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THE ARCTIC AS A NEW DOMAIN OF RUSSIA – TÜRKIYE COLLABORATION

Elena V. KIENKO
Ayşe G. ÇALIK

Abstract: Nowadays the significance of the Arctic is growing at a notable pace. Türkiye that strives to cultivate a robust foreign policy sees the region as a new focal point of its policy. Non-Arctic states, however, including Türkiye, do not have the same scope of the rights as Arctic Coastal states. The character of Russia's involvement is different: as an Arctic Coastal state, with the largest coastline in the Arctic region and a long history of engagement in the region, Russia plays a major role in the region. Like other Arctic Coastal state, it has been and still is determinative in the development of the Arctic marine areas' legal regime.

At this juncture, the Arctic has prompted preliminary explorations between Russia and Türkiye. The pivotal issues that this study seeks to address is whether the Arctic can serve as a new domain of collaboration between Russia and Türkiye regardless of the NATO and whether scientific and economic areas of cooperation in the Arctic are mutually beneficial for both states.

To address this issue authors analysed the main legal documents of Russia and Türkiye related to their maritime policy in the Arctic. Although Türkiye has not published the Arctic policy yet, its legal position on different aspects of legal regime of the Arctic reflected in national laws and in international agreements to which Türkiye is a party. As a result of the study, the authors defined several possible areas of bilateral cooperation in the Arctic, namely, scientific research, commercial shipbuilding, energy projects. General scientific and private scientific methods of cognition composed methodological basis for the study.

Keywords: the Arctic, international cooperation, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, the Arctic Council, science diplomacy, energy, shipbuilding.

Dr. Elena V. KIENKO –Senior Research Fellow, Institute for International Studies, MGIMO University.
ORCID: 0000-0001-8997-065X. E-mail: e.kienko@inno.mgimo.ru
76 Prospect Vernadskogo, Moscow, Russia, 119454.

Ayşe Gülsüm ÇALIK – Foreign Policy Expert, MASA Strategic Research Center.
ORCID: 0000-000-3450-7451. E-mail: aysegulsumcalik@gmail.com
51/15 Aziziye, Portakal Çiçeği, Ankara, Türkiye, 06690.

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Introduction

The Arctic[1], which has long been considered inaccessible and uninhabitable region because it has been covered with glaciers for centuries, is transforming now into a new geographical shape. According to the study, the earliest ice-free conditions in the Arctic Ocean could potentially occur in the 2030s and are likely to happen before the 2050s (Jahn, Holland, Kay, 2024). The decreasing ice cover of the region creates a new potential for maritime activities, which was previously considered impossible. As the effects of climate change become increasingly evident on a global scale, the Arctic region is witnessing a surge in geopolitical and economic significance. There are several reasons behind this trend. Firstly, global warming affects navigation because traditional sea routes in the Arctic are becoming ice-free most part of the year. Secondly, climate change has impact on the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources. In new conditions it would require less efforts to develop oil and gas deposits. Therefore, the Arctic region has obtained new strategic importance in the geopolitical and economic context for the non-Arctic states, particularly for Türkiye[2].

Commercial shipping is of vital importance today, especially for maritime powers. Traditionally maritime routes in the Arctic Ocean include the Northern Sea Route (NSR) passing along the Northern coast of the Russian Federation; the Northwest Passage (NWP) passing the Canada's Arctic Archipelago and along the Northern coast of North America[3]; the Transpolar Sea Route passing straight through the central part of the Arctic Ocean (the North Pole) and the Arctic Bridge connecting Russia and Canada. These shipping routes have different legal regimes. For instance, while the NSR and the NWP are generally referred to as coastal sea routes, the Transpolar Sea Route is recognised as the route stretching across the high seas of the Arctic Ocean, where the principle of freedom of navigation is established by the Convention on the High Seas 1958 and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982.

The sea routes in the region are emerging as the most important alternatives to the Suez and Panama Canals, which are considered traditional sea routes and used especially in maritime trade between Asia and Europe[4]. Navigation via

[1] According to the international legal doctrine, the Arctic is a northernmost polar region of the Earth centered on the North Pole and bounded by the Arctic Circle (66 degrees 33 minutes north latitude).

[2] Turkey does not follow the logic of some other non-Arctic states by positioning itself as a "near-Arctic state" like China or "vertical Arctic nation" like Switzerland. The elevation of its territory compared to Europe and Asia makes Turkey a "third pole" (Limon, 2021: 4).

[3] Robinson L.J. (2013) Northwest Passage. *The Canadian Encyclopedia,* 12 August. Available at: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/northwest-passage (accessed 28 November 2024).

[4] According to Atomflot, from January 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024 nuclear icebreakers provided 438 ship calls in comparison with the same period in 2023 – 435. The total gross tonnage was 50.4 million tons (in comparison with the same period in 2023 – 48.6 million tons). From: *Atomflot Rosatom* (2024) Rosatomflot sets new record for cargo transportation along the Northern Sea Route. Available at: https://www.rosatomflot.ru/press-centr/novosti-predpriyatiya/2024/07/04/11614-rosatomflot-ustanovil-novyy-rekord-gruzoperevozok-po-severnomu-morskomu-puti/page,5/ (accessed 28 November 2024).

the water area of the NSR has considerable advantages over other routes. For instance, the NSR is approximately 40% shorter compared to the Suez Canal, which, in turn, may facilitate more than a doubling of vessels' operational energy efficiency performance (Schøyen & Bråthen, 2011: 978). For Türkiye's vessels passing from the Asian markets navigation through the NSR will furthermore drive down fuel costs. Another important benefit for non-Arctic states is the possibility of larger vessels than those admitted for transit through the Suez to use the NSR (Vylegzhanin, Bunik, Torkunova & Kienko, 2020: 287). Moreover, increasing pirate attacks on vessels around African coastline (Akhahenda, Kim, Son & et. al, 2024) and a possible blockage of the Suez Canal as it happened in 2021 (Man-yin Lee & Yin-cheung, 2021) present constant risk for the world trade and remain the major reasons for searching alternative routes[5].

Nowadays experts and officials from the United States contest legal justification for Russian and Canadian control over Arctic seaways (the NSR and the NWP, respectively) based on art. 234 UNCLOS[6]. They claim that new climate conditions and lack of ice in the Arctic automatically mean this article should not be applicable to these maritime routes and the NSR and the NWP should not be subject to special national regulations of the Russian Federation and Canada (Schreiber, 2019).

In this regard Dr. Alexander N. Vylegzhanin, a renowned Arctic expert, Professor at MGIMO University, emphasized that if ice covers an area in the Arctic waters for less than 6 months of the year, this does not mean the disappearance of the environmental risks caused by navigation in the area; on the contrary, harsh weather conditions, low visibility due to darkness in winter ('polar nights'), and intermittent fog in all seasons remain important 'obstructions' to navigation in the Arctic (Vylegzhanin, 2020).

The Arctic attracts attention due to the diversity and abundance of hydrocarbons and other mineral resources, geopolitical importance and its location between the three continents of the world (Østreng, et al., 2013: 29). According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the Arctic has the largest unexplored prospective area of petroleum. It corresponds to 13% of the world's undiscovered or unexplored oil resources and 30% of its natural gas resources (90 billion barrels of undiscovered

[5] Statistically, almost half of Turkish shipyards' exports go to Northern European countries (Norway, Iceland). For example, in 2022 the main products exported to Norway by Türkiye were Passenger and Cargo Ships, Fishing Ships, and Delivery Trucks. From: *OEC* (n.d.) Norway/Turkey. Available at: https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/nor/partner/tur (accessed 28 November 2024).

[6] Art. 234 UNCLOS: "Coastal States have the right to adopt and enforce non-discriminatory laws and regulations for the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution from vessels in ice-covered areas within the limits of the exclusive economic zone, where particularly severe climatic conditions and the presence of ice covering such areas for most of the year create obstructions or exceptional hazards to navigation, and pollution of the marine environment could cause major harm to or irreversible disturbance of the ecological balance. Such laws and regulations shall have due regard to navigation and the protection and preservation of the marine environment based on the best available scientific evidence". From: *The UN* (n.d.) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Available at: https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf (accessed 28 November 2024).

oil and 1,670 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, respectively)[7]. The region also stands out in the field of rare earth mineral resources such as diamonds, tin, zinc, platinum and uranium. Although the existence of subsoil resources in the Arctic was previously known, the high cost of extraction was one of the obstacles for the states in the region. However, with the thawing of permafrost and the advancement of technology, drilling and mining fields have started to develop rapidly and have become effective in global energy markets.

In this regard it is also should be mentioned that Türkiye's participation as a non-Arctic state in the exploration projects is only possible under bilateral agreement with the Arctic states, or under other contracts with Russian and other oil and gas companies which perform exploration and mining of mineral resources on the Arctic continental shelf (Kienko, 2021: 200). The presence and activities of foreign oil and gas companies on the shelf of one of the Arctic states is possible in various form—under a product sharing agreement, as a joint venture or a concession, under service contract, etc. (Kienko, 2021: 200). By now, Turkish energy companies have not been involved in exploration and exploitation projects in the Arctic. Türkiye (company "Renaissance Construction JSC") participated in construction of the Yamal LNG facilities in 2015 – 2016. Some Türkiye's experts, such as Assistant Professor at Recep Tayyip Erdogan University, Rabia Kalfaoglu, consider that Turkish companies can contribute to efficiently exploiting Arctic resources by leveraging their energy technology expertise and participating in projects like electrifying drilling rigs and other energy infrastructure initiatives (Kalfaoglu & Viakhireva, 2024).

Increasing Global Importance of the Arctic Council

The Ottawa Declaration 1996 stated the Arctic Council (AC) is a high-level forum, promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states[8], Arctic Indigenous Peoples and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic[9]. The AC emerged out of the necessity of cooperation between the eight Arctic states "concerned with the threats to the Arctic environment and the impact of pollution on fragile Arctic ecosystems"[10]. According to Professor Young, a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the Bren School of

[7] *UNCLOS Debate* (n.d.) Arctic contains huge deposits of oil and natural gas. Available at: https://www.unclosdebate.org/evidence/248/arctic-contains-huge-deposits-oil-and-natural-gas (accessed 28 November 2024).

[8] The Arctic Circle crosses the territories of eight Arctic states, namely the Russian Federation, the United States of America (USA), Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland. These states are the permanent members of the Arctic Council. The list of the members of the AC is conclusive.

[9] *The Arctic Council* (n.d.) About the Arctic Council. Available at: https://arctic-council.org/about/ (accessed 28 November 2024).

[10] *The Arctic Portal* (1991) Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy June 14, 1991. Available at: https://library.arcticportal.org/1542/1/artic_environment.pdf (accessed 28 November 2024).

Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, the AC has been 'a symbol of the emergence of the Arctic as a region and a symbol of both global cooperation and increased awareness in the North' (Young, 2000: 4).

The role of the Arctic states acting within the framework of the AC has been highly praised. As noted, the Head of the Legal Department at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasizes that "only those Arctic states whose population lives in the Arctic and who realize their sovereignty and jurisdiction over vast areas of the region bear special responsibility for its sustainable development and governance and that has already been demonstrated by the activities of the Arctic Council" (Berkman, Vylegzhanin & Young, 2019).

Nowadays the secondary actors started to be involved in the Arctic issues, accelerating the globalisation process of the region at the same time. By now, 13 non-Arctic states gained the observer status in the Arctic Council (the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Netherland, France, Spain, Italy, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Switzerland)[11]. Seeking to participate in the activities of the AC as observers they should correspond to the criteria stated in the Arctic Council Rules of Procedure. Annex 2 to Arctic Council Rules of Procedure includes seven criteria for admitting new observers[12].

The applicant should 1) accept and support the objectives of the Arctic Council defined in the Ottawa declaration; 2) recognize Arctic States' sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic; 3) recognize that an extensive legal framework applies to the Arctic Ocean including, the Law of the Sea; 4) respect the values, interests, culture and traditions of Arctic indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitants; 5) demonstrate a political willingness as well as financial ability to contribute to the work of the Permanent Participants and other Arctic indigenous peoples; 6) demonstrate their Arctic interests and expertise relevant to the work of the Arctic Council; and 7) demonstrate a concrete interest and ability to support the work of the Arctic Council, including through partnerships with member states and Permanent Participants bringing Arctic concerns to global decision-making bodies.

It also should be noted that the status is not granted by the AC indefinitely and every four years states are required to submit updated reports. Up to this moment, no observer status has been cancelled, but given the increase in the number of states applying to join it, membership cancellations are possible in the future (Terzi, 2020; Viakhireva, 2019). Albeit decisions in the Arctic Council are the exclusive right and responsibility of the Arctic States, observers may participate in the AC meetings and working groups, propose projects through an Arctic state, make statements during these meetings and participate in the development of the documents in the frame of working groups (Torkunov & Vylegzhanin, 2024: 51).

[11] *The Arctic Council* (n.d.) List of Arctic Council Observers. Available at: https://arctic-council.org/about/observers/ (accessed 28 November 2024).

[12] *The Arctic Council* (n.d.) Arctic Council Rules of Procedure. Available at: https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/6e73a734-2f8b-40f6-849a-245ef9942790/content (accessed 28 November 2024).

In 2015 Türkiye has also applied for the observer status in the Arctic Council. This status is seen as an opportunity for Türkiye to be involved in the region (Biresselioglu et al., 2022), closely follow the developments in the region, contribute to scientific research activities, and work in cooperation with the AC members. The Arctic Council is perceived by Türkiye's scientific community as "a common ground for international scientific collaboration" (Caymaz, 2023) and a "main platform for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic states". It also corresponds to Türkiye's desire to promote regional cooperation (Kalfaoglu & Viakhireva, 2024) and to gain legitimacy through established research stations and scientific expeditions (Çetin & Büyüksağnak, 2021: 356).

This application did not enjoy much support from Turkish public opinion (Limon, 2021: 8). Although Türkiye's application was rejected in 2017 and no official reason for the rejection was provided, it has not lost its interest in the region (Kalfaoglu & Viakhireva, 2024). On the contrary, Türkiye has started to prepare for the second application. Türkiye 's commitment to become observer in the Arctic Council underscores its long-term strategic interest in contributing to the governance and sustainable development of the Arctic (Kalfaoglu & Viakhireva, 2024). In order to gain this status, Türkiye should also develop a comprehensive Arctic strategy and roadmap, and carry out more scientific researches in the region. In this process, it is very important for Türkiye to transfer its experience gained in the Antarctic to the Arctic region.

Türkiye's Arctic Policy

Although Türkiye has not published an official Arctic strategy yet, Türkiye's interest in the region is not new contrary to popular belief. As Dr. Caymaz states, Celal Nuri Bey, a member of the First Turkish Parliament, visited the region twice (in 1912 and in 1913) and published two books about his experiences in the Arctic. After these visits, Türkiye became a member of international organisations such as the American Geographical Society, decided to participate in the second International Polar Year (1932-1933) and closely followed and participated in subsequent ones (Caymaz, 2024).

The institutionalisation process of polar scientific research in Türkiye started in 2013 when the Türkiye Representative Office of the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) was established. In 2014, the Antarctic Science Programme Workshop was held in cooperation with Türkiye and Germany with the support of TÜBİTAK. After three expeditions to the South Pole, Turkish scientists headed North in the summer of 2019 with the first Turkish Arctic Scientific Expedition (TASE) conducted in the Arctic Ocean around the Spitsbergen (Caymaz & Büyüksağnak, 2011: 43-44).

One of the main pieces of evidence of the growing interest of Türkiye in the Arctic was the 'National Maritime Research Strategy of Turkey' published in 2014. This strategic document aimed at encouraging marine research performances in the areas that are out of Türkiye's maritime jurisdiction areas such as the Antarc-

tic and the Arctic with a global point of view[13]. Türkiye includes the Arctic and the Antarctic in its marine research priorities "in order to reach a level that competes with international studies effectively, productively, scientifically and technically", to make the country arbiter and director in international platform by creating policies towards national interests. These initiatives, which started with the motivation of scientific research, are expanding on economic and cultural fields of work carried out jointly with the states of the region.

Russian experts also hold the opinion that the Turkish government does not divide its foreign policy into the Arctic and the Antarctic, forming a kind of "polar" policy direction that cannot be considered in isolation from each other (Vernigora, 2024; Gutenev & Kalfaoglu, 2022).

The primary regulatory document outlining its polar interest was the "National Polar Science Programme (2018-2022)", aimed at positioning Türkiye as a leading country in polar science (Kalfaoglu & Viakhireva, 2024). The main goals of the Program are organizing national expeditions to the polar regions under the auspices of the Turkish State Presidency and under the coordination of TÜBİTAK MAM Polar Research Institute (KARE), establishing bilateral relations on polar sciences, sending scientists to other countries' science bases and establishing a Turkish science base in the Antarctic[14].

Türkiye's "National Polar Science Strategy 2023-2035" was published in 2023. According to this strategy, Türkiye strives to be among the leading countries in polar research. The Turkish government, national research institutes and other bodies consistently develop scientific researches and science diplomacy activities with a governance-based approach to achieve this. To be more precise, there are three strategic aims have been defined in the period up to 2035: 1) to achieve scientific excellence by increasing the quantity and quality of national polar science outputs, thereby strengthening Türkiye's position in scientific international organizations and networks; 2) to increase awareness, understanding, and knowledge on polar regions and global climate change; 3) to ensure the sustainability of national polar research[15].

In 2019 to provide support for research and development in polar regions the Polar Research Institute was established. It is within its competence to operate Türkiye's polar research infrastructure, to plan and coordinate logistics, to facilitate communication among relevant organizations, to conduct bilateral international collaborations, to develop and implement the national polar strategy

[13] *Turkish government* (n.d.) Turkish National Marine Research Strategy document. Available at: https://www.shodb.gov.tr/shodb_esas/orj/kurul/tudas_7405b.pdf (accessed 28 November 2024).

[14] *TÜBİTAK MAM Polar Research Institute (KARE)* (n.d.) Polar program 1001 (Year 2022) for Participation in National Antarctic and Arctic Science Expeditions. Available at: https://kare.mam.tubitak.gov.tr/en/duyuru/polar-program-1001-year-2022-participation-national-antarctic-and-arctic-science-expeditions (accessed 28 November 2024).

[15] *TÜBİTAK MAM Polar Research Institute (KARE)* (n.d.) Turkish Polar Science Strategy 2023-2035. Available at: https://mam.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/images/turkish_polar_science_strategy_2023_2035.pdf (accessed 28 November 2024).

in cooperation with stakeholders, to raise awareness of polar regions at national level, to materialise national and international scientific diplomacy on polar regions and to represent Türkiye in the international polar research arena[16].

Another of Türkiye's significant steps in its presence in the Arctic region was its adhesion to the Treaty concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen, signed in Paris, February 9, 1920 and became the latest signatory state of the Treaty in 2023. Under the Treaty, the contracting parties recognize the full and absolute sovereignty of Norway over the Archipelago of Spitsbergen (comprising with islands listed in the Treaty), with the limitations prescribed by the articles 2, 3, 7. According to its provisions, Türkiye and its nationals 1) have the equal liberty of access and entry for any reason or object whatever to the waters, fjords and ports of the territories; they may carry on there without impediment all maritime, industrial, mining and commercial operations on a footing of absolute equality; 2) admitted under the same conditions of equality to the exercise and practice of all maritime, industrial, mining or commercial enterprises both on land and in the territorial waters; 3) have the right of ownership of property, including mineral rights, in the territories specified in the Treaty. Moreover, this allows Türkiye to establish a scientific base in Spitsbergen.

Priorities of the Russian Federation in the Arctic

For Russia, economic development in the Russian North and the stability of its Arctic communities remain the top priorities and they figure prominently in Russia's Arctic policy documents (Vylegzhanin, Young, 2021: 3). Priorities of the Russian Federation in the Arctic region can be identified in several laws.

In March 2020 the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir V. Putin signed the Executive Order "Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic to 2035". According to the Presidential Executive Office website, this is a strategic planning document aimed at ensuring national security and have been drafted to protect the country's national interests[17].

The main national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic are as follows: 1) to ensure Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity; 2) to preserve the Arctic as a territory of peace and stable mutually beneficial partnership; 3) to guarantee high living standards and prosperity for the population of the Russian Arctic; 4) to develop the Russian Arctic as a strategic resource base and use it rationally to speed up national economic growth; 5) to develop the Northern Sea Route as a globally competitive national transport corridor; and to protect the Arctic environment, the primordial homeland and the traditional way of life of the indigenous minorities in the Russian Arctic[18] Moreover, the foundations of Russia's state policy in the Arctic establishes mechanisms of implementing these goals.

[16] *TÜBİTAK MAM Polar Research Institute (KARE)* (n.d.) Institutional Overview. Available at: https://kare.mam.tubitak.gov.tr/en/about-pri/institutional-overview (accessed 28 November 2024).

[17] Vladimir Putin approved basic principles of state policy in the Arctic. Available at: http://en.kremlin.ru/acts/news/62947 (accessed 28 November 2024).

[18] Vladimir Putin approved basic principles of state policy in the Arctic. Available at: http://en.kremlin.ru/acts/news/62947 (accessed 28 November 2024).

In this case the determinative role of the Arctic Council (AC) for Russia (and for other four Arctic Coastal states) also should be noted. Regional format of the AC is reflected not only in the national legislation of the Arctic Coastal states but also in scientific researches (mainly, Russian). Many Russian scientists have come to the conclusion that the creation of the AC is one of the most successful outcomes of cooperation among the Arctic states at the regional level (Vylegzhanin, 2021: 2).

Russia held its chairmanship in the AC in 2021-2023 and had a detailed program with the following priorities during this period[19]: 1) to ensure responsible governance for the sustainable development of the Arctic; 2) to promote collective approaches to the balanced development of the Arctic socially, economically, and environmentally based on respect for international law; 3) to maintain the sustainability and vitality of the peoples of the North, promoting measures for their adaption to climate change, improving the wellbeing, health, education, and quality of lives, and ensuring sustainable socioeconomic development throughout the region; 4) to adapt life-sustaining activities and ensure resilience to its consequences, preserve and restore the environment, use natural resources in a sustainable manner, and support the health of Arctic ecosystems; 5) to facilitate the transition to a low-emission economy and to promote the introduction of advanced innovative technologies in the region, including the use of renewable energy sources; 6) to promote sustainable economic development of the Arctic, including reliable energy infrastructure and sustainable transport routes, etc.; 7) to consolidate the Arctic Council as a key format for international Arctic cooperation, improve its work, enhance the efficiency of the Working and Expert Groups and the Secretariat, develop mechanisms to fund the Council's activities, to develop dialogue and contacts with Observers; to promote international scientific cooperation under the auspices of the AC.

Directions of Russia – Türkiye Cooperation in the Arctic

As it was mentioned above, in the future possible areas of the Russia – Türkiye cooperation in the Arctic region may include energy projects and development of the NSR infrastructure. Today bilateral cooperation focused mainly on scientific research projects and to a lesser extent on the commercial shipbuilding.

Scientific cooperation between research groups of two states involves the information and technology sharing. For instance, within the scope of the Third Turkish Arctic Scientific Expedition (TASE-III) held in 2023 around Spitsbergen was to investigate the presence and intensity of anthropogenic impacts on a global scale, as well as, to observe the parameters and effects of global climate change in the Arctic.

Besides different types of projects dedicated to combating with the global warming, there was the project on the implementation of the 2018 Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement and the Convention for the Conservation of Antarc-

[19] *Arctic Russia* (n.d.) Priorities of Russia's Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Available at: https://as.arctic-russia.ru/en/priorities/ (accessed 28 November 2024).

tic Marine Living Resources (Türkiye is a Party to none of them). The Arctic states accepted non-Arctic states as signatories to the 2018 Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement due to the fact that the agreement covers areas of the high seas in which all states enjoy freedom of fishing (Vylegzhanin & Young, 2021: 4). Nevertheless, there are maritime areas under the jurisdiction of the Arctic Coastal states which inevitably should be crossed in order to get to the Central part of the Arctic Ocean (Vylegzhanin & Young, 2021: 4).

In the future Russian – Türkiye scientific researches around Spitsbergen could be developed in the frame of an international science and education centre. This centre could enable extensive joint research efforts focused on polar science and monitoring of the environment, thus greatly improving the understanding of the Arctic region. These joint scientific initiatives emphasise the mutual interest in using shared expertise to address global environmental challenges.

Moreover, bilateral relations between states have been developing at private entities' level which are involved in the Arctic region for several decades. In particular, the Sedef Shipyard, the largest private shipyard in Türkiye, built a cargo ship named the Arctic Sea for the Soviet Union in 1991. Furthermore, the Çelik Shipyard, which operates in shipbuilding, ship management and tourism business fields, is the first shipyard in Türkiye that has been awarded with the contract for the construction of the vessel to be operated in the polar conditions[20].

One of the major global shipyards in Europe, Tersan Shipyard received 45 orders such as fishing vessels and ferries from Russia, USA, Greenland, Norway and Canada between 2010-2019. Tersan also built a krill trawler for Norway to be used in the Antarctic in 2021. Currently, Tersan has several ship orders from different Arctic countries. In addition, Sefine Shipyard, one of the Turkish shipyards, was shortlisted as the sole bidder for Russia's icebreaker tender which was launched by Rosmorrechflot, in 2021[21].

In 2021, Atomflot, a subsidiary of Rosatom (Russia), signed a construction contract with Kuzey Star Shipyard (Türkiye), for the floating dock for nuclear icebreakers in Murmansk. The Atomflot already has 2 floating docks in Murmansk: PD–0002 which is used only for Russian icebreakers and PD–3 which also carries out third-party vessels repair and maintenance works. They are not capable to service new type of nuclear icebreakers – Project 22220 series icebreakers. It is expected the new floating dock to replace PD-3 because it has more capacity of around 30,000 tons[22]. In comparison with the dry dock, the floating dock has a major advantage, it can be installed anywhere offshore.

In addition, other Turkish shipyards such as Sanmar, Cemre, Ozata and Çelik Tekne received many orders ranging from ferries to offshore support vessels. Atlas and Akdeniz Shipyard are building ice class vessels in accordance with Polar Code

[20] *Eworldship* (n.d.) Çelik Tekne Shipyard. Available at: https://www.eworldship.com/app/company/2557 (accessed 28 November 2024).

[21] *Ship Technology* (2021) Turkey-based Sefine Shipyard secures Russian icebreaker tender. Available at: https://www.ship-technology.com/news/sefine-shipyard-russian-icebreaker-tender/ (accessed 28 November 2024).

[22] *Rosatom* (2022) Turkish Start. Available at: https://rosatomnewsletter.com/2022/04/26/turkish-start/ (accessed 28 November 2024).

requirements. Beşiktaş Shipyard, which is building ice class fuel vessels, Sanmar Shipyard, which won the ice breaker tug tender, and Sefine Shipyard, which participated in ice breaker tenders, can be mentioned as examples (Caymaz, 2024).

Many Turkish shipyards closely follow and increasingly participate in the Nor-Shipping exhibition which annually takes place in Norway. Their growing interest in the region and their ability to offer lower bids make Turkish shipyards stand out as important alternatives to suppliers from other countries for future large-scale projects in the Arctic.

There is no doubt that there is a growing interest in Arctic shipping. In this process, Turkish shipyards have also expanded their vision to participate in Arctic tenders. It is concluded that Russia will continue to invest in large-scale infrastructure projects with new non-Arctic actors such as Türkiye. In addition to sustainability awards for their green technology-based vessels, Turkish shipyards' participation in Russian tenders as sole contractors and the construction of floating docks for Russian icebreakers by 2021 underline their determination to be active actors in the Arctic shipping sector (Caymaz, 2024).

However, international cooperation between Russia and Türkiye in the Arctic faces some challenges. One of the obstacle to Arctic cooperation between two states is that Türkiye does not have clear Arctic policy and this fact complicates understanding of Türkiye's intentions in the region. But the main stumbling block is Türkiye's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Since 1952 NATO has been the cornerstone of Türkiye's defense and security policy[23]. And after the NATO enlargement in the region, Russia's cooperation with Türkiye can be seen as a challenge. According to Rabia Kalfaoglu, "Turkey's NATO membership presents a nuanced dynamic in their Arctic relationship" (Kalfaoglu & Viakhireva, 2024). The complex geopolitical situation also exacerbates risks that faced two states in the region. On the other hand, given the historical foreign policy relations between the two states, Türkiye's membership in NATO is not a new situation and bilateral relations have been built on this basis.

Conclusion

Türkiye's main objective in the Arctic reflected in the national programme includes strengthening Türkiye's position in this region, creating a roadmap for Türkiye's Arctic policy, gain the observer status in the AC, increasing the country's scientific and technical competence by encouraging Turkish scientists to conduct polar research, and improving the training of experts in the field of polar sciences. Türkiye is determined to promote the trade volume of Turkish shipyards and strengthen its commercial ties with the Arctic states, especially with the Russian Federation. Although Türkiye is pursuing a balanced policy, there may be risks and challenges for the Russia – Türkiye relations in the Arctic in a long term

[23] *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (n.d.) Turkiye and NATO. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_191048.htm (accessed 28 November 2024).

(Caymaz, 2024). Most importantly, Türkiye is a member of NATO and has not published its strategic roadmap for the region, the official Arctic Policy, yet. Thus, Türkiye's interests in the Arctic have not been clarified.

At this stage, the Russia – Türkiye cooperation in the Arctic is considered to be beneficial for both states. It has extended regardless of the NATO issues. The experts of both sides are jointly working on issues related to the scientific research (mainly, around Spitsbergen), commercial shipbuilding and construction of facilities for Russian major energy projects. It is expected that in the future bilateral cooperation may include development of the NSR infrastructure and participation of Türkiye in exploitation and exploration projects (like electrifying drilling rigs).

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АРКТИКА КАК НОВАЯ СФЕРА СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА РОССИИ И ТУРЦИИ

Елена Викторовна КИЕНКО – кандидат юридических наук, старший научный сотрудник Института международных исследований МГИМО МИД России.
ORCID: 0000-0001-8997-065X. E-mail: e.kienko@inno.mgimo.ru.
119454, Москва, проспект Вернадского, 76.

Айше Гюльсюм ЧАЛЫК – эксперт по внешней политике, Центр стратегических исследований (MASA), Турция.
ORCID: 0000-000-3450-7451. E-mail: aysegulsumcalik@gmail.com
06690, Турция, Анкара, Бульвар Портакал Чичеги, 51/15.

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Аннотация: В настоящее время Арктика становится более значимым регионом на международной арене. Активная внешняя политика Турции распространяется на новое для этого государства направление - Арктический регион. Между тем, неарктические государства, в т. ч. Турецкая Республика, не обладают теми же правами, что и арктические страны. Российская Федерация как арктическое прибрежное государство с самым протяженным побережьем и многовековой историей освоения и изучения Арктики имеет значительно больший объем прав и играет ключевую роль в развитии региона. Как и другие арктические прибрежные государства, Россия влияла и продолжает влиять на правовой режим Арктики. На данном этапе проведение исследований в Артике является толчком к развитию российско-турцеких отношений. В статье авторы поднимают вопросы о том, может ли Арктика стать регионом, в котором будут развиваться двусторонние отношения России и Турции, вне зависимости фактора НАТО; а также являются ли научная и экономическая сферы сотрудничества взаимовыгодными для обоих государств.

Авторы проанализировали основные правовые документы России и Турции, определяющие их арктическую политику. Несмотря на то, что Турция пока не имеет официальной стратегии, ее позиция по различным аспектам правового режима Арктики отражена в национальных законах и в международных соглашениях, участницей которых эта неарктическая страна является. В результате проведенного анализа авторы выделяют научные исследования, судостроение, а также участие в энергетических проектах в качестве перспективных направлений двустороннего сотрудничества в Арктике. Методологическую основу исследования составили общенаучные и частнонаучные методы познания.

Ключевые слова: Арктика, международное сотрудничество, Российская Федерация, Турция, Арктический совет, научная дипломатия, энергетика, судостроение

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