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TURKISH POLICY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE. ANALYSIS OF THE CASE OF DE-DEMOCRATIZATION¹

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INTRODUCTION

The dynamic process of democratization has been changing noticeably in the recent dozen or so years. In many states in the world, including Europe and its neighbourhood, we can observe the phenomenon called most often as „de-democratization”. Some political scientists write in this context about the “democracy decline” (Plattner 2015, 5-10) while others mention its crisis and “new transition” (Schmitter 2015, 32-34). Although it is too early to identify precisely what kind of process is under way, it is possible to point out the following variants of the aforementioned process: 1) change of the regime – from a democratic to a hybrid one or from a hybrid to a non-democratic one (one of new kinds of authoritarianism, e.g. electoral authoritarianism), 2) loss of democratic quality with reference to: procedures - correct working of procedural aspects of the representative democracy; content – the question if citizens, associations, etc. are able to enjoy liberty and equality; and results – legitimation of a democratic regime (Morlino, 194-197), and 3) interruption of the democratic transition of non-democratic countries. The problem of keeping the model of liberal democracy – with free and competitive elections, respecting individual rights and freedoms as well as rule of law, political pluralism and protection of minority rights – is noticeable in all these variants.

This analysis is about this new, complex process. The author concentrates on the case of Turkey as well as selected states from Central and Eastern Europe – Hungary and Poland. There are already separate publications on the problems with democracy in these states, e.g. the special issue of the periodical “South European Society and Politics” from 2016 – in the case of Turkey or books by Paul Blokker or edited by Jan Holzer and Miroslav Mareš – on Central and Eastern Europe (Blokker, 2014; Holzer, Mareš, 2016). However, the goal of the

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analysis is to approach the issue of the state of the liberal democracy comparatively and answer the following questions: Do we really observe the departure from the model of liberal democracy? If so, in which direction? What are the reasons for the observed changes concerning the political regimes? From the point of view of international relations it is also interesting to ask the question of impact of the domestic changes on the international relations of the mentioned states. Answering these questions is important for a better identification of the changes concerning the political regimes and understanding of the problem of working of the liberal model of democracy and its external influence. The choice of the aforementioned states aims at showing that the problem with the liberal model of democracy concerns not only the states on the outskirts of Europe but also the European Union members. It is then a more universal phenomenon.

Turkey as well as Hungary and Poland represent different (although not fully separate) types of the political regimes (“a hybrid regime” and “flawed democracies” respectively). However, these differences do not make the comparative analysis of the cases impossible. All three countries are involved in the process of unfinished democratic consolidation (although Hungary and Poland have been much more advanced in this process than Turkey). At the same time, in recent years there have been symptoms of breaking off from or even reversal of the democratization process there (Poland still differs in this respect from Turkey and Hungary – due to the relatively early stage of the new phenomenon, developing after the 2015 elections). These processes have the impact on the external relations of these states.

The aforementioned symptoms have been already recognized by some scholars. For instance, the author of this paper did research on the processes unfavorable for the democratization of Poland and Turkey, connected with the negative impact of the ideological factors (conservatism, nationalism, populism) promoted by important political parties in these states – the Law and Justice in Poland and Justice and the Development Party in Turkey (Szymański 2015). Actually, the case of the Hungarian FIDESZ (Hungarian Civic Union) could be also included in the analysis - due to many similarities with the mentioned political parties. Besides, political scientists recognize many similarities while conducting the research on the relationship between “de-democratization” and “de-Europeanization” in the three selected countries (Sedelmeier 2014, 105-121; Cebeci 2016, 119-132).

This analysis is becoming a part of the already existing comparative studies on Turkey and the Central and East European states. It contributes at the same time to the scientific debate aimed at thorough research of the new phenomenon concerning the process of

democratization. Its added value is a look at the changes connected with the process also from the point of view of significance for the external environment of the states. This analysis will focus in this case on the selected European partners – Germany, France and Great Britain as well as the EU.

Assuming that there are problems with the functioning of liberal democracy in the EU and its neighbouring countries, the author would like to verify the following hypotheses: H1: the problems with keeping the liberal model of democracy result from the dominance of the formal democratization in the analyzed countries; H2: a substantial contribution to the process of de-democratization, which reflect the problems with keeping the liberal model of democracy, are, on the one hand, the political culture and historical legacy, and, on the other hand, ruling by parties which are critical of the EU and liberal model of democracy as well as the social and economic problems in a given country; H3 – the process of de-democratization has a negative impact on relations of the selected countries with the most important European partners and the EU institutions.

A useful theoretical framework for the analysis of the domestic aspects will be the conceptualization of the issue of democratic consolidation, being part of the liberal model of democracy, proposed by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (Linz and Stepan 1996). Democratic consolidation, which goes beyond the electoral or procedural democracy, has many definitions, but for the purpose of this paper it means a process that leads to the establishment of an effective democratic regime, with the consensus made by all the significant political actors that democracy is most appropriate for the society (Usul 2011, 13). Linz and Stepan proposed the classification of dimensions of the democratic consolidation. They are: constitutional (formal), behavioural and attitudinal dimension. In the first case it refers to the formal-institutional basis for democracy connected with the functioning of democratic institutions and conducting their reforms. The other two dimensions concern mainly the political culture – attitudes towards democracy and democratic rules (first of all the support for democracy in principle, positive attitude towards the functioning of democratic structures and negative approach to non-democratic regimes) as well as the commitment to it in practice through certain activities - in the case of citizens it is about different forms of participation in politics, in the case of elites – the political activities confirming the acceptance of democratic rules (Linz and Stepan 1996, 16).

The analysis consists of two main sections and a conclusion. The diagnosis of the state of the liberal democracy in Turkey, Hungary and Poland, focusing on the second decade of

the 21st century, will be included in the first part of the paper. An important reference point will be reports of Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), showing to a large degree the state of liberal democracy in a given state – used due to the choice of categories for evaluation, being parts of this model (See Table no. 1, 2 and 3 below). Next in this part will be an attempt to explain the reasons for these states' problems with keeping the liberal model of democracy. The second main part of the paper will be about the impact of the changes concerning the political regime on the external relations of the analysed states.

PART ONE - POLITICAL REGIME CHANGES

1. Diagnosis of state of liberal democracy

Hungary, Poland and Turkey went through a democratic transformation, consisting in transition from the non-democratic regime to democracy, before the beginning of the EU path. For historical reasons this process started earlier in Turkey than in the post-communist countries which went through a dynamic regime change after 1989 (Kalaycioğlu 2005; Błuszkowski 2007). The development of relations with the Union and the involvement in the enlargement policy was to facilitate progress in the democratic consolidation of the analysed countries

In spite of the clear progress in democratization, which was influenced by the pre-accession process, some problems and deficits still existed (more numerous in Turkey than in Hungary and Poland). For instance, according to the European Commission's reports from 2002 the common dilemmas were e.g.: respect for the rule of law, working of administration or corruption issue, in the case of Hungary and Turkey also the protection of minority rights – Roma and Kurds respectively (European Commission 2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

However, some processes, which could prove a gradual departure from the liberal model of democracy, have begun to be noticeable first in the last decade. In Turkey it was connected with conducting the domestic reforms (2006-2007) detached from the pre-accession process and with the more and more unclear EU membership prospects. The legal changes were still adopted but not for the sake of democracy, but rather particular interests of the ruling elites (Alessandri 2010, 24).

On the one hand, Turkish politicians assured that they are committed to the democratic principles (as the EU basic rules); on the other hand, the domestic changes influenced negatively the democratization process. The AKP government conducted reforms which only

partially can be called democratic (usually they are then in the AKP's interests as in the case of religious freedom). However, other reforms from the same packages reflected to a large extent the reversal of the democratization process (Cebeci 2016). The best examples are the judiciary packages between 2010 and 2016, which show the weakening of the functioning of the rule of law. There were some amendments favourable to this rule, e.g. the introduction of the institution of ombudsman, limiting the competences of military courts and the change of composition of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, making it more representative of the judiciary as a whole (Yazıcı 2010). On the other hand, there were many legal changes being against the independence of the judiciary and separation of power. They concerned the competences to nominate the members of the highest judiciary institutions and the composition of top courts, leading to the increasing control by the executive power and the governing party AKP over the judiciary and limiting its power. It is at the same time a good example of how the reforms were used for political purposes in Turkey to fight with political enemies – here Kemalists as well as Fethullah Gülen members and supporters (Saatçioğlu 2016, 137-41).

The increasing authoritarian inclinations connected with the strengthening of the executive power at the cost of other branches of power, first of all the judiciary (and the functioning of the system of checks and balances) included also aspirations of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to change the system from the parliamentary one into the presidential one *a la Turca*, i.e. a model with a very strong position of the head of state but without a sufficient system of checks and balances. It has been introduced gradually after the constitutional referendum from April 2017. These authoritarian inclinations also include a broader phenomenon. It is about the consolidation and centralisation of power within one party and its leader connected with the seizure of control of different state institutions, the army and the media as well as the decision-making process limited to narrow the circles of actors (Heper 2013, 145).

When it comes to the aforementioned media, an important phenomenon showing the loss of democratization benefits in Turkey achieved within reforms in 2001-2005, must be pointed out. Different individual rights of citizens are increasingly limited, led by the freedom of expression and the media. More and more newspapers or TV channels are under the AKP control. It is increasingly difficult to find independent media criticising the government. The banning of websites or publications, seizure and closure of media, censorship or self-censorship, an increasing number of arrested journalists and lawsuits against them are only examples of restrictions on the freedom of expression and the media (Yılmaz 2016).

There was some progress in Turkey in guaranteeing the rights of Kurds or religious communities in the first decade of the 21st century. Democratic reforms were conducted in these areas also after 2005, though at a slower pace and in cycles. However, it does not contradict the previously described phenomena. These reforms, particularly concerning the rights of Kurds, were conducted when they served the interests of AKP, not for the sake of democracy (Efegil 2011). Particularly years 2015-2017 show that once the support of Kurds and pro-Kurdish parties is not in the party’s interest, the government’s policy changes.

Although it is too early to talk about the change of the Turkish political regime into a non-democratic regime (it is still classified as a hybrid regime), the authoritarian tendencies developed in Turkey particularly after 2010 and enhanced at the time of emergency rule, introduced after the failed coup d’état in July 2016, lead not only to disruption of the democratic consolidation but also to the reversal of this process. Referring to Morlino’s classification, we can without any doubt talk about the loss of quality of democracy regarding the content and results.

All the mentioned negative processes are reflected in the Democratic Index by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Table 1 included below shows clearly the departure from the liberal democracy in years 2012-2017. The increasingly lower score in category “Functioning of the government” (at least in years 2012-2015) reflects the aforementioned authoritarian tendencies. The situation in category “Civil liberties” also clearly worsened (in 2006-2017), outlining restrictions on rights and freedoms, first of all the freedom of expression. In addition, the lowest score in category “electoral process and pluralism” was reported in 2017. It has a lot to do with limiting the electoral competitiveness (Szymański and Wódka 2017).

Table 1 Democracy Index – Turkey

Category/ Year	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Overall score (10=best)	5.70	5.69	5.73	5.73	5.76	5.63	5.12	5.12	5.04	4.88
Electoral process and pluralism	7.92	7.92	7.92	7.92	7.92	7.92	6.67	6.67	5.83	5.33
Functioning of government	6.79	6.07	7.14	7.14	6.79	6.43	5.36	5.36	6.07	6.07
Civil liberties	5.59	5.00	4.71	4.71	4.12	3.82	3.53	2.94	2.65	2.35

Political participation	4.44	4.44	3.89	3.89	5.00	5.00	4.44	5.00	5.00	5.00
Political culture	3.75	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.63	5.63	5.63	5.63

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), www.eiu.com

In Hungary and Poland the functioning of the liberal model of democracy looked much better in the years 2006-2017, in comparison to Turkey. According to the data from the EIU Democracy Index these states were "flawed democracies" while Turkey a "hybrid regime" (see Table 2 and 3 below). However, similar general processes have occurred in these post-communist countries, particularly in the second decade of the current century. Looking at the Democracy Index scores we can notice one important difference between Hungary and Poland concerning the time of the development of de-democratization processes. The scores for the first country show that the democracy was in a constant decline between 2006 and 2017, with enhancement of negative processes particularly after 2011 (starting from this year this state was lower in rank in EIU Democracy Index than Poland). In Poland there was in turn a changing tendency, with the last three years of clear development of negative processes. These phenomena have a lot to do with the fact who ruled in these countries at a particular time as a result of winning elections.

Hungary after 2011 was called by Atila Agh "a chaotic democracy" or sort of "Potemkin democracy". It is about the regime with a substantial role of the oligarchic structures (networks of party members, businessmen and media actors) which captured the weak state and dominate in the political system with extensive political patronage and corruption (Agh 2015, 10-16). The critical juncture was the 2010 election which resulted in creation of the coalition government of FIDESZ (the party which created links with business beforehand) and Hungarian Civic Union, with Viktor Orbán as the prime minister. Thanks to "the supermajority" it started "systematically to dismantle all checks on government" (Tomini 2015, 155).

It was a similar process to the one in Turkey – the executive power was strengthened at the cost of other branches, first of all increasingly controlled judiciary in order to destroy the checks and balances system and diminishing the role of institutions important for this system, e.g. the Constitutional Court or the Central Bank. Adoption of many laws, often amended due to their poor quality as well as the new, undemocratic constitution of 2011

contributed to the creation of a new system. It was called by the Hungarian government the “National Cooperation System” (Tomini 2015, 156).

The state posts and the media were captured by the members of FIDESZ whose functioning started to resemble a hegemonic party system. What played a significant role was the deficits of elections carried out on the basis of electoral law favorable for FIDESZ and characterized by the limited competitiveness due to unequal access of the incumbents and opposition to the media, financial resources, etc. (the same phenomenon could be observed in Turkey). Clientelism started to be a rule in relations between the politics and the economy, with such negative consequences as increasing corruption (Agh 2015, 16-20).

These clear de-democratization examples are reflected in the EIU Democratic Index. The results in category “Functioning of government” lowered already in 2008 (we can observe a decline again in 2017, after one year of a slightly higher score), “Political participation” (very low score generally) – in 2011 and “Electoral process and pluralism” - in 2012 (with a next decline in 2017, after several years of a steady value). The same tendency concerns the “Civil liberties” – they have been in decline since 2008 (there was another decline in 2014-2016 after three years of a constant score). Telling in this context is the provision of the 2011 constitution: “We hold that the common goal of citizens and the State is to achieve the highest possible measure of well-being, safety, order, justice and liberty” (Hungarian Government 2011, 3) - with “liberty” being at the end. It was clearly implemented in Hungary. For instance, similarly to Turkey, the restrictions on the freedom of the media and expression were imposed by the creation of the National Media and Telecommunication Agency which can decide e.g. about sanctions on the media for ‘insulting the majority.’ (Tomini 2015, 157).

Table 2 Democracy Index - Hungary

Category/Year	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Overall score (10=best)	7.53	7.44	7.21	7.04	6.96	6.96	6.90	6.84	6.72	6.64
Electoral process and pluralism	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.17	9.17	9.17	9.17	9.17	8.75
Functioning of government	6.79	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.43	6.07
Civil liberties	9.41	9.12	8.53	8.24	8.24	8.24	7.94	7.65	7.06	7.06
Political participation	5.00	5.56	5.00	4.44	4.44	4.44	4.44	4.44	4.44	4.44

Political culture	6.88	6.88	6.88	6.88	6.88	6.88	6.88	6.88	6.88	6.88
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Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), www.eiu.com

The de-democratization in Poland is a relatively new phenomenon although its prelude was already visible during the Law and Justice rule in 2005-2007 period. However, first in 2015 the overall score of the Democratic Index as well as category “Functioning of government” (surprisingly already in 2014) went down (with small improvement in 2017). In 2016 in turn we could observe the decline of scores in categories “Electoral process and pluralism” and “Civil liberties”. In the second case the decline was reported also in 2017, similarly to the category “Political participation” (see Table 3 below).

The Law and Justice won the presidential elections and parliamentary elections in 2015 – the second ones with a majority which enabled it to form a single-party government. It created a political situation quite similar to the one in Turkey and in a way to the one in Hungary (FIDESZ has a weak coalition partner). The difference from these two countries is that the leader of the Polish governing party, Jarosław Kaczyński is not the prime minister. It creates a situation quite distant from the European standards that the person who plays the key role in the decision-making process in the state is not accountable.

The Polish government’s policy in 2015-2017 can be diagnosed as the one which does resemble the practice of the AKP and FIDESZ. First of all, it concerns the willingness to tamper with the system of checks and balances and the capture of different state political and economic institutions as well as courts (the Constitutional Tribunal, the Supreme Court, the National Judiciary Council) and the public media by the people connected with Law and Justice. This brings these institutions under the control of the ruling party (Economist Intelligence Unit 2017).

Table 3 Democracy Index - Poland

Category/Year	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Overall score (10=best)	7.30	7.30	7.05	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.47	7.09	6.83	6.67
Electoral process and pluralism	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.17	9.17
Functioning of government	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.43	6.43	6.43	5.71	5.71	5.71	6.07
Civil liberties	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	8.24	7.65
Political	6.11	6.11	6.11	6.11	6.11	6.11	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.11

participation										
Political culture	5.63	5.63	4.38	4.38	4.38	4.38	6.25	4.38	4.38	4.38

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), www.eiu.com

The departure from the liberal model of democracy is to be seen in all three countries also within the discourse about democracy and democratization conducted by FIDESZ, Law and Justice and AKP respectively. The language of liberal democracy is substituted by the expression of support for the democracy but understood in a different way than the liberal model. Beforehand there was a consensus concerning some fundamental characteristics of the liberal model of democracy. In the current decade the “standard” basis of the liberal democracy, being a reference point in assessment of the democratic character of political regimes all over the world (e.g. Freedom House surveys as well as reports of the European Commission and the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, OSCE, UN or such organizations as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch) has been questioned as the only possible approach to democracy by politicians of the analyzed countries. There is a talk about more progressive democracy (e.g. “advanced” as AKP puts it or “full” according to Law and Justice) in which “people”, common citizens, not oligarchic elites, have the decisive impact on governing. However, it is the vision of democracy with a clear populist aspect and more emphasis put on the rights of communities – be it family (micro-community) or nation and religious community (macro-community, here: Turkish Sunni Muslims, Polish or Hungarian Catholics or Christians respectively) than on the freedoms of the individual citizens who have also obligations to the community (Szymański 2015, 64). This concept of democracy resembles the approach of many Asian countries.

The Hungarian Justice Minister László Trócsányi was talking in this context directly about the conservative, not liberal understanding of democracy with the key role of a community (*Trócsányi* 2015). The collective approach is reflected in the Hungarian constitution, in which it is stated that “we hold that individual freedom can only be complete in cooperation with others.” (Hungarian Government 2011, 2). According to Law and Justice, without the community and without the nation state democracy and human rights are not possible. Only being a member of the nation state every citizen can use all rights. A similar approach is taken, at least in theory, by the AKP. Erdoğan, while talking about democracy, mentions both the common good and individual rights (Szymański 2015, 64).

As mentioned above, the priority given to the collective principles and values over the individual rights and freedoms leads in practice to negative consequences for liberal

democracy (first of all for the content of the democratic quality). The emphasis on the community and its religious, conservative or national values leaves little space for different opinions and pluralism. Because of this the policy of exclusion was observed in the case of FIDESZ, Law and Justice or AKP - the representatives of different minorities are often discriminated (be it LGBT, ethnic or religious minorities). The policy of exclusion has even more serious consequences for the functioning of liberal democracy. The exclusion of some groups in the society while supporting the others, i.e. the majority, “the nation” who voted for the governing party, results in the polarization of the society as well as in a narrow, majoritarian understanding of democracy (Szymański 2015, 66-8).

2. Reasons for Departure from the Liberal Model of Democracy

The key question however is why we can observe symptoms of the phenomenon called by many scholars de-democratization in the three analyzed countries. We will focus in this part on the issues strictly connected with Linz’s and Stepan’s dimensions of democratic consolidation, putting aside the reasons concerning the EU effectiveness, which are related to the separate question of “de-Europeanization”.

The author of this paper agrees in this context with Agh who claims with reference to the CEE countries that the process of democratization was unfinished (Agh 2015, 9). The same can be said about Turkey. In this state as well as in Hungary and in Poland a big progress at the level of formal/institutional democracy was achieved at a certain time thanks to many legal reforms, also within the EU pre-accession process, but not at the level of the substantive democracy. Referring to Linz’s and Stepan’s dimensions of democratic consolidation the institutional dimension remained until recently satisfactory (with some reservations with reference to Turkey) but other dimensions, connected with the political culture – concerning attitudes towards liberal democracy and related behaviour, leave a lot to be desired.

The previous section proved that for the governing elites democracy (at least the liberal model) is currently not “the only game in town” – both their policy and discourse reflect it. However, the general attitude and behavior of the societies in Turkey, Hungary and Poland with reference to democracy show that there are some deficits of the democratic political culture.

It can be already seen while looking at the EIU Democracy Index (see Tables 1, 2 and 3 above). The categories “Political participation” and “Political culture” – having a lot to do

with the behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of the democratic consolidation are relatively low in all the cases, e.g. in comparison to “electoral process and pluralism” which reflects a more formal-procedural dimension of democratic consolidation. Hungary has generally a higher score in the “Political culture” than Poland and Turkey (the last state has improved it a little in last three years, achieving a better score than Poland in 2015) but Poland’s result is in turn higher than that in Hungary and Turkey (and increased in last two years in comparison with the decline in Hungary already in 2011) in the “Political participation” (although the Polish score was lower in 2017 in comparison to previous years, reflecting some measures (including legal changes), which can limit to some extent e.g. the right of assembly or increase control over organizations of the civil society (Economist Intelligence Unit 2017, 30).

These scores are confirmed in surveys reflecting the state of the attitudinal and behavioral dimension in the analyzed countries. For instance, the World Values Survey 2010-2014 (including data on Poland and Turkey) together with the European Values Study 2008 and Pew Research Center’s survey from 2009 (data on Poland and Hungary) show that although democracy is important for the Hungarian, Polish and Turkish societies, answers to other questions about democracy indicate some deficits concerning the democratic political culture. The question about democracy as the best political regime shows that although a substantial part of the three societies supports this opinion, quite a lot of them are not fully convinced about it. In Poland it is even nearly 56% of respondents who think that having democracy is “fairly good”; only 18% - “very good”. Moreover, there is a relatively high percentage of people opposing this opinion (in Turkey this percentage is less than 10%, in Poland and Hungary between 10 and 20%, depending on the survey) (Pew Research Center 2009, 21-22; International Center for Democratic Transition 2015, 29; World Values Survey 2015, 293 and 322).

Even more telling is the opinion about the relative importance of democracy. A higher percentage of respondents give priority to the economic prosperity or more specific economic issues (for example fighting rising prices) as well as order in the country than to democracy (Pew Research Center 2009, 24-25; World Values Survey 2015, 123 and 125). All these results show that there is a problem with the quality of democracy in terms of results – i.e. legitimacy for the democratic regime.

When it comes to the behavioural dimension of the democratic consolidation connected with the political participation, a relatively low percentage of people being

members of different associations is striking. In Poland and Turkey (there is no comparable data about Hungary) much more than 90% of the society did not belong to different types of associations in 2010-2014, while in the case of citizens of some “old” member states, e.g. the Netherlands, Sweden or Germany this percentage was usually near or below 90%, sometimes even 80%, depending on a country and type of association (World Values Survey 2015, 54-61).

The deficits of democratic political culture in the three countries are often connected with the historical legacy. Let us take the example of corruption and the rule of law. In Turkey there is a specific historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire that was a rent-seeking and rent-providing state in which the state employees got their income from users of public services. However, in all the three analyzed countries the corruption was not morally condemned and was a result of a kind of patron-client relationship which seems to be functioning again nowadays (particularly in Turkey and Hungary). The custom to give gifts to the public officials was present in Turkey and the CEE countries. Although in Turkey it had deeper roots (the existence of collective culture: loyalty towards family, religion, village), in all the analyzed cases the need for going through the complex bureaucratic procedures which require obtaining many permits generates corruption (Ömürgönülşen and Doig 2012; Olsson 2014, 104-9; Tomini 2015, 104-145).

The problems concerning the rule of law are also connected with the democratic political or rather legal culture and the historical legacy issue. A common feature of the societies from Central and Eastern Europe, Turkey (and Western Balkans) has been an excessive flexibility of approach to legal compliance. It means that although the regulations are respected, they are treated as guidelines which do not have to be fully obeyed and can be modified or evaded (Szymański 2012b, 126).

The determinants mentioned in this part are not favorable to the progress of the democratization and consolidation of the liberal model of democracy. The question is just why we observe the development of these processes in the second decade of this century, in the case of Turkey even a few years earlier. The answer can be found in the particular set of determinants. The dysfunctional role of the deficits of the attitudinal and behavioral dimension of the democratic consolidation, connected often with the historical legacy of communist/Ottoman and Atatürk’s times respectively (crucial for the existence of such unfavorable phenomena as clientelism, political patronage, “flexible” attitude to the respect of law and to corruption) in the three states has been enhanced due to the additional factors that

appeared at the turn of the second decade of this century. First, the global developments – the problems in the socio-economic and security spheres influence the attitudes and behavior of common citizens and elites. As the mentioned surveys indicate more citizens in Hungary, Poland and Turkey prefer the economic benefits and stability than the liberal model of democracy. Many people were disappointed with this model, associating it also with the socio-economic problems of their country and their own situation (as losers of the reforms and groups without the expected benefits) (Agh 2015; Pew Research Center 2009, 31-3). It must be added that losses suffered by these citizens were often in their opinion a result of the activities of persons who represent institutions being part of the liberal model of democracy – judges, representatives of financial institutions, etc. This had also impact on the negative attitude towards this model (Gdula 2018, 65-82).

Second, in Hungary, Turkey and Poland power was taken or consolidated by political parties which were critical towards the EU and the liberal model of democracy. They offered the aforementioned different approach to democracy. The adjective “liberal” was avoided on purpose as they supported another model, in their opinion a more effective one in terms of functioning of the state and its economic performance - free e.g. from the dysfunctional system of checks and balances. It was based on the collective approach with the key role of ideological factors (a mixture of conservatism, nationalism and populism), close to the hearts of many citizens in comparison to the liberal principles. In theory the real power in this more “advanced” model of democracy belongs to the society instead of oligarchic elites, however, in reality the governing parties are using the role of the “nation” instrumentally and developing new patronage and clientelism networks (Szymański 2015, 62-8).

PART TWO – IMPACT OF DE-DEMOCRATIZATION ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS

In the first part of the text an analysis was made of the departure of Turkey as well as Poland and Hungary from the liberal model of democracy and the reasons behind it. This section is aimed at the description of significance of this phenomenon for the external relations of the analyzed countries and at an attempt to verify the thesis that the process of de-democratization has a negative impact on the relationships with the most important partners in Europe. In the first place, the relationships with the European Union will be examined (the

Union institutions including the European Commission), followed by the relationships with Germany, France and Great Britain.

1. Relationships with the European Union

In the case of *Turkey* de-democratization imprints primarily on the pre-accession process. The legal and political changes after 2010 give rise to a growing EU concern, which is reflected in the European Commission reports and European Parliament resolutions. Turkey is criticised for the deficit in following the principles of democracy and human rights. There is a reference to activities in South-Eastern Turkey as contrary to these principles and the unsolved Kurdish problem, problems related to independence of courts of law and separation of powers as well as to the freedom of speech and free activities of civil society organizations. These deficits strengthen the positions of some EU countries reluctant towards the Turkish accession, which more and more openly speak about the necessity for stopping the membership talks (Austria or the Benelux countries). They also have a considerable impact on the lack of progress in the accession negotiations – the issues of democracy and the rules of law are at present an inherent part of the pre-accession process (some chapters concern these issues directly). The situation in the area of democracy and human rights in Turkey also affects other elements of the Turkish-EU relations, for example the dialogue on the visa regime liberalization. Some criteria related to democracy and the rule of law are not met (personal data protection or antiterrorist law regulations) (Commission Staff Working Document, 2016).

In particular, the prolongation of the state of emergency after the coup d'état attempt in July 2016 and the changes in law (including the Constitution) undertaken at that time gave rise to increasingly loud postulates to break off the accession negotiations and a *new formula for relationship* in connection with common business, sidelining the issue of the EU membership. They are not put forward only by the EU member states but also by the Union institutions. The European Parliament in its resolution of July 2017 called all the EU member countries to suspend talks on the membership in the case of coming into effect, without any changes, of the Constitutional package adopted in the referendum of April 2017, which deprives Turkey of restraints and balance. Thus, it repeated its opinion of November 2016. The Parliament criticized activities pursued by the Turkish government and the president after the imposition of the state of emergency, which were, according to this institution, not proportionate to the goals and excessively restricting the basic freedoms and the rule of law. It

indicated the arrests and dismissals of journalists, scientists, clerks, teachers, judges and activists fighting for human rights on the basis of special government decrees (European Parliament resolution, 2017).

President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker also indicated the political situation in Turkey as a serious obstacle to the advancement of Turkey on its way to the Union. In his speech in September 2017, he stated that "candidates to the accession must give priority to the principle of the rule of law, justice and basic rights in the negotiations. This excludes the membership of Turkey in the EU within the foreseeable future. For some time, Turkey is at a considerable distance away from the European Union." (President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union Address, 2017).

However, a one-day summit of the European Union-Turkey in Varna on 26 March 2018 showed explicitly that the questions of democracy and human rights are not the factor leading to a catastrophe in the relationship between the Turkish state and the Union. During the summit the willingness was expressed again by the EU and the member states to maintain good relationships with Turkey. It was not concealed that it refers to the business and security areas as well as the significance of Turkey with regard to the solutions to migration problems. Although it was clearly emphasized that the emergency state should be terminated in this country and democratization should return, the summit showed again that democratic deficits may complicate the issue of the Turkish EU membership, but they do not dramatically deteriorate the Turkish-Union relationships. (Firat, 2018).

The relationships of **Hungary** and **Poland** with the European Union deteriorated after the power was taken respectively by FIDESZ (with an insignificant coalition partner) and Law and Justice, i.e. parties reluctant towards the liberal model of democracy and skeptical about the Union. The reasons for the deterioration of these relationships include the disobedience of the EU law (in economy, environmental protection etc.) and the migration problem (unaccepted system of refugees relocation). However, the maintenance of the liberal model of democracy plays an important role in this context. It should be borne in mind that its components underpin the EU, which is reflected in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (Consolidated versions of the Treaty on the European Union, 2016). With regard to Poland and Hungary, the most important issues refer to the respect for the rule of law, the operation of the judiciary and media as well as non-governmental organizations.

This becomes explicit on examination of the process of deterioration of relationships of Poland and Hungary with the EU as well as the related events. In the case of the former, the

departure from the liberal model of democracy caused, in a relatively short time, the deterioration of contacts with the Union institutions, and furthermore, after some time it also caused launching the proceedings of Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union (consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union, 2016), which could eventually lead to the suspension of Poland's EU Council voting rights.

In January 2016, the European Commission began the procedure of monitoring rule of law in *Poland*. It was reflected in a difficult dialogue between the Commission (primarily commissioner Frans Timmermans) and Polish authorities. It did not bring effective results and showed different opinions (often referred to as *argument*) between the parties in relation to following the principle of the rule of law in Poland. The rule of law monitoring procedure was a definite Union reaction to the situation of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal and the changes in regulations related to this institution. (*Rząd: Procedura monitorowania praworządności/Government: Law and Order Monitoring Procedure*, 2016). In June 2016 the European Commission issued a negative opinion on the Polish authorities related to the full respect for the rule of law. And in July 2016 it published a recommendation making the Polish government publish all the verdicts of the Constitutional Tribunal and follow them. In October 2016, the Polish government replied to the EC recommendations, stating that they were not well-founded and that it did not see any possibility of their implementation. On 21 December 2016 the European Commission issued additional recommendations and expected the Polish authorities to reply within two months. On 21 December 2017, the Polish government replied the Commission on the additional recommendations with regard to the rule of law of 21 December 2017 in a similar tone to the former reply (Bodalska, 2017a).

In connection with the situation of rule of law in Poland, on 16 May 2017 the first debate in history on the topic was held in the EU Council. A report on Poland (biased according to the Polish government) presented during the meeting indicated certain deficits with regard to the judiciary, media and civil service (Kokoszczynski, 2017). In the period July-November 2017, the European Commission sent four letters to the Polish government, e.g. on the laws concerning the judiciary. Poland did not accept invitations to talks and criticized the Commission for exceeding its competence and accused commissioner Timmermans of a personal crusade (Bodalska, 2017b).

The relationship Poland-European Union became even more troublesome after 15 November 2017, when the European Parliament passed a resolution calling to recognize the threat to rule of law in Poland and to apply in relations to it the so-called nuclear option, i.e.

the aforementioned Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. There were 438 votes for, 152 against with 71 abstentions. In the adopted resolution the European Parliament stated that "the present situation in Poland represents a clear risk of a serious breach of the European values listed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union." (Bodalska, 2017c). The MPs expressed anxiety about the changes in regulations on the Polish judiciary system, "because they may structurally endanger the independence of courts and weaken the rule of law in Poland" and they also voiced "profound regret" due to the lack of compromise on the appropriate operation of the Constitutional Tribunal (the problem of its independence and legitimacy and also the publication and respect for its verdicts) (Bodalska, 2017c). According to the Parliament, this undermined the Polish Constitution and the principles of democracy. It should be added that in the resolution, the MPs mandated the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs to make a special report on Poland. It would allow the Parliament to vote the motion calling the EU council to undertake action according to Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. On its basis the EU Council may declare a risk of a serious breach of the Union values by a member state, which may as a result give rise to the suspension of Poland's EU Council voting rights (Bodalska, 2017c). Poland was in even more troublesome situation as a EU member, when on 20 December 2017, the European Commission decided to launch Article 7 of the Treaty the EU on European Union against Poland and to file a case against this state to Court of Justice of the European Union in connection with the law on common courts (Orłowski, Wilgocki, 2017).

To recap, it should be said that Poland's problems to maintain the liberal model of democracy in the last few years have an adverse effect on its position and image in the EU as well as the relationships with major EU institutions. The question remains open whether the procedure of Article 7 of the Treaty the EU on European Union will be completed with an unfavorable result for the Polish state. It seems that despite the official rhetoric Poland wishes to ease the present situation, which was seen during the meeting of Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz with the Union officials in February 2018. It also does not suit the European Commission to conduct the procedure to the final stage of voting in the Council. In the case of a possible lack of the sufficient number of votes, the EU weakness would be revealed and the differences between members would grow. Gaining such a majority and Poland's suspension in the EU voting rights would not be a fully positive solution. Although it would be proved that the Union has effective procedures and can make use of them in order to protect its fundamental principles, at the same time the defeat would have to be admitted, i.e. the EU

enlargement policy did not bring the desired effects: the reinforcement of political transformations in the countries of the former Eastern bloc. Moreover, this sort of situation could deteriorate the relationship between the Union institutions and the Polish government and perhaps also the Hungarian government, which would eventually weaken the Union.

In the case of *Hungary*, the relationships with the Union institutions, primarily with the European Commission began to deteriorate much earlier than in the case of Poland. However, unlike the Polish case, Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union was not applied with regard to the Viktor Orbán government in the years 2010-2017. The European Parliament did not call to do it until spring 2018 (Hungary: EU Parliament report, 2018). After taking power by FIDESZ the departure from the liberal model of democracy, initially resulted in political pressure on Hungary exerted by the EU and its members so that it would not go in that direction. There have been multiple opinions voiced by the Union officials and representatives of the EU member states expressing anxiety about the situation in Hungary. For example, in 2013 the anxiety about the constitutional changes in education and the electoral system was expressed by President of the European Commission of the EU Jose Manuel Barroso. The necessity for the adoption of an appropriate procedure in the case of violation of the principles of democracy was touched on by the leaders of countries like Germany (*Brussels struggles*, 2013). Critical opinions were most frequently negatively commented on by the Hungarian government, which like the Polish authorities later, did not share the EU opinion on the state of democracy in Hungary (*Viktor Orban*, 2013).

In March 2014 the European Commission adopted a legal framework on the "protection of legal state in the EU." This step on the part of the Union was to respond to the legal changes made by Prime Minister Orbán in Hungary, which were against the principles of democracy (the European Commission did not have then any tools to oppose the violation of the rule of law by the member states) (*European Commission*, 2014).

However, in relation to Hungary till the end of 2017, standard procedures were continued with regard to breaking the union rules and regulations. For example, in 2017 The European Commission launched a procedure in connection with the adoption of a new law by Hungary on the operation of non-governmental organizations. The new regulations hit for example the foundation of George Soros and the Central European University in Budapest. The procedure achieved the second stage – the reasoned opinion of the European Commission (Gotev, 2017).

Thus, the relationships between Hungary and the Union institutions deteriorated due to the state of democracy in this country. However, till the end of 2017, they were not so troublesome as they are in the case of Poland. The situation in Hungary was not like Poland's until the parliamentary elections won by FIDESZ on the 8 April 2018.

2. Relationships with Germany

The process of de-democratization in Turkey, Poland and Hungary makes the relations with Germany deteriorate, though to varying degrees. Besides, there is a trend to be noticed consisting in covering up for the state of democracy in these countries by the new German government.

In the case of *Turkey* the development of authoritarian tendencies is only one of the factors worsening the relationships with Germany (others include the questions of PKK and the movement of Fethullah Gülen, whose support the German authorities are accused of by Turkey, the ban of conducting election campaign by AKP in Germany or no permit granted to German MPs to visit a military base in which German troops are stationing). It has more serious consequences for the bilateral relations than in the case of both Central European countries. But it does not result from the general great attention paid by Germany to obeying democratic principles by their foreign partners, but from the impact on the state of democracy on German affairs. Chancellor Angela Merkel and other German politicians explicitly criticize the state of democracy and the rule of law in Turkey after the attempted coup in July 2016. It affects the attitudes of the government and the opposition in Germany to the future relationships between Turkey and the European Union. German parties unanimously say that there is no possibility of continuing the talks about membership or even the development of the relationships with the EU based on extended customs union if Turkey is moving towards the authoritarian regime (Güsten, von Salzen, 2018).

However, de-democratization would not have such a considerable impact on the bilateral relationships if it did not hit German affairs directly. As a result of activities based on the decrees adopted by the Turkish government in the period of the state of emergency after July 2016, several German citizens were arrested. The best known case was that of German journalist of Turkish descent Deniz Yücel, who was accused of supporting terrorism and arrested. Only due to the pressure from Germany, Yücel was released from arrest on 16 February 2018. However, there are other German citizens deprived of freedom, for example activist for human rights Peter Steudtner. Importantly, it is the release of these people that

according to Germans determine the improvement of bilateral relations. Although the issue of the rule of law is somewhere in the background, the improvement of it is not a prerequisite for a change in relationships (*Merkel macht im Fall Yücel weiter Druck*, 2018).

The de-democratization itself is not a factor considerably affecting the relationships with Germany. Can Dündar - Turkish journalist staying in Germany said it resulted from the "advantage of pragmatism over principles" (Dündar, 2018). Turkey is a key partner of European countries, with Germany in the first place with regard to the migration problem. It is also an important partner in the area of business and security. Like other European partners, it is aware that it cannot lead to a definite deterioration of relationships with Turkey as this may mean tightening relationships with such countries as Russia. It should not be expected then that the improvement in the political situation after the solution to the problem of the arrested German citizens will be a factor determining bad Turkish-German relationships.

In the case of the relationships between *Poland* and Germany, the problem of the rule of law in the former was one of the reasons behind the worsening mutual relationships – besides the differences on refugees, the Nord Stream 2 issue and heating up anti-German sentiment through the reference to the question of war reparations made by Poland. However, the Polish problems with democracy did not eventually affect the bilateral relationships considerably. It results again from pragmatism which dominated the policy of chancellor Merkel after the new government was formed. She is aware that emphasizing the topic of the rule of law may become an additional tool in the hands of Law and Justice. The politicians of this party could take advantage of the German activities in favor of the current political interests (as it was the case of the criticism made by the European Commission) (Bogdańska, 2018). Besides, Poland is connected with Germany by common business and important Union issues – primarily in the area of security. The mitigation of arguments is also in favor of serious problems faced by Europe. Hence, there were rare references to democratic deficits in Poland in the German election campaign and the problem was ignored during official visits after the election. With regard to Merkel's visit in Warsaw in March 2018, this issue was only raised by German journalists at a press conference. The issue of the rule of law is presented by Germans as a topic at the Union level and not Polish-German relationships (Kokot, Orłowski, 2018). It differs from the earlier explicitly critical Merkel's stance, expressed for example during her visit in Warsaw in February 2017. Then, Merkel pointed to the questions of a pluralist society as well as free media and the independent judiciary system (Mazurczyk, 2017).

With regard to the relationships between *Hungary* and Germany, like in the case of Poland, de-democratization does not remain without any impact on these relationships. But again, it is one of the factors adversely affecting these relationships. Others include: the question of refugees – in this case the stance of Germany seems more critical than in the case of the state of democracy in Hungary and the pro-Russian position, acting against sanctions aimed at Russia and the support for Turkish President Erdoğan (Bakos, 2017). Although such topics as freedom of media and non-governmental organizations as well as the operation of courts appear in chancellor Merkel's speeches, the government stance is mitigated – for similar reasons as in the case of Poland. The stance of the CSU, which is in favor of Orbán's party, has also some impact. The German government represents this attitude despite the opposition's protests. For example, FDP demands stopping the support for Orbán's authoritarian party and government and has doubts whether FIDESZ should still be a member of the European People's Party – the largest political group in the European Parliament, which CDU and CSU also belong to (*Merkel gratuliert Orbán, 2018*).

3. Relationships with France

The process of de-democratization does remain without any influence on the relationships of Turkey, Poland and Hungary with France. However, there may be an impression that President Emmanuel Macron is also guided by pragmatism in his contacts with these countries. He is critical of their departure from the liberal model of democracy, but this criticism is primarily referred to the relationships with the European Union, and not to the bilateral relations between the analyzed countries and France.

The authoritarian tendencies in *Turkey* adversely affect the French-Turkish relationships to a relatively small degree. Greater tensions are caused by such issues as the French criticism of Turkish attack in Afrin or receiving the representatives of PKK by the French side. The criticism of activities of Erdoğan and the ruling AKP is explicit, especially after July 2016. France criticizes the breach of human rights and deficits of the rule of law. During the visit of Erdoğan, government members and Turkish businessmen, President Macron emphasized a "different perception" of human rights in France and Turkey and he indicated definite cases of breaking human rights, referring to activists from non-governmental organizations, journalists and Kurdish or pro-Kurdish activists. The French President also appealed to Erdoğan with regard to the freedom of press. However, Macron and representatives of the French government refer these issues to the relationships with the

European Union and not France. During that visit, President Macron explicitly underlined that in the present political situation in Turkey, its membership in the Union is out of question, so is the progress in negotiations. He proposed the development of cooperation and partnership (using these very words: cooperation and partnership). Such an approach on the part of France gave rise to a negative reaction of the Turkish authorities, much disappointed with Macron's address (Semo, 2018; *Macron: la situation en Turquie*, 2018).

Nevertheless, bilateral relations have not deteriorated much due to the political situation in Turkey. During the January visit (2018), common interests were emphasized. Both presidents agreed that their common goal was to fight terrorism. Macron was willing to strengthen cooperation with Turkey in relation to the migration crisis and Islamist terrorism. He was afraid that many foreign jihadists, perhaps including Frenchmen, who are presently staying in Turkey, may wish to come to France. And this is what Macron wanted to prevent. The French President also stressed a convergent point of view of Turkey and France in relation to the situation in Syria as well as a common strategic interest in this respect. These countries agree that "Assad cannot represent the future of Syria." However, Turkey takes part in the negotiations between the parties of the Syrian conflict held in Astana (Turkey, Iran, Russia), while France is suggesting a "contact group" should be established, thanks to which it would share the impact on the situation in Syria. France also wants to participate in the construction of the long range anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems in Turkey. This is to be achieved through the conclusion of the contract for building this system by France and Italy together with Turkey (Malbrunot, 2018).

It should be added that unlike the right-wing parties, the left-wing ones were surprised by Erdoğan's visit in France. Rachid Temal from the Socialist Party claimed it was Macron's mistake, just like his pragmatic policy (called "Realpolitik" by Temal), which according to the left-wing politicians cannot be pursued contrary to human rights. (Lepelletier, 2018).

In the case of the relationships between *Poland* and France, there is a similar approach observed, consisting in indicating problems of obeying democratic rules primarily in the Union context, not with regard to the bilateral relations. During the talks with Poland's representatives Macron explicitly emphasized the necessity for obeying democratic values by this country, adding though that he meant the reaction compliant with the European Commission recommendations. The intention to maintain appropriate relations with Poland gave rise to the use of the diplomatic language. Macron said that France on the one hand did not interfere in internal reforms of other countries, but on the other he defended the respect for

democratic rules. The deficits in this area may have negative consequences. However, it was not explicitly said what these consequences might mean. It may be supposed that it referred again to the Union aspect, and to be more specific, to instituting the proceedings of Article 7 of the Treaty on the European Union. It results from other speeches made by the French President, who spoke about the necessity for the sanctions to be imposed against Poland (Bertrand, 2018). However, during the talks with the representatives of the Polish authorities, after expressing his opinion on the application of democratic principles in Poland, Macron quickly moved on to speaking about common interests in security, energy or trade. The wish to maintain good relationships with Poland is clear. The problems of this country with democratization are not an obstacle to reach the planned goal (Bodalska, 2017d).

In the case of relationships between *Hungary* and France, a similar phenomenon to Polish-French relationships may be observed. Both Central European countries are explicitly criticized for the state of democracy on the European forum. President Macron, after FIDESZ won the parliamentary elections in April 2018, placed Hungary together with Poland on the side of "new populist authoritarianisms" which ignore the rule of law, on the other side – the European countries faithful to the liberal model of democracy. In his speech in the European Parliament, he spoke even about a war to defend the "authority of democracy" (Erlanger, 2018). At the level of rhetoric, there are very critical remarks, on both sides, concerning not only the political regime in Hungary but also the vision of Europe or the question of migrants.

However, the opinions expressed in speeches do not translate into bilateral Hungarian-French relationships. France is the fourth largest investor in Hungary, with 350 firms employing about 35 thousand people. Among 25 largest investors in this Central European country, five are companies from France: Groupama, EDF, Sanofi, Auchan and GDF Suez. The French government takes into account the French interest and that is why, there is no real impact of Hungarian problems with democracy on the bilateral relations (*France and Hungary*, 2017).

4. Relationships with Great Britain

The relationships with Great Britain are important for all the analyzed countries. Although this country is leaving the European Union, it is still significant for them, primarily in the economic and security dimensions.

Great Britain is one of major *Turkey's* friends in the context of its European Union membership efforts. Both these countries are NATO allies. The political events in Turkey in

recent years have affected the mutual relationships but have not deteriorated them considerably. Theresa May's government conducted "balanced diplomatic" activities in 2017. It meant that although there was some constructive criticism of the state of democracy and human rights in Turkey on the part of British authorities, the willingness to maintain good relationships was clear at the same time. Thus, a pragmatic approach of the United Kingdom was prevailing, which resulted from its interests. It was shown for example by the visit in Turkey paid by Prime Minister May at the beginning of 2017, during which contracts worth 100m pounds were signed (project connected with combat aircraft). Such an approach was suggested by British journalists. For example, *The Guardian* said that the British government must be aware of the Turkey's potential and should improve the relationships with it and emphasize that it treats Turkish anxieties seriously (terrorism), but at the same time maintain its stance on democracy and human rights and convince Turkey that the improvement in this area will be advantageous to it. (Doğuş, 2017). This pragmatic approach was criticized by other journalists, especially the sales of weapon to Turkey in view of the state of democracy and human rights in this country (and an intensive conflict between the government and PKK). Simultaneously, certain determinants of this stance were indicated, i.e. Brexit and the necessity for extended trade agreements (Doward, 2017).

There was an impression that the negative impact on the British-Turkish relationships was made not really by the state of democracy in Turkey but by the question of the extradition of businessmen and activist staying in Britain connected with the Gülen Movement and accused of participation in the attempted coup. The British government was being convinced by the Turkish authorities about it (Bowcott, 2017).

In the case of **Poland**, on the one hand there was a negative image of the country connected with the state of democracy created by the British media, critical of the political situation in Poland. The newspapers said for example that democracy in Poland was threatened; it was proved by the politicized procedure of choosing judges or the Constitutional Tribunal reform (Acherson, 2016).

On the other hand, the stance of the British authorities was more carefully balanced and led to the maintenance of correct relationships with Poland despite problems with the respect for the principles of democracy in this country. This stance was criticized by the media, but the correction of British policy towards Poland was not made. The press stated that Poland departs from the liberal democracy, and the non-liberal regime should be built outside the EU structures and without its funds (a similar statement was expressed about Hungary

(Hutton, 2018). It was rightly indicated that it did not disturb the May government in creating a "strategic alliance" with Poland before another round of talks on Brexit. The Prime Minister herself ignored the persuasion of other European leaders to criticize the Polish government for internal reforms (*The Guardian view on Poland*, 2017). Thus, the interest (this time political) outweighed the willingness to defend democratic values.

Similarly, the relationships between *Hungary* and Great Britain did not suffer considerably in relations with the departure from the principles of liberal democracy. Hungary was criticized in the British media for the state of democracy (like Poland), which affected an unfavorable image of the country. It was said for example that the country should not exercise the presidency of the EU Council (Traynor, 2011). It was also added that no reaction on the part of European leaders on the political situation in Hungary may have an adverse effect on other EU member countries, which might have a sense of impunity when effecting the changes meaning the departure from the liberal model of democracy. The British government did not change the attitude to Hungary under the influence of the negative opinions in the media. It was again due to the political interest – Brexit negotiations required the search for allies. The deterioration of relationships with European partners was not recommendable then. Besides, Great Britain is not the most suitable country to criticize Hungary due to the xenophobic sentiment in this country (Jones, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

The paper proves that we witness problems with keeping the model of liberal democracy or even with the process which can be called the de-democratization in the analyzed cases of Turkey, Hungary and Poland, in the second decade of the current century. There are some differences in how this process manifests itself - first of all between the selected "new" EU member states on the one hand, and Turkey, on the other - connected with different types of political regimes in these states.

However, there are also important similarities. In all the three countries the formal/institutional dimension of the democratic consolidation was well developed through the reforms within the transformation and EU pre-accession process. It was enough to achieve the formal democratic regime but insufficient to reach the stage of the substantive democracy. The latter would be possible through the development of the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of the democratic consolidation. However, as the quoted surveys show, in all the three countries both elites' and common citizens' approach and commitment to democracy

(liberal model) leave a lot to be desired. The author of this paper agrees in this context with Agh who points out that as far as the political culture is concerned there is still a substantial gap between the West and the East (to the latter belong both the CEE countries and Turkey), having a lot to do with the historical legacy (Agh 2015, 7-8). The hypothesis H1 has been verified positively then.

The divergence of the analyzed countries from the West/Europe in terms of the functioning of the liberal model of democracy was deepened in the second decade of the 21st century, having the dysfunctional impact even on the formal-institutional dimension of the democratic consolidation. In this context we can talk about the “de-democratization”. The deficits of the political culture and the related historical legacy – as the long-term system issues - contributed to a large extent to this situation. However, the deepening of the problems of the functioning of the liberal model of democracy was also a result of the additional factors – belonging more to the category of current issues. The socio-economic problems, connected also with the global crisis, as well as the domestic situation characterized by the ruling of the parties critical to the EU and the liberal model of democracy, enhanced the dysfunctional role of the political culture/historical legacy. This has been clearly indicated in this paper. The hypothesis H2 has been then verified positively as well.

The working of these factors resulted in the substantial departure from the liberal model of democracy described in this paper, which currently translates into changes in the given type of the political regime (first of all the clear lowering of the quality of democracy). However, it can also mean the change of the political regime in the long-term perspective – to a less democratic or a non-democratic one, at least with reference to some of the analyzed states.

The impact of the de-democratization process on the relations between Turkey, Poland and Hungary with the most important European partners – the European Union (led by the European Commission) as well as Germany, France and Great Britain has been analyzed in the second section of the paper. Its conclusion is that although the departure from the liberal model of democracy is not without any impact on the relations with the aforementioned actors, the bilateral relations with Germany, France and Great Britain have not been weakened substantially due to the de-democratization. A bad state of relations, if it occurs, is rather a consequence of other factors. The problem of de-democratization is raised by the German, French and British representatives but first of all on the EU level and with reference to the Union procedures. The democracy issue is present during the bilateral meetings in the

rhetorical sphere but has no major effect on the real contacts due to the pragmatic policy of the European leaders. They take into consideration their countries' interests in the relationships with Turkey, Poland and Hungary.

An evolution of the position can be observed in some European states. The new German government first of all seems to be more cautious about indicating Turkish, Polish and Hungarian problems with democracy. It is a result of the German interests but also the awareness that emphasizing the respect for democratic rules could be used by a government of the state having problems with keeping the liberal model of democracy for its own political purposes and, as a result, could bring a contrary effect.

The situation looks a little different with regard to the European Union. Due to the fact that democratic rules are the EU basis, the Union institutions, first of all the European Commission must react to the democratic deficits both in the candidate countries and the member states. It has more tools in relation to the former. The example of Turkey proves this clearly. The problems of its political regime have a negative impact on the pre-accession process. The effective actions of the European Commission are more difficult in the case of member states. However, the Commission takes here some measures too, connected among others with article 7 of the Treaty on the EU. This leads to some tensions in relations with the Union institutions. However, the EU is not in favor of exacerbating relations with Turkey as well as Poland and Hungary – for different reasons but always related to the Union political and security interests. Thus, we do not observe any substantial deterioration of relations between the EU institutions and the three analyzed states. The H3 hypothesis has been verified only partially positively then.

This paper concerned three cases of states, showing some universal phenomenon, independent in general terms of the political regime (differences concern only details how this phenomenon manifests itself). However, it must be underlined that it embraces many other countries. In the case of Europe and its neighbourhood it is e.g. about: Bulgaria, Romania, Western Balkan states and such eastern EU neighbours as Moldova. These cases are also worth studying thoroughly, with the use of more complex research methods (such as QCA).

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