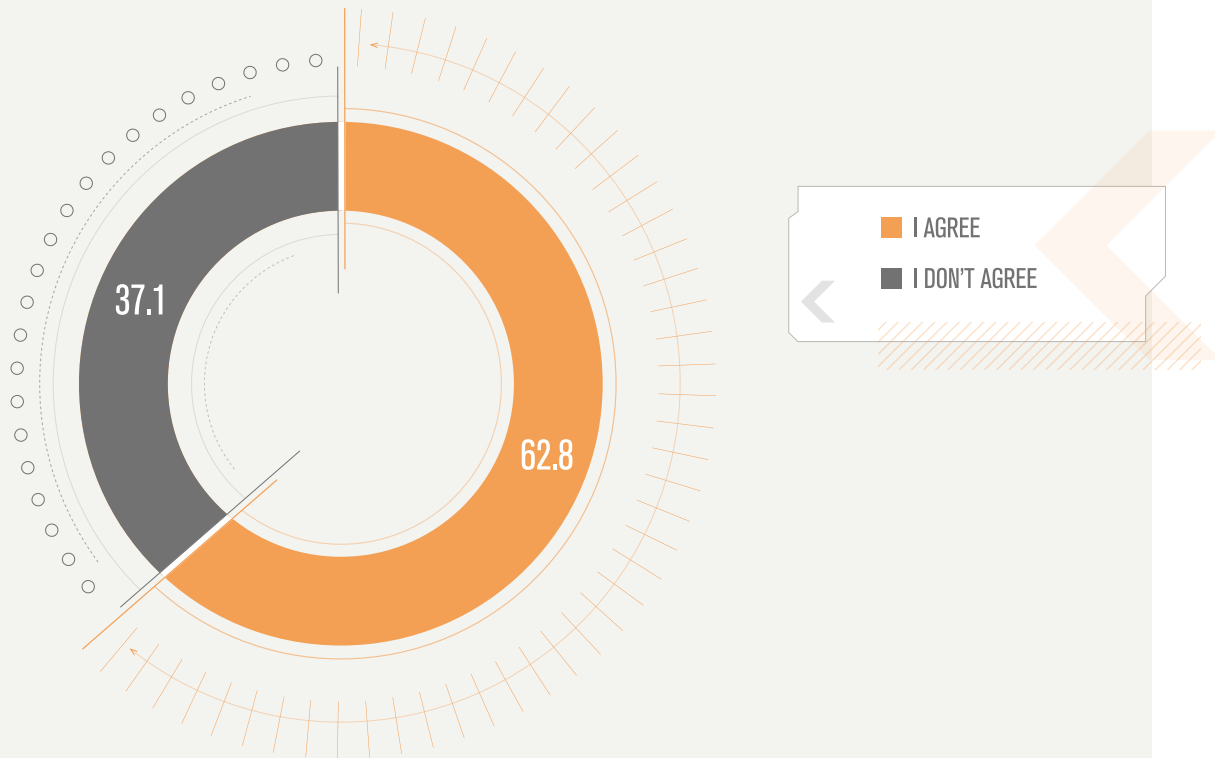
	Agreed (%) 2018	Agreed (%) 2021
I think Turkey should neglect this criterion	53,9	52,6
I think they contributed to the improvement of Turkey's democracy and human rights standards	38,8	45,3
I think they have been imposed on Turkey	23,6	41,1
I think they have been shaped with the contribution of Turkey	15,3	28,8

Regarding Turkey's membership in the Council of Europe and the its oversight, while in the 2018 survey 53,9 % of the respondents think that Turkey should neglect the Council's steering and control mechanisms for the implementation of human rights standards, in 2021 the percentage of the respondents holding this view decreased slightly to 52,6 %. In addition, compared to 2018, in 2021 a higher percentage of the respondents (45,3% in 2021 and 38,8 % in 2018) consider that Turkey's membership in the Council of Europe has contributed to the improvement of democratic and human rights standards in the country. Here what is striking is that whilst in 2018 23,6 % of the respondents state that human rights criteria have been imposed on Turkey by major powers, in 2021 a significant increase has been observed in the percentage of the respondents holding this view (41,1 %). This increase can be read as a consequence of rising criticism of the Council of Europe about the deterioration of human rights practices in Turkey. Similarly, in 2021 a higher percentage of respondents (28,8 % compared to 15,3 % in 2018) think that as a member of the Council of Europe Turkey also played a role in the implementation of human rights criteria.



→ Figure 2:

*Although it contradicts the decisions of the Turkish judiciary, the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights must be respected:*



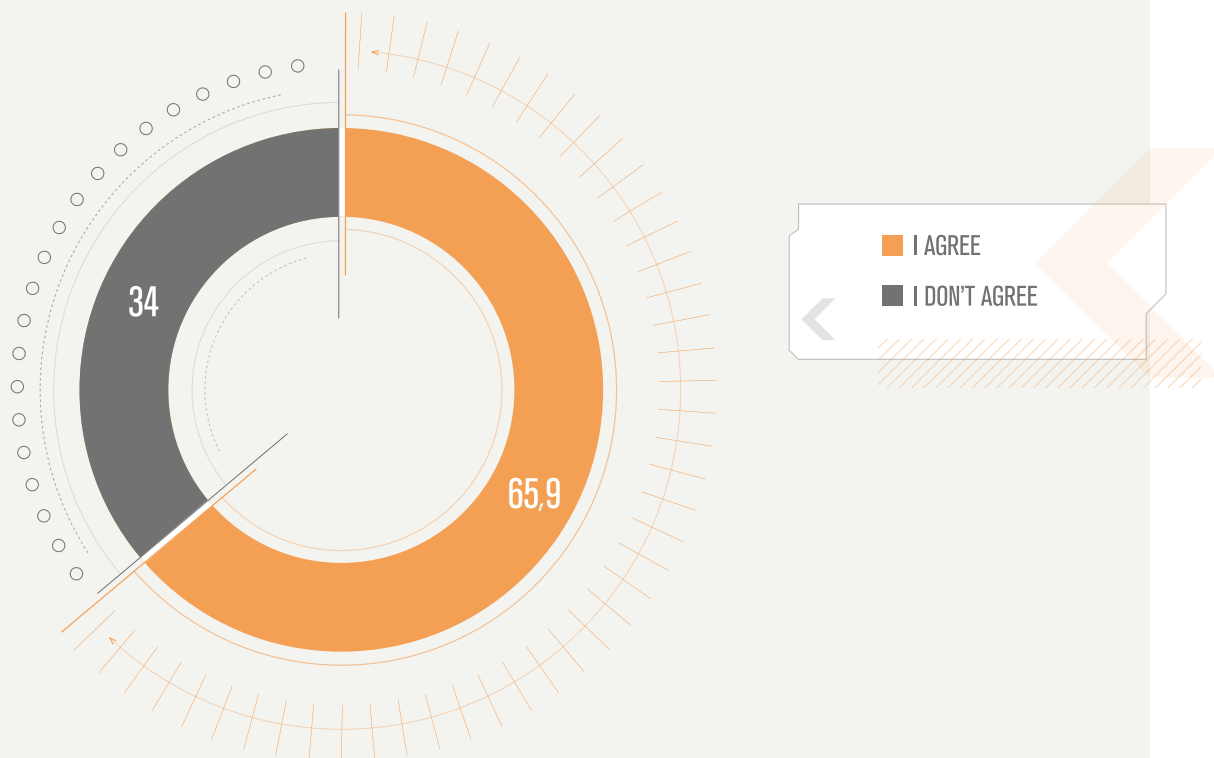
As a follow-up question, the survey asked whether Turkey should abide by the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights even if they contradict the decisions of Turkish legislation. 62,8% of respondents think that the decision of the European Court of Human Rights must be followed in that case while 37,1% of the respondents state otherwise. In 2018 survey, the Turkish public was sharply divided on whether Turkey is subject to the International Courts' jurisdiction or not (54,3% versus 45,7%). The increase of the percentage of respondents holding the view that the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights must be respected although they contradict with those of the Turkish judiciary clearly shows that Turkish citizens trust the decisions taken by the European Court of Human Rights more than those of its own judiciary.

Another question asked in the 2021 survey is about whether the European Court of Human rights has a Turkish judge. While 34 % of the respondents state that there is one, 37,4% think that the ECHR does not have any Turkish judge in its composition. 28,5% of the participants indicate that they have no idea about this question. Another striking question of the 2021 survey is whether the ECHR can take its decisions independently from European governments. While 42% of the respondents hold this view, 47,8% of them do not share this view. Only 10,1% of the respondents indicate that they don't know the answer to this question.

### 4.3. Turkish views on non-compliance and sanctions

→ Figure 3:

*In case of non-compliance, political, military and economic sanctions should be implemented.*



Non-compliance in the absence of a higher authority is one of the most debated topics in international politics. The survey tries to evaluate the Turkish public's views on this issue. To the question whether there should be political, military and economic sanctions in case of non-compliance, 65,9 % of the respondents think that political, military and economic sanctions should be enforced if states fail to comply with their international commitments, while 34 % of the respondents take the opposite view. In 2018 as a response to the same question 61,6% of the participants approved the sanctions in case of non-compliance. The findings show that there is slight increase in the percentage of the respondents holding a positive view on the application of sanctions in case of non-compliance.



#### 4.4. Turkey's compliance with human rights criteria: Reflecting the liberal/ conservative divide?

→ **Table 22:**  
*Turkey's compliance with  
the human rights criteria imposed  
by institutions such as the EU,  
Council of Europe and the UN...*

	(%)
Turkey should comply with these criteria	42,9
These criteria should be shaped according to Turkey's local and national values	50,7
These criteria should be respected in case they comply with Turkey's interests	55,9
None	7

42,9 % of the respondents think that Turkey should comply with the human rights criteria formulated by the institutions such as the EU, the Council of Europe, the UN, while 50,7 % of the respondents consider that these criteria should be shaped according to Turkish national values and 55,9 % indicate that Turkey should comply with international human rights criteria as long as they are in conformity with Turkey's national interests. This demonstrates the divisions within Turkish society between the liberals who give higher importance to internationally agreed norms and values over national interests, and the nativists who prioritize national priorities and ownership over international norms and values.



## 5. CSOs, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### 5.1. The Role of the CSOs in Turkey

→ **Table 23:**  
*Regarding the activities of CSOs operating in Turkey such as Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace, do you agree with which of the following assumption (s)?*

	2018 (%)	2021 (%)
I think their activities should be restricted by the government	29,4	34
I think they should be more involved in Turkey's decision-making, legislative, executive and judiciary processes	25,8	37,5
I think they should give their opinions on issues such as human rights and corruption	24,2	50
I think they are protecting the interests of major powers	20,6	37,6

In 2018 while 29,4% of respondents considered that the activities of the CSOs in Turkey should be restricted by the government, 25,8% of the respondents believed that CSOs should be further involved in decision-making, legislative, executive, and judiciary spheres. While 24,2% of the respondents indicated that CSOs should give their opinion on issues such as corruption and human rights, 20,6% of them remained skeptical against their activities in Turkey on the claim that they protect the interests of major powers. As seen clearly in the above table the percentage of the respondents stating that the CSOs operating in Turkey such as Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace should give their opinions on human rights and corruption related issues almost doubled in 2021. Similarly, compared to the findings of the 2018 survey the increase of the percentage of respondents holding the view that these CSOs should be more involved in Turkey's decision-making, legislative, executive and judiciary processes also increased by 2021. This clearly shows that the Turkish public has an increasing positive perception of the CSOs like Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace and their activities relevant to human rights and corruption in Turkey. However, as the education level increases the respondents become more skeptical towards these organizations.

→ Table 24:

*Breakdown - Regarding the activities of CSOs operating in Turkey such as Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace, do you agree with which of the following assumption (s)?*

	I think they are protecting the interests of major powers	I think they should give their opinions on issues such as human rights and corruption	I think they should be more involved in Turkey's decision-making, legislative, executive and judiciary processes	I think their activities should be restricted by the government
	YES	YES	YES	YES
PhD	60%	40%	20%	40%
Elementary school graduate	39%	45%	45%	37%
Elementary school dropout	32%	28%	52%	32%
High school graduate	38%	51%	37%	37%
Illiterate	25%	50%	50%	25%
Secondary school	41%	49%	40%	36%
Master's degree	43%	53%	24%	34%
University graduate	35%	53%	34%	29%

→ Table 25:

*Regarding the activities of international humanitarian organizations operating in Turkey in the field of refugees, education, disasters, do you agree with which of the following assumption (s)?*

	2021 (%)
I think their activities should be under state control.	74,6
I think rather than carrying out direct activities in Turkey they should send financial assistance to Turkey	39,2
I think their activities are beneficial to Turkey	28,1
I think as independent organizations they should act more freely in Turkey	29,3

The findings of the survey relevant to the above question illustrate the Turkish public opinion's skepticism against international humanitarian organizations and their activities in Turkey. 74,6% of respondents think that their activities should be under strict control of the state. In a similar vein, 39,2% of the participants prefer that they should send financial aid to Turkey rather than acting on the ground. Only 29,3% of the Turks claim that they should act more freely in Turkey.

## 5.2. Turkish Views on Environment and Climate Change

→ **Table 26:**  
*Which of the following  
arguments are correct?*

	I agree	I don't agree
Turkey has responsibility to contribute to fight against climate change	82,9	17
Despite the fact that the fight against climate change decreases Turkish industry's competitiveness, Turkey should take necessary actions	83,3	16,6
Despite the fact that the measures to be taken to fight against climate change increase electricity bill, we should combat climate change	63,4	36,6
Turkey should take necessary measures to combat climate change if only the industrialized countries like U.S, EU and China implement climate criteria	72,8	27,1

The surveys also had interesting findings in the field of environment and climate change. In 2018, respondents stated that they will not support the actions to help fight climate change if a) these restrictions make their electricity bills higher (70%), b) decrease the competitiveness of Turkish industry (86,1%). In a follow up question, 76,7% of respondents state that they don't support the idea of Turkey joining the fight against climate change in the absence of actions taken by the industrialized countries such as the EU countries, the US and China while 78,7% stated that Turkey had no obligation to contribute to the fight against climate change. It is also noteworthy that these findings support the assumed public perception in the developing world that the fight against climate change is first and foremost the obligation of industrialized countries

Given this, the 2021 survey draws a different picture from the 2018 survey in the field of environmental and climate change. The findings of the 2021 survey confirm the increasing consciousness of the Turkish public in recent years about the importance of the fight against climate change at multiple levels. 82,9% of respondents think that Turkey has responsibility to combat climate change. They even think that Turkey should take the necessary measures in climate action although this would lead to harm Turkish industry. In a similar vein, 63,4 % of the respondents indicate that the responsibility relevant to fight against climate change is on the Turkish state even though this would lead to the increasing of their electricity bill.

However, 72,8% participants argue that Turkey should engage in climate action if only the industrialized actors like U.S., EU members and China implement the global climate change agenda. This is a clear sign of Turkish public's attachment to the principles of climate ethics. Aside this, the survey results also show that the Turkish public acknowledges the importance of international cooperation, multilateral institutions and CSOs in climate action. More than 80% of the respondents believe that for combatting climate change IOs like the UN (84,1%) and CSOs (82,4%) like Greenpeace should play a more active role.

Based on all these findings, it can be argued that today despite its limited capacity to affect governmental action relating to environmental governance, in recent years Turkish public opinion has an increasing consciousness about the role of the state and CSOs in climate action and the multilateral character of climate adaptation. Here it must also be underlined that despite the weakness of Turkey's own environmental CSOs acting on the ground, compared to 2018, in 2021 Turkish people remain less skeptical against the activities of major international CSOs operating in Turkey like Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace.



greenpeace  
Amnesty International  
Transparency International  
CSOs

## 6. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND CYBER GOVERNANCE

### 6.1. Perceptions towards NATO

In the 2018 survey when asked about the role of NATO in international security, more than 60% percent of the participants reported negative views of NATO. Responses to follow-up questions offered a general view on NATO that is decisively negative. Almost 45% of all participants believed Turkey would be better off without NATO, while 34,2% view NATO as an attempt to control Turkey and 27% said it limited Turkey's sovereignty. Only 30% ascribe to NATO a genuine role in Turkey's security. In the 2021 survey perceptions towards NATO become less negative but not positive given the fact that 44,2 % of all participants still regard NATO as a tool for foreign control over Turkey. Similarly, 49,1 % disagree with the use of the Turkish military in the defense of other NATO members and 22,6 % believe Turkey should cooperate with non-NATO members even as it stays in the alliance. However, 22.5% of the respondents think that Turkey should leave NATO, while 41.1% states that it should remain a member of this organization. Another important finding of the survey is that Turks are divided over the deployment of Turkish troops outside Turkey in order to assure NATO member countries' security. While 49,1% of Turks find such a decision incorrect, 45,4% of them approve the sending of troops for NATO missions.

Turkish citizens' negative views of NATO might be mainly due to the recent crisis in Turkish-American relations and the regional security challenges mostly emanating from the Syrian crisis. The debates over Turkey's purchase of S-400 missile systems from Russia and their incompatibility with NATO's systems also added a new complexity to Turkey-NATO relations. All these episodes seem to have fueled Turkish citizens' suspicion of NATO. However, compared to 2018 Turkish people's distrust in NATO decreased in 2021. 51.3% of respondents think that NATO has an important role in Turkey's security. Similarly, 53% of respondents don't hold the view that Turkey does not need NATO for its security. 51,9% of the participants indicate that NATO does not restrict Turkey's independence. In another finding of the 2021 survey relevant to NATO's role in international security 51,3% of respondents do not hold a positive view about NATO's role in international security while 17,6% sees this role positive. 31% of participants do not have any idea on NATO's contribution to international security. This last finding shows that NATO still remains as a less-known IO by the Turkish public.

When we compare the results of the 2021 survey with those of 2018 public support for NATO has somewhat increased . The findings also show that only 22.5% of respondents think that Turkey should completely withdraw from NATO. Only 2% of respondents welcome security cooperation with Russia and 3.2% thinks that Turkey must be a member of Shanghai Cooperation

Organization instead of being a NATO member. The overall results point to the fact that Turks do not give credibility to alternatives to NATO in the East, most specifically with Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2 % and 3,2%, respectively).

With the Syrian crisis, Turkish people have begun to rethink their priorities in terms of security and defense and Turkey's ongoing security relations with Western institutions, with NATO in particular. However, Turkey still remains an active and engaged member of this organization with its increasing military spending in recent years and its high involvement in NATO's missions. The bipolarization of the international system as a result of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war may increase support of the Turkish public for NATO and its security umbrella in the upcoming years.

## 6.2. Cyber Governance

In the 2018 survey respondents were divided on the first question of whether the government should control the internet: 50.6% percent opposed while 49.4% supported such a stance. In 2021 59,6 % of the respondents do not share this view while 40,2% accepts state's control. In the 2021 survey, 47,1 % of respondents think that government control of the internet harms freedom of speech. Moreover, the survey reveals that the majority of Turks attach a role to the government in managing the internet (56,4% support, 43,56% oppose). Around 52 % believe that government control over internet content actually makes the internet safer. While 55,9% of the respondent's state that an independently-managed technical organization is necessary for internet control, 56,4% thinks that states should be responsible for internet controls. Again, 83,7% of the respondents indicate that states have an obligation to better inform its citizens about how they regulate and monitor internet services within the framework of the existing law leading to restrictions on freedom of speech and online privacy.

The survey revealed an awareness of the risks and vulnerabilities of cyber networks and connected devices. Respondents listed foreign countries and hacker and criminal groups as major threats at 29% and 30,5%, respectively. Global governance on cyberspace is seen as a fundamental responsibility of their own states by 21,2% of participants while 19,1% believe an independent oversight mechanism would be most effective.

## 7. ASSESSMENT OF KEY FINDINGS

This survey shows that Turkish citizens generally hold differing perceptions about global governance depending on the issue areas. The duality and the polarization observed in every sphere of Turkish politics is also reflected in the findings of the survey. The overall assessment of the survey also confirms recent trends in the fora of global governance such as the rise of nationalism and protectionism against the demise of internationalism and globalism and liberals-nativist divide. On the other hand, this survey reveals that almost half of respondents (45,9%) consider IO activities are important for Turkish foreign policy while only 11% find them unimportant and 35,5 % prioritize bilateralism over multilateralism. In a similar vein, 36,5% of respondents suggest that IOs must occupy a larger place in Turkish foreign policy. This finding clearly shows that despite their reservations, Turks still give credibility to international organizations, particularly in specific policy areas such as human rights, economics-trade, democracy-rule of law, humanitarian assistance, refugees and climate change. This result indicates that Turks display a higher preference for multilateral institutions with a high level of approval to their activities in human rights-democracy related areas.

The opinions reflected in this survey also justify the recent trends in Turkish foreign policy, including the rise of nativism, nationalism, the pre-eminence of skepticism against the West and Western institutions and the increasing practices of autonomy in foreign policy. The survey findings allow us to understand the state elite-mass opinion linkage in the Turkish case. Today Turkish public opinion is very receptive to the messages coming from the ruling class as a result of the existence of a less competitive and pluralist information space. In competitive democracies, citizens receive competing messages from different opinion leaders creating a less susceptible environment for elite manipulation. The ubiquity of the premise used by Turkey's political elites that Turkey faces foes on many fronts as security threats proliferate in its surrounding and that Turkey should reaffirm its new identity through building alliances on cultural and religious grounds, can further justify this apparent rise of conservative nationalism in Turkey.

The survey also highlighted that 35,9% of Turks indicate that Turkey can preserve its national interests without IOs, while only 11% of respondents say that international organizations are unimportant. This also shows that they are still attached to multilateralism despite harsh public rhetoric from governing authorities about the possibility for Turkey to follow its own path alone when deemed necessary.

Regarding the UN specifically, findings clearly show that the UN is mainly identified with human rights and democracy related issues and is considered an active and indispensable actor in global issues, namely human rights, refugees, security and disarmament. Despite the acknowledgement by many respondents of the important role played by the UN in solving global issues and their desire



to see its role increase in the current global governance architecture, more than half of the respondents perceive the UN as an IO mostly controlled by great powers. This perception once again brings up questions of the legitimacy and representativeness of the UN and the Turkish political decision-makers' growing calls for a comprehensive reform of the UNSC. Turkish people's skepticism against the UN is also a natural consequence of the influence of Turkish governing authorities' increasing order challenging and anti-conformist discourses on public opinion. Taken together, Turkish state elites seek to alter their constituents' policy positions with regards to the UN and its reform process. Their harsh UN criticism, (especially about the Security Council's composition) seems to have largely contributed to the increasing distrust of Turkish citizens in the UN and its conflict resolution/prevention and peacebuilding capacity.

In the field of economy and trade, the survey confirms the recent rise and support for protectionist economic policies in Turkey in parallel to the emerging trends in the current global political economy. This finding also reflects the ongoing debates on import substitution as a method of solving the current economic crisis in the country. The fact that more than half of the respondents hold a negative view about existing international financial and trade rules is also a sign of rising nativism versus internationalism in the country. This finding also highlights the increasing skepticism of Turkish citizens against the Western-led international order and its existing rules and mechanisms in financial global governance. Despite this skepticism, Turkish citizens still see the IMF and EU as the second and third most favorable actors (42,9% and 23,8% respectively, following the Gulf countries at 17,5%) from which Turkey may borrow.

On the other hand, the survey also shows that Turkish people do not totally reject or ignore the benefits of economic liberalization for Turkey, as corroborated by the positive view that most of the respondents hold on the link between trade liberalization and economic growth on one hand and trade liberalization and democracy on the other hand. Another interesting finding of the survey is that the OECD ranks 1st among financial global governance organizations with the most appropriate activities. It is followed respectively by the World Bank with 40,6% and by the G20 with 39,7% which is probably the result of positive coverage in the media and flattering political rhetoric in Turkish political circles towards these institutions. Compared to the findings of the 2018 survey, in 2021 the positive perception about the G20 has slightly decreased. This is particularly important since it also verifies the gradual degrading of the place of informal IOs or status clubs in the Turkish people's perception of global governance.

Survey findings on international law are inconsistent. 72,3 % of respondents think that in case of conflict with Turkey's national interests Turkey is not under an obligation to comply with the provisions of international treaties. 38,8% of respondents consider that Turkey should comply with the fundamental provisions under international law and consider them binding on all national practices. 27,6 % of respondents indicate that national sovereignty can be transferred into a supra-national authority if stipulated by international treaties and conventions. More than half of Turks (62,8%) prioritize compliance with national courts over that of the European Court of Human

Rights (37,1%). Paradoxically, more than 65,9% say that political, military, and economic sanctions must be imposed on states in case of their non-compliance with international commitments. Another interesting finding is that more than half of respondents (55,9%) say that Turkey must strictly obey human rights criteria of organizations such as the UE, the Council of Europe, and the UN. This clearly shows that, despite the prioritization of national over international courts, Turks acknowledge Western institutions as defenders of human rights and believe that Turkey must comply with their decisions in the key areas of human rights abuses. In short, for most Turks international law and courts still matter, especially in the field of human rights, but as seen in the findings of the survey they think that international norms and agreements must be fairly applied to all states and not under the force of major powers. This last statement is also a clear example of how governing authorities may shift their citizens' view on human rights related IOs in their favor.

Survey findings relevant to engagement with CSOs are also interesting. The 2021 survey indicates that the CSOs should be more involved in Turkey's decision-making, legislative, executive and judiciary processes. This clearly shows that the Turkish public has an increasing positive perception of the CSOs like Amnesty International, Transparency International, and Greenpeace and their activities relevant to human rights and corruption in Turkey. However, Turkish public opinion is still skeptical about international humanitarian organizations and their activities in Turkey. 74,6% of the respondents think that their activities should be under strict control of the state. In the field of environment and climate the findings of the 2021 survey show the increasing consciousness of the Turkish public in recent years about the importance of the fight against climate change at multiple levels. 82,9% of respondents think that Turkey has a responsibility to combat climate change.

Regarding the topic of cyber governance and international security, compared to 2018, the findings of the survey clearly indicate that in 2021 Turkish people's distrust in NATO decreased. In 2021, 51,3% of the respondents think that NATO has an important role in Turkey's security. 51,9% of participants indicate that NATO does not restrict Turkey's independence. 51,3% of respondents do not hold a positive view about NATO's role in international security while 17,6% sees this role positively. 31% of participants do not have any idea on NATO's contribution to international security. This last finding shows that NATO still remains as a less-known IO by the Turkish public.

Similarly, 53% of the respondents say that Turkey needs NATO for its own security. When asked about the necessity of finding an alternative to NATO, 22,6% welcome a search for alternative grounds for security cooperation with other non-NATO member countries even while preserving its NATO membership. The findings also show that most of the Turks believe that NATO is indispensable for Turkey's security. (51,3%) while 46,9% think that Turkey does not need NATO for its own security. The overall results point to the fact that Turks do not give credibility to alternatives to NATO in the East, most specifically with Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2 % and 3,2%, respectively).

The majority of Turks rejects government surveillance of the internet with 59,6 %, 47,1 % of the respondents think that government control of the internet harms freedom of speech. The survey also reveals that the majority of Turks attach a role to the government for internet and network surveillance (56,4% support, 43,56% oppose) and 52 % say that government surveillance makes the internet safer. 55,9 % of respondents state that an independently-managed technical organization is necessary for internet control. Another interesting finding is that approximately 83.7 % of Turks think that states must better inform their citizens about Internet surveillance law and policies restricting and limiting freedom of expression. The survey clearly indicates a rising awareness in the Turkish society about internet surveillance and regulation, as well as cyber threats and vulnerabilities.



## Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned findings, this first-of-its-kind global governance survey of EDAM carried out respectively in 2018 and 2021 provides valuable insight on Turkish people's perceptions about and expectations from major and regional IOs and global governance related issues. One of the key findings of the survey is that despite Turkish governing authorities' strong criticism of major global governance institutions Turkish people still seem to be attached to multilateralism, especially in the field of human rights, democracy, humanitarian assistance and global financial governance. This means that for Turks IOs still matter in solving global problems although half of respondents (51,6%) think that Turkey does not need to get support from IOs. What can also be derived from the overall survey results is that Turkish people's opinion about IOs also illustrate the recent trends in global politics like the rise of conservatism versus liberalism and the rise of nationalism versus internationalism. Western skepticism and increasing demand for autonomy in foreign policy constitute the other characteristics of Turks' perception of global governance.

The overall survey findings also justify that in Turkey interface between policy and public opinion has been gradually reduced in many issue areas of global governance. Building on the assumption that Turks' opinion on IOs and global problems have largely been shaped by state elites' strong foreign policy rhetoric, the present survey also enables us to assess about which IOs and issue policies states elites have altered public opinion in recent years. The survey also proves Turkish people's increasing interest in informal IOs having flexible decision-making mechanisms like the G20 which is likely to endure in the upcoming years. The survey findings also indicate that Turkey's lack of a comprehensive global governance strategy covering all the issue areas also makes Turkish people adopt a selective multilateral understanding. However, compared to 2018, in 2021 Turkish people's increasing trust in environmental IOs is a clear sign of their "thickening multilateralist" approach to global governance. Another interesting finding of this survey is about the Turkish public's increasing interest in UN and its constructive role in the fields of human rights, refugees, disarmament and health. All in all, based on the statistical data the survey enables us to map Turkish people preferences about IOs and global governance related topics and to make further projections about which IOs and global policy topics Turks' consciousness should be increased.

In conclusion, the survey findings clearly reflect the shifts occurring in recent years at three interconnected levels of global governance: systemic, state and societal/individual. This multi-layered approach further facilitates the assessment of the survey findings in the sense that each level is mutually interdependent. Taken together, each level of analysis completes each other and provides a detailed understanding of Turkish people's approach to global governance in general and international organizations in particular.

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## SHIFTS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND TURKEY

Centre for Economics  
and Foreign Policy Studies

# edam

Hare sokak No.16 Akatlar / İstanbul

T. +90 (212) 352 18 54  
F. +90 (212) 351 54 65

info@edam.org.tr

f t You Tube in // edam.org