

Algerian-Turkish strategic cooperation

التعاون الاستراتيجي الجزائري التركي

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to make known the importance of cooperation between Algeria and Turkey, which has been further strengthened by assessing the terms of the partnership agreement with the European Union on the basis of a sovereignty principle, in the context of the "win-win" approach, and in the light of some reports, which consider Algeria to be one of the largest economies in Africa. Algeria ranked fourth in 2021, with the highest gross domestic product (GDP) on the African continent. This provides a rewarding business opportunity for investors. In particular, under recent laws that encourage foreign investment in Algeria, there is a genuine intention on the part of the Algerian authorities to move towards other, more confident, more profitable and safer destinations for economic independence. Turkish-Algerian cooperation coincided with a renewed inertia period in Algerian-French relations.

The capacity of the two countries regarding their enormous economic and geopolitical potential is a source of alarm for France, which view Algeria as its gate to Africa. This was for years, the focus of interest of Turkey, especially since it adopted the strategy of «Policy of openness to Africa, » which it formulated in 1998, and therefore Turkey attaches particular importance to Algeria. Based on the foregoing, we can put forward the following questions: What is the nature of Algerian-Turkish relations? What are the challenges facing this cooperation?

Keywords: Cooperation, Partnership, Strategy, Algeria, Turkey.

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Introduction

The beginning of Turkish-Algerian relations dates back to the arrival of Barbros Khairdin Pasha in Algeria in 1516, and was further strengthened with the opening of the Turkish embassy in 1963 in Algeria, which declared independence in 1962. Relations between the two countries then experienced many developments in the political, economic and cultural fields in the 2000s.

With the strong will and common desire of the leaders of the two countries to work to strengthen and expand bilateral cooperation in various areas. The Friendship and Cooperation Agreement was signed between the two countries in 2006 and relations have grown more since the accession to the Algerian presidency of Abdelmadjid Tebboune in late 2019. Ankara has become the first foreign investor outside Algeria's oil and gas sector. Algeria is Turkey's second largest trading partner in Africa and remains Turkey's largest direct investment destination on the continent. From the above, we can formulate the following questions: What is the nature of Algerian-Turkish relations? What are the challenges facing this cooperation?

Objectives of the study: This paper aims to shed light on the most important areas of cooperation between Algeria and Turkey, especially in light of Algeria's endeavour to evaluate the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and to adopt a new "win-win" approach in relations with its partners, including Turkey.

Importance of the study: This study is of great importance in defining the extent to which the historical and cultural dimension between the two countries contributes to laying new foundations for bilateral relations.

Methodology of the study: This paper relies on several approaches, including the historical approach through which we traced the extent of its contribution to the consolidation of bilateral relations between the two countries, in addition to the descriptive approach through which we were able to describe the depth of the economic and commercial partnership and the volume of investments between Turkey and Algeria up to the strategic level of cooperation. Not to mention the statistical approach by highlighting the volume of trade exchanges and economic growth.

Firstly: Historical and cultural dimension of Algerian-Turkish relations

By the early 16th century, the Zionist state had lost its unity and dispersal had become characteristic. This situation had prompted the Algerians to seek help from the Ottoman sailors, who were carrying out naval activities against European pirates, and helping Andalusian refugees in the Maghreb, after which Algeria became an Ottoman

loyalty after requesting the help of the Barbros brothers.¹ who focused their attention on the sea and maritime piracy as the main resources², Ottoman rule passed by several stages and it penetrated, to be most influential in the coastal cities, This was due to the Ottomans' fear of invasions from the coast, especially the Spanish threats, which made them simply present on the coastal areas to repel attacks if they occurred, but as their ammunition retreated, they imposed a levy on the inhabitants of Algeria, who tried to counter this by popular revolts.

Algeria emerged as an entity carrying the monuments of the Ottoman Empire with the janissary army to secure the area from the Spanish invasion.³ All these events contributed to the rapprochement between the two countries, and increased their strength derived from the religious and historical dimensions, as Ottoman Algeria extended the Ottoman Empire for three centuries, leaving clear imprints on the cultural ties between the two countries⁴.

Today, Turkey insists on further strengthening its relations with Algeria, valuing them through strategic linkages within the framework of common and balanced interests, in various areas, beyond policy to culture, economy to security and partnership in the realization of military industrial projects, which adds to the two countries' strength.

1. The importance of Algeria in the Turkish perspective

Due to its geographical and demographic weight, its historical and geopolitical status, Turkey considers Algeria as the main gateway to the Maghreb region (100 million inhabitants) and the African continent (about 1 billion inhabitants).⁵

The cultural dimension is another pillar of the consolidation of relations between the two parties. The Ottoman presence contributed to the production of a cultural identity between the two peoples.⁶ If the relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire is based on the convergence of many issues related to thought and religious belief, the Ottoman presence in Algeria did not persecute the population or forced it to learn the "Ottoman" Turkish language. Will the French lobby be buried?, In addition, the Ottomans did not compel Algerians to follow the Hanafi doctrine and remained on their Maliki doctrine until today.⁷

Algeria is the largest country in Africa covering 2.381.741 square kilometres and owns a large amount of natural gas and oil deposits, making it the region's fourth largest economy Therefore⁸, Turkey sees Algeria as a gateway to the African continent and

places investment and technology transfer as one of its priorities. It also views Algeria as Africa's main entry point seeking to value the mutual links to strengthen economic cooperation, particularly in the industrial sphere. The institutions of more than 64 municipalities in Turkey are also preparing to convey their experience to Algeria in various sectors of activity through win-win partnerships or by accompanying Algerian institutions at various stages of the project.

Twenty years ago, Turkey experienced the same difficulties that Algerian entrepreneurs face today in launching their projects, which is why it is important to take advantage of Turkish institutions in managing investments, adding that Algeria can achieve an economic renaissance if its investors can take advantage of the unprecedented support and facilities granted by the government. This is reinforced by the fact that dozens of Algerian entrepreneurs have met with Turkish experts to benefit from their experience in investment management and explore the possibility of partnering with Turkish companies.⁹

The Turkish side seeks to reach the volume of trade exchanges with the African continent to reach 50 billion dollars, starting with raising it with Algeria to 5 million dollars.¹⁰ If the renaissance of Africa is a reality, the emergence of Turkey's role in it is also indisputable, as we are witnessing today a dynamic and intensive interaction between Turkey and African countries in the fields of trade, business and diplomacy despite the presence of other competitors on the scene.

Today, Turkey has become a clear influencer in Africa, with a unique position due to the achievements of its multidimensional foreign policy over the past fifteen years. Turkey is still seeking to increase its influence on the continent using all diplomatic, commercial, investment, educational, health, security and military cooperation channels, in addition to employing the soft power tools of culture and history.¹¹ Turkish influence has increased significantly in North Africa in general and Algeria in particular, over the past decade and a half. Located at the crossroads of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Southern Europe, and the Mediterranean, the Maghreb countries have become part of Turkey's sphere of influence. Ankara has focused on expanding its sphere of influence to further its goals at the economic and military levels, in preparation for a greater role in Africa and the Mediterranean region.

2.Areas of co-operation between Algeria and Turkey

The arrival of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power in Turkey in 2002 contributed to changing the objectives and determinants of Turkish foreign policy in North Africa in general, and the Maghreb in particular, as Turkey became a new model that gained the confidence of the peoples of the region, and thus this rapprochement between Algeria and Turkey gained great momentum during the past years. In 2006, the two parties signed a friendship and cooperation agreement that stipulated the development of dialogue in the political, economic and cultural fields, the commitment of the two parties to strengthen economic cooperation, especially in the field of small and medium enterprises, and the establishment of an annual high-level meeting between the two countries.¹²

For Algerian foreign policy, which took a new path after the election of the current Algerian president, its determinants and objectives were changed to be an active and proactive foreign policy.¹³ Algerian-Turkish relations have witnessed a rapid movement in recent years at all levels, consolidated by the friendship and cooperation agreement signed between the two countries in 2006, and has gained momentum since President Abdelmadjid Tebboune took over the Algerian presidency at the end of 2019.¹⁴

Algeria and Turkey are increasingly keen on strengthening economic ties and expanding the volume of investments between the two countries, which is reflected in bilateral cooperation based on the "win-win" principle, and the desire of the two countries to move to the strategic level.¹⁵

The bilateral economic partnership between Algeria and Turkey is also witnessing an increasing development, as evidenced by the completion and launch of joint projects in various sectors of activity and an increasing volume of exchanges that reached more than 4 billion dollars in 2021. In 2000, Algeria counted only 7 Turkish companies, which today ranks seventh among the countries in which Turkey invests the most and the first in Africa. Turkish direct investments in Algeria amounted to about 5 billion dollars and created about 30,000 jobs, according to Turkish official data. These investments were realized in the iron and steel, textile, chemical, pharmaceutical and food industries.

The TOSYALI iron and steel complex in Oran, which invests in the production of construction steel, iron wire, spiral pipes and soon laminated steel, as well as the Tayal integrated textile complex in Sidi Khattab, Relizane. In total, the number of

Turkish enterprises present in Algeria reached 1,400, covering various sectors including construction, public works, industry, agriculture, distribution, communication technologies, maritime and air transportation, noting that the total value of projects supervised by Turkish contractors in Algeria is estimated at about 20 billion dollars.

The volume of trade exchanges in 2021 between the two countries reached 4.2 billion dollars, according to statistics of the Ministry of Trade and Export Promotion. The value of Algerian exports to Turkey amounted to 2.5 billion dollars, while imports were estimated at 1.7 billion dollars. Exports consist of 90 percent energy products, such as liquefied natural gas, crude oil and natural gas.

Turkish exports to Algeria include transportation vehicles, spare parts, iron and steel products, machinery parts, textile products, non-woven clothing, television and communication equipment, non-ferrous metals, grains and their derivatives, and packaging materials such as paper, cardboard and plastics. Turkish Airlines also organizes regular flights to Algeria to the airports of the capital, Oran and Constantine since 2013.

In the field of energy, the two countries renewed in 2020 the contract that allows Algeria to supply Turkey with liquefied natural gas (LNG) until 2024, making Algeria the first supplier of LNG to Turkey and the fourth supplier of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). On the other hand, the partnership between Sonatrach and the Turkish company Renaissance concerns the construction of a petrochemical complex for the production of propylene and polypropylene (PDH-PP) in Ceyhan.¹⁶ Algeria is one of the main trading partners in Africa. Energy and construction are major pillars of economic relations.

In the economic field, bilateral relations have reached a satisfactory level. Turkey has \$3.5 billion worth of investments in Algeria, making it one of the largest investors and the largest foreign supplier of employment in Algeria. Turkish construction companies are working on cultural restoration sites, such as the Kitchiova Mosque and the Kasbah neighborhood in the capital, and the historic Kitchaoua Mosque was renovated and reopened on April 9, 2018.

The Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center contributes to the strengthening of bilateral cultural relations and offers Turkish language courses at the University of Algiers 02. Algeria is one of Turkey's most important trading partners in the region and

occupies a crucial position in Turkey's energy diversification. Algeria is Turkey's fourth supplier of natural gas after Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan.

Algeria also offers attractive investment opportunities for Turkish companies operating in the food sector. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, bilateral trade increased by 35% to \$4.2 billion (65.3 billion lira).¹⁷

Table N°1. Algeria-Turkey Economic and Trade Relations Table 2017

GDP (billion \$)	172	Inflation rate (%)	5,5
Economic growth (%)	2,3	Unemployment rate (%)	11.1
Population (million)	42,2	Exports (billion USD)	30.02
Population growth rate (%)	2,1	Imports (billion USD)	45.95
GDP per capita(USD)	4.069		

(Source: Turkish Embassy in Algeria .EUName of author (2018).

Main trade partners: China, France, Italy

Main export items: Mineral fuels, fertilizers, inorganic chemicals, sugar and sugar products, organic chemicals.

Main import items: Machines, road transport vehicles, electrical and electronic equipment, grains, iron and steel. (Republic of turkiye ministry of foreigne affairs, 20218).

Table N°2. Bilateral Trade Statistics

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018(Excluding Petroleum and derivatives)
Export	2,083	1,826	1,737	1,713	2,031
Import	2,642	1,919	1,347	1,762	1,137
Volume	4,721	3,745	3,083	3,475	3,168
Balance	-0,563	-0,93	0,388	-0,049	0,894

(Source: Ministry Of Economy,TUK2018

Main export items: Road transport vehicles, iron and steel, machineries, textiles and confectionery

Main import items: Mineral fuels, sugar and products, inorganic chemicals

Number of Algerian visitors: 213.333 (2017), 265.000 (First 11 months of 2018)

Secondly : Algerian–Turkish position on regional issues

Matching sides on all regional and international issues strengthens relations with the level of the strategic alliance industry that, in the long run, sparks a long history of joint tournaments in the Mediterranean.

1. Consensus on the political side:

The Libyan and Palestinian files were present on the table of discussions between the two presidents, with the Algerian president emphasizing the alignment of views with the Turkish side on various regional issues, especially with regard to Libya. It is expected that the process of building the bilateral relationship between the two countries will continue, with continued coordination at various levels between the two sides, especially political and security coordination with regard to crises with a converging dimension and challenges in the region, such as the Libyan file and the Palestinian issue, in addition to military coordination between them and security coordination with regard to the extradition file between Algeria and Ankara.

The two countries share growing differences with France on many issues, opposition to French military operations and military deployment in the Sahel in particular and on the African continent in general, and the desire of both countries to strengthen their political and economic influence on the African continent in exchange for limiting French influence, which is a strong Algerian desire that converges with Turkey, which has already become a strong influence in many parts of the African continent.

This is a strong Algerian desire that converges with Turkey, which already has a strong influence in many parts of the African continent, and cooperation between the two countries would be a great support to their efforts in this direction. Partnership in general is seen as "a mechanism for growth and expansion, replacing the competitive relationship with cooperation, and the exchange of expertise and experience in order to acquire skills". Algeria aims to strengthen partnership as an alternative or strategic choice" in the model of relations with Turkey. This is a privileged type of relationship that Algeria establishes with different countries, through which political and economic diplomacy aims to establish the principle of common interest and mutual benefit .¹⁸

2. Cooperation in the military and security field:

In addition to the fifteen agreements signed between Algeria and Turkey in the fields of culture, social, environmental, mining, the fight against organized crime,

education, media, etc. The two countries have declared their common and great desire to lay the foundations for cooperation in the field of military industries, thus transferring to Algeria the technology of the Turkish military industry, which has recently undergone significant development.

This new strategic orientation between the two countries would change many of the equations existing today in the region, and Algeria and Turkey are moving towards signing strategic agreements in many fields that "include even military industries".

This new Algerian-Turkish trend towards accelerating military cooperation between the two countries, and thus transferring the technology of Turkish military industries to Algerian territory, indicates the desire of the two countries to move their relations to the strategic level, especially since Turkish reports and studies on the Ankara Institute for Political Studies confirm that the manufacture, export and import of military technology represents one of the pillars on which Turkey builds its orientations in building its international relations.

On the Algerian side, this means that there is a definite desire to overcome the financially costly import of this type of industry, while working to diversify the sources of obtaining it, especially with the Turkish side, which remains the closest foreign dealer to Algeria, to enable it to lay the foundations of a real national military industry, through the Turkish side's readiness to transfer accurate military technology to Algeria, which is not provided by other parties.¹⁹

The Algerian party's desire to partner with Ankara is part of a gradual shift towards strengthening Algeria's military capabilities, diversifying the military arsenal and its sources, reducing the import bill, as well as modernizing military and war equipment to face security challenges and strengthen the defense forces. In this context, the implementation of cooperation in the field of military industry between Algeria and Ankara represents a new transformation on several levels for Algeria, such as responding to the strategic, security and defense challenges faced by the Maghreb region, the African Sahel and the Mediterranean basin. This cooperation aims to cover the entire eastern, western and southern borders, which extend to more than 1,600 square kilometers, a topography that requires specificity in the field of armaments and imposes control over technologies, communications and constant air surveillance.²⁰

France's position regarding Algerian-Turkish co-operation:

The deteriorating Franco–Algerian economic relations on the one hand, and the escalating Algerian–Turkish counterpart on the other, have contributed to what appears to be a historic opportunity for Algeria and Ankara to get rid of the influence of Paris, which harnessed all its capabilities to ignorance of the Algerian people, and to Franchise and evangelize them through the monk "Charles Lavigri", the French lobby and the colonial doctrine changed their methods to get rid of Algeria, but did not change their thinking, goals and plans so it is expected that the "French lobby" will be the biggest rejector of this rapprochement for several reasons, including the following:

- France categorically rejects that Algeria has strong allies.

- France seeks to keep Algeria in the logic of dependency with a colonial background.

France's attachment to all that is French, especially since the French lobby has been hit after the decline in the value of investments between France and Algeria.²¹

- France considers Algeria a backyard in which it does not accept the participation of others, especially Turkey.

- France sees Turkey as a historical enemy, with which it has fought and is fighting in many arenas in the past and present.

- France fears Turkish incursion into many African countries, taking advantage of the many common ties, such as religion and common history.

- Fear of Turkey's endeavour to reach the Mediterranean coast through Algeria.²²

Algerian–Turkish relations formed a strong backlash against France following France's regional policies and the "bill against Islamic separatism" that was prepared following the French president's initiatives. Due to his increasingly anti-Islamic rhetoric in Europe. In addition to the adoption of the bill, whose emergence is due to the terrorist attacks in French locations that are religiously motivated, which has been put to a vote in the French parliament. The law to be enacted in line with this approach aims to limit the influence of Turkish, Algerian and Moroccan imams on the Muslim population in France, and provides for strict supervision of mosques. According to French officials, it is estimated that 1,800 out of 2,400 mosques in France are under the influence of imams from these countries. However, France's Operation Barkhane in Mali and Niger since 2014 has increased the influence of so-called Islamist groups on Algeria's southern border.

From the Algerian perspective, France is on the one hand the source of the crisis in Libya due to its support for Haftar and its dual diplomacy with Libya, and on the other hand the main driver of radicalization on the country's southern borders due to its military presence in Mali. In addition, as one of the main actors in the anti-Turkish camp in Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean, France is looking for ways to unite alliances in these regions into a political bloc.²³

Conclusion

The different factors and components of Algeria allow it to achieve a leap forward in the field of economic development through the diversification of foreign investment and the strengthening of related sectors and their reflection on development, which places Turkey at the top of the list of countries with which Algeria deals in this field. The location of Algeria and Turkey, one to the west and one to the east of the Mediterranean, plays an important role in the stability of the region.”

The Algerian movement towards a partnership with Turkey in the field of military industries aims to establish a national military industrial base and diversify alliances, which qualifies it to play pivotal roles in the Maghreb region, of West Africa and the Sahel. In the shadow of the decline of French influence and the expansion of other regional powers, Algeria’s diplomatic and military activity is part of moderate axes and non-interference in regional conflicts. Algerian leaders also see Turkey as a strategic partner through which Algeria can benefit from Ankara’s experience. He also believes that a strong alliance with Turkey could help the Algerian government strengthen its economic potential.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Promote economic cooperation between Algeria and Turkey in addition to strengthening political dialogue
- ✓ Develop relations in the field of energy and renewable energies.
- ✓ Reconstitute the Algerian-Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

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