

Relationship Between Inflation and Economic Growth in EU Countries

AB Ülkelerinde Enflasyon ve Ekonomik Büyüme İlişkisi

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ABSTRACT

Low inflation and high economic growth are two of the main macroeconomic targets that all countries hope to reach. The reciprocal relationship between inflation and growth is currently an important debate in the literature. Although early studies generally focused on the view that inflation had no effect on growth or that it had a positive effect on growth, the upward trend of inflation in many countries in the 1970s and 1980s led to a change in direction in the inflation-growth debate. This discussion shows that the way inflation affects growth is directly related to its level. Therefore, if a certain inflation threshold value is exceeded, the view that inflation will affect growth negatively comes to the fore. In addition, the effect of economic growth on inflation is another dimension of the inflation-growth debate. In this context, it is important to examine the inflation growth spiral in the context of causality. In this study, the relationship between inflation and growth was investigated between the years 1996 and 2019 in 27 EU countries using Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality approach. In the analysis, two variables were used as an indicator of inflation. These are consumer prices Index (CPI) and GDP deflator. The results show that there is a bidirectional causality relationship from inflation to growth and from growth to inflation for both inflation indicators.

Keywords: Inflation, CPI, GDP deflator, economic growth, causality analysis

Jel Code: O11, O16, E31

ÖZ

Düşük enflasyon ve yüksek ekonomik büyüme, ülkelerin temel makroekonomik hedefleri arasında yer almaktadır. Bu noktada enflasyon ve ekonomik büyüme arasındaki karşılıklı ilişki literatürdeki önemli tartışmalardan biridir. Erken dönem çalışmalar her ne kadar genel olarak



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enflasyonun ekonomik büyüme üzerinde etkisiz olduğu veya büyümeyi pozitif etkilediği görüşünde yoğunlaşsa da enflasyonun 1970'lerde ve 1980'lerde birçok ülkede artış eğilimi göstermesi enflasyon-ekonomik büyüme tartışmanın yön değiştirmesine yol açmıştır. Esasında bu tartışmada enflasyonun ekonomik büyümeyi ne yönde etkileyeceği enflasyon düzeyi ile doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Dolayısıyla belirli bir enflasyon eşik değerinin aşılması durumunda enflasyonun ekonomik büyümeyi olumsuz etkileyeceği görüşü öne çıkmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra ekonomik büyümenin enflasyona etkisi de enflasyon büyüme tartışmasının diğer boyutunu oluşturmaktadır. Bu çerçevede enflasyon-ekonomik büyüme sarmalının nedensellik bağlamında incelenmesi önem arz etmektedir. Bu çalışmada 1996-2019 döneminde 27 AB ülkesinde enflasyon ve büyüme arasındaki ilişki Dumitrescu ve Hurlin (2012) nedensellik yaklaşımı kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Analizde enflasyon göstergesi olarak iki değişken kullanılmıştır. Bunlar Tüketici Fiyatları Endeksi (TÜFE) ve GSYİH deflatörüdür. Elde edilen sonuçlara göre her iki enflasyon göstergesi için de enflasyondan ekonomik büyümeye ve ekonomik büyümeden enflasyona doğru çift yönlü nedensellik ilişkisi bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Enflasyon, TÜFE, GSYİH deflatörü, ekonomik büyüme, nedensellik analizi

Jel Code: O11, O16, E31

Introduction

Inflation, which is a continuous increase in the general level of prices, is one of the important macroeconomic indicators of countries. One of the main indicators currently being discussed together with inflation is that of economic growth. Over the years, the content of discussions on the relationship between economic growth and inflation has differed depending on the period of the world economy. After the Second World War, Keynesian policies began to come to the fore in the world and as a result of the policies that increased the total demand, inflation started to rise along with an increase in production. In this period, inflation was not perceived as a problem, so the Keynesian approach did not initially develop a theory of inflation and did not see inflation as a fundamental problem. In fact, the Phillips curve approach, which emerged in the 1960s, was seriously embraced by Keynesian economists, and moderate inflation was accepted as a reasonable cost on the way to full employment. This was because the focus of the Phillips Curve was that high inflation would reduce unemployment and positively affect economic growth through this channel. According to Mundell (1963) and Tobin (1965), who have similar arguments, increasing inflation increases the cost of holding money. For this reason, households will tend to capitalize in order to protect their real income. An increase in capital accumulation will positively affect economic growth. Therefore, before the 1970's, the prevalent discussions on the relationship between inflation and growth were mostly that there was no relationship between the variables or that the relationship was positive. However, in the 1970s, growth rates began to decline with high inflation in many countries, and as a result, the view that

inflation positively affected growth began to be discussed. In addition, the crisis that emerged in Latin America in the 1980s led to high inflation and hyperinflation, and this process led to the acceptance of inflation as a monetary phenomenon that needed a solution (Tatlıyer, 2017; Majumder, 2016; Rao & Yesigat, 2015; Behera, 2014; Ahmed, 2010; Ercel, 1999).

There are many parameters that determine the inflation-growth relationship. The first of these is the economic conditions of countries. If the potential output of the economy grows enough to keep up with demand, high growth can be achieved without a significant increase in inflation. When actual output is equal to potential output, the economy reaches economic growth and full employment and can be achieved despite rising inflation. However, at this stage, if demand continues to increase and production capacity is not increased, a rapid increase in the general price level can be seen in the long run. Rising inflation may become a serious problem for the economy at this stage (Ayyoub, Chaudhry, & Farooq, 2011).

One of the channels by which inflation affects growth is exports. Increasing inflation may affect the balance of payments by making exports more costly and reducing the international competitiveness of countries. Inflation also directly affects borrowing and lending decisions. In this context, firms may have to allocate more resources to cope with the effects of inflation. This causes inefficiency in resource allocation and is a direct determinant on growth (Gokal & Hanif, 2004).

One of the debates on the inflation-growth relationship is that inflation affects growth by distorting the income distribution. One of the factors leading to this is wage delay. Accordingly, there is a time gap between the increase in output prices and the increase in input prices during inflation periods. When this process, called wage delay, continues for a long time, there is an increase in the profit margin of firms. Increased profits increase firms' investable funds. This results in a rise both in production capacity and in output level. Moreover, since upper income groups have a higher tendency to save, increasing inflation increases total savings. An increase in savings increases the supply of investable funds and lowers interest rates and this encourages investment and economic growth (Datta & Mukhopadhyay, 2011).

Increasing inflation also increases the cost of capital to be used in production. This is because uncertainties about the future increase with inflation and therefore the price of risks rises. In this way, capital owners who do not want to lose real income offer resources to investors with interest rates above inflation. This effect is not only limited to the capital owners but can spread to the general public by influencing consumer confidence. All of these factors may discourage investments and consumption and may, as a result, reduce the

country's potential production capacity (Tunalı & Özkan, 2016; Karaçor, Özer, & Saraç, 2011).

In this study, the relationship between economic growth and inflation in EU countries in the 1996-2019 period is analyzed using Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality approach. The plan of the paper is as follows: In the next section, empirical studies are presented. This is followed by a section on data and methods. In the final section, the analysis findings are discussed.

Literature

There are many studies in the literature that discuss the inflation-growth relationship from different perspectives. Some of these studies discuss the effect of inflation on growth (Kasidi & Mwakanemela, 2013; Hussain & Malik, 2011), while other studies discuss the effect of growth on inflation (Süleymanov & Nadirov, 2014). Despite the studies suggesting that there is a bidirectional causal relationship between growth and inflation (Singh & Singh, 2015; Koulakiotis, Lyroudi, & Papasyriopoulos, 2012), some studies suggest that there is a unidirectional relationship between the variables (Denbel, Ayen, & Regasa, 2016; Niyimbanira, 2013). In addition to these, some studies have suggested that the effect of inflation on economic growth will differ if inflation exceeds/does not exceed a certain threshold level (Pollin & Zhu, 2006; Bruno & Easterly, 1995).

Al-Khulaifi (2018), who argues that there is a unidirectional relationship between economic growth and inflation, found that there is a long-run relationship between inflation and economic growth in Qatar, and that there is a causal relationship from inflation to economic growth. Sa'idu and Muhammad (2015) in Nigeria and Niyimbanira (2013) in South Africa, found unidirectional causality from inflation to economic growth. Hossain et al. (2012) suggested that there is no cointegration relationship between the variables in Bangladesh, but there is unidirectional causality from inflation to economic growth. Uysal, Mucuk, and Alptekin (2008) and Yapraklı (2007) found a unidirectional relationship from inflation to growth in Turkey. Contrary to these studies, other studies found unidirectional causality from growth to inflation. For example, Karabulut (2019), Topçu (2017) and Kanca (2017) found a unidirectional causality relationship from growth to inflation in Turkey. In their studies, Denbel, Ayen, and Regasa (2016), Umaru and Zubairu (2012), and Gokal and Hanif (2004) suggested that there is a unidirectional causality relationship from economic growth to inflation for Ethiopia, Nigeria and Fiji, respectively.

Contrary to the wider literature suggesting that there is a unidirectional relationship between inflation and economic growth, there are also studies in the literature that find a bidirectional relationship between the variables. For example, Singh and Singh (2015) in

Japan and Koulakiotis, Lyroudi, and Papasyriopoulos (2012) in 14 European countries found a bidirectional causality relationship between inflation and growth.

In addition to the studies that discuss the inflation-growth relationship in the context of causality, some studies discuss how inflation affects growth. In this context, Barro (2013) found that inflation negatively affects growth in nearly 100 countries. Majumder (2016) found a positive relationship between inflation and economic growth in Bangladesh in the long run. In addition, Hussain and Malik (2011) suggested that inflation causes growth in Pakistan. Contrary to these studies, there is a large body of literature which suggests that there is a negative relationship between economic growth and inflation. For example, Rivera, Rojo and Gómez (2020) in some Latin American countries and Olamide, Ogujiuba and Maredza (2022) in the Southern African Development Community found a negative relationship between inflation and economic growth. Adaramola and Dada (2020) in Nigeria, Khan and Khan (2018) in Bangladesh, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan, and Kasidi and Mwakanemela (2013) in Tanzania, argued that inflation has a negative effect on economic growth. According to Salih and Türk (2020), Kopuk (2020), and Gürel and Tokar (2019), inflation affects growth negatively in Turkey. In addition, Karaçor, Özer, and Saraç (2011) and Pata (2017) found that there is a negative relationship between the variables in Turkey, both in the short and long run. Korkulu and Yılmaz (2017) argued that the relationship between economic growth and inflation differs according to the chosen inflation indicator. According to the study, only GDP Deflator as an indicator of inflation is significant on growth and inflation reduces growth.

In some studies, the inflation-growth relationship was examined both in the context of causality and on the basis of the direction of the effect. For example, Saungweme, Odhiambo, and Nicholas (2021) found that inflation negatively affects economic growth in the long run in Kenya. In addition, according to the causality analysis, there is unidirectional causality from economic growth to inflation in the short run. Suleymanov and Nadirov (2014) revealed that there is unidirectional causality relationship from growth to inflation in Turkey. In addition, they stated that economic growth had a positive effect on inflation. Berber and Artan (2004) and Karaca (2003) found unidirectional causality relationship from inflation to economic growth in Turkey. In addition, according to the study, inflation affects economic growth negatively.

In some studies, no significant relationship was found between inflation and growth. For example, according to Anidiobu, Okolie, and Oleka (2018) inflation is statistically insignificant on growth in Nigeria. Özçelik and Uslu (2017) found that there is no causal relationship between inflation and growth in Turkey. Similarly, Emsen et al. (2012) argued that inflation is not effective on growth in the long run in Turkey. According to Chimobi

(2010), there is no cointegration relationship between the variables in Nigeria. In addition, Hossain (2005) argued that there is no causal relationship from inflation to economic growth in Indonesia.

In some studies, the inflation-growth relationship may differ according to the short or long-run. In this context, Akter and Smith (2021) found a negative relationship between economic growth and inflation in Malaysia in the short run, but found a positive relationship in the long run. Sahnoun and Abdennadher (2019) found unidirectional causality relationship from inflation to economic growth in the short run for North African countries. However, in the long run, bidirectional causality was found between the two variables. According to Datta and Mukhopadhyay (2011), the direction of causality between inflation and growth is from inflation to economic growth in the short run, but from economic growth to inflation in the long run for Malaysia. Obradović, Šapić, Furtula, and Lojanica (2017) found that there is cointegration between inflation and growth in the long run in Serbia, while there is a unidirectional causality from inflation to economic growth in the short run. Manamperi (2014) found a positive long-run relationship between the variables for India in the BRICS countries, but did not find a long-run relationship in the other four countries. In the short run, a significant negative relationship was found between the variables for South Africa, Russia, Brazil and China but a positive relationship was found for India. In Bangladesh, Ahmed (2010) suggested that there is no significant relationship between inflation and economic growth in the long run, but there is a negative and statistically significant relationship in the short run. In addition, unidirectional causality relationship was found from inflation to economic growth.

In the literature, some studies suggest that the findings differ according to countries. For example, for in five African countries, Opeyemi (2020) found that inflation negatively affects economic growth in four countries, excluding Egypt. Akinsola and Odhiambo (2017) argued that the effect of inflation on economic growth in both developed and developing countries differs according to country and time. However, in general, there is a mostly negative relationship between the variables especially in developed economies. According to Behera and Mishra (2015), a positive relationship between growth and inflation in BRICS countries is valid only for China and South Africa in the long run. According to causality analyses, there is unidirectional causality between the variables in India, but bidirectional causality in China. Paul, Kearney, and Chowdhury (1997) found that the relationship between inflation and economic growth in 70 countries differed by country. According to the study, there is no causal relationship between the variables in 40% of the countries, unidirectional causality relationship in one-third of the countries, and bidirectional causality relationship in about one-fifth of the countries.

There are many studies that focus on the nonlinear relationship between inflation and

growth and discuss this relationship with the threshold value. One of the earliest of these studies was conducted by Sarel (1996), who determined the inflation threshold to be 8% in 87 countries. According to the study, inflation, which affects growth positively up to this point, affects growth negatively after this threshold value. Ghosh and Phillips (1998) found that inflation above 2.5% negatively affects economic growth in 145 countries. Bruno and Easterly (1995) determined the threshold level of inflation as 40% and they argued that after this threshold level, inflation negatively affects economic growth in 26 countries. Pollin and Zhu (2006) found that average inflation positively affects growth up to a threshold of 15-18% in 80 middle-income and low-income countries.

Sergii (2009) argued that if inflation exceeds 8% in CIS countries, it affects growth negatively, but a value below this affects growth positively. Munir, Mansur, and Furuoka (2009) determined the inflation threshold rate as 3.89% in Malaysia and found positive relationship between inflation rate and growth below the threshold level. Risso and Carrera (2009) argued that if the rate of inflation exceeds 9%, inflation will negatively affect growth in Mexico. Ayyoub, Chaudhry, and Farooq (2011) found that inflation negatively affected growth after a threshold level of 7% in the Pakistani economy. Bhusal and Silpakar (2011) found an inflation threshold of 6% for Nepal. According to the study, the inflation rate below or above this level can negatively affect economic growth. Vinayagathan (2013) argued that if inflation exceeds 5.43%, it will adversely affect growth in 32 Asian countries. Tung and Thanh (2015) determined the inflation threshold as approximately 7% in Vietnam. Accordingly, if the inflation rate exceeds 7%, inflation will negatively affect economic growth. Thanh (2015) argued that after the rate of inflation exceeded the threshold level of 7.84%, it affected growth negatively in ASEAN-5 countries. Altıntaş and Koçbulut (2019) found that if the inflation rate exceeds the level of 3.286% in 27 OECD countries, it will affect economic growth negatively, but inflation below this level will affect growth positively. Tien (2021) suggested that the threshold value of inflation is 6%, and hyperinflation above this threshold and very low inflation below this threshold negatively affect growth in Vietnam. In addition to these studies, Rao and Yesigat (2015), found a bidirectional causality relationship between inflation and economic growth in Ethiopia. In addition, the study revealed that there is a negative relationship between inflation and economic growth. In addition, the inflation threshold value was calculated and, accordingly, inflation exceeding the level of 9-10% affects economic growth negatively.

3. Data and Method

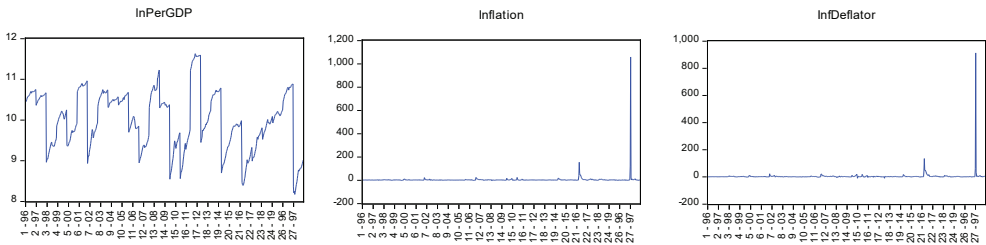
In this study, the relationship between inflation and growth in 27 EU countries was investigated between the years 1996 and 2019 using Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality approach. Descriptive statistics of the variables used are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Description	Min	Max	Std. Dev.	Mean
lnPerGDP	GDP per capita (constant 2015 US\$)	8.1710	11.6299	0.7241	9.9878
Inflation	Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)	-4.4781	1058.374	42.4094	5.1780
Deflator	Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	-9.6661	913.2117	36.5455	4.9706

The time dynamics of the period considered for the variables are given below.

Figure 1. Dynamics of Variables by Years



Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) Panel Causality test was developed by Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) and takes into account cross-sectional dependence and heterogeneity. The following model is taken into account in model estimation (Dumitrescu & Hurlin, 2012).

$$y_{i,t} = a_i + \sum_{k=1}^K \gamma_i^{(k)} y_{i,t-k} + \sum_{k=1}^K \beta_i^{(k)} x_{i,t-k} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \tag{1}$$

In the equation $\beta_i^{(k)} = (\beta_i^{(1)}, \dots, \beta_i^{(k)})'$. a_i individual effects are shown and are assumed to be constant over the period under consideration. Parameters $\gamma_i^{(k)}$ and regression slope parameters $\beta_i^{(k)}$ differ between units. The lag length K is assumed to be the same across cross sections in the panel. The main and alternative hypotheses are as follows. The main hypothesis shows that there is no causality from X to Y (Dumitrescu and Hurlin, 2012).

$$H_0: \beta_i = 0 \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, N \tag{2}$$

The alternative hypothesis, on the other hand, shows that there is a causal relationship in at least one unit (Dumitrescu and Hurlin, 2012).

$$H_1: \beta_i = 0 \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, N_1 \tag{3}$$

$$H_1: \beta_i \neq 0 \quad \forall i = N_1 + 1, N_1 + 2, \dots, N \tag{4}$$

Here N_1 is the unknown parameter. However, the condition $0 \leq N_1/N < 1$ must be satisfied. N_1/N is necessarily less than 1. This is because if N_1 is equal to N the hypothesis

will be no causality equivalent to the basic hypothesis. Conversely, when N_1 is equal to 0, there is causality for all cases (Dumitrescu & Hurlin, 2012).

The test statistic used to test the basic hypothesis is the average of the Wald statistics of the units (Dumitrescu & Hurlin, 2012).

$$W_{N,T}^{Hnc} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_i^N W_{i,T} \quad (5)$$

$W_{i,T}$ shows the Wald test statistic used for causality testing for each country. In the case where T and N go to infinity, it can be decided by looking at the $Z_{N,T}^{Hnc}$ statistic, which has an asymptotic distribution (Dumitrescu and Hurlin, 2012).

$$Z_{N,T}^{Hnc} = \frac{\sqrt{N}}{\sqrt{2K}} (W_{N,T}^{Hnc} - K) \xrightarrow[T, N \rightarrow \infty]{d} N(0,1) \quad (6)$$

When T is constant, the Z_N^{Hnc} statistic with a semi-asymptotic distribution is used (Dumitrescu & Hurlin, 2012).

$$Z_N^{Hnc} = \frac{\sqrt{N} [W_{N,T}^{Hnc} - N^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^N E(W_{i,T})]}{\sqrt{N^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^N Var(W_{i,T})}} \xrightarrow[N \rightarrow \infty]{d} N(0,1) \quad (7)$$

4. Empirical Results

In the empirical application part of the study, an examination of whether there was a cross-section dependence in the series took first place. When testing cross-sectional dependence, the CD test developed by Pesaran (2004) gives consistent results in the case of $N > T$, as well as the Bias Adjusted LM test developed by Pesaran, Ullah, and Yamagata (2008), which gives consistent results in cases where N and T are long were used. Test results are given in the Table.

Table 2: Cross-Section Dependency and Unit Root Test Results

Tests	Cons./Trend	InperGDP	$\Delta \ln \text{PerGDP}$	Inflation	$\Delta \text{Inflation}$	Deflator	$\Delta \text{Deflator}$
CIPS	Constant	-3.271***	-5.493***	-2.881***	-3.212***	-3.172***	-5.231***
	Constant+Trend	-3.746***		-3.014***		-3.497***	
Z_A^{SPC}	Constant	0.877***	0.215***	-1.054***	-0.204***	0.650***	0.533***
	Constant+Trend	3.976		0.310***		3.859	
Z_A^{LA}	Constant	0.175***	2.445	3.772	3.899	4.327	5.401
	Constant+Trend	-0.953***		0.843***		5.078	
CD Test		49.388***		49.461***		17.858***	
Bias Adjusted LM		197.703***		175.274***		166.603***	

*** indicates that there is a cross-section dependence in the series at the 1% significance level for the cross-sectional dependence, and that the series is stationary for the unit root test.

When the results of the cross-section dependence of the variables are examined, it is seen that there is a cross-section dependence in all the variables. Therefore, the CIPS test developed by Pesaran (2007), and Z_A^{SPC} and Z_A^{LA} unit root tests developed by Hadri and Kruzomi (2012) which takes into account the cross-section dependency, were used. According to CIPS and Z_A^{SPC} test results, the series are stationary. The homogeneity of the models was examined by the Pesaran and Yamagata (2008) Delta test. Models and homogeneity test results are given below.

Model 1

$$\ln PerGDP_{it} = \beta_{0it} + \beta_1 Inflation_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{8}$$

Model 2

$$\ln PerGDP_{it} = \beta_{0it} + \beta_1 Deflator_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{9}$$

Table 3: Homogeneity Test Results

Model	Model 1	Model 2
$\hat{\Delta}$	34.0935***	108.1775***
$\hat{\Delta}_{Adj}$	37.1990***	118.0313***

*** Indicates that the model is heterogeneous at the 99% confidence level.

Delta test results show that both models are heterogeneous. Since Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) panel Granger causality test takes into account heterogeneity, this method was used in this study. The causality results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Dumitrescu ve Hurlin (2012) Causality Test Results

Causality	$W_{N,T}^{Hnc}$	$Z_{N,T}^{Hnc}$	Z_N^{Hnc}
Inflationà lnPerGDP	16.5321***	15.7982***	1.9596*
lnPerGDPà Inflation	32.2751***	39.4127***	6.6825***
Deflator à lnPerGDP	19.9602***	20.9403***	2.9881***
lnPerGDPà Deflator	12.2753***	9.4129***	0.6826

The optimum lag length was determined by the Akaike information criterion.

According to the results of Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality test, there is a bidirectional causality relationship between inflation and growth. The findings also apply to the different inflation indicators, the CPI and GDP deflator.

Conclusion

Early studies discussing the relationship between inflation and growth mostly focused on the positive effect of inflation on economic growth. According to the Phillips Curve, which

stands out in the discussions on the inflation-growth relationship, high inflation reduces unemployment and through this channel, inflation affects economic growth positively. According to the Tobin Effect, which advocates a similar view from a different perspective, increasing inflation increases the cost of holding money. For this reason, households and businesses will turn to capital accumulation instead of holding money in their asset portfolios in order to protect their real income, and as a result, increased investments will positively affect growth. However, according to another approach, high inflation, which has a negative effect on investment decisions, affects growth negatively through the investment channel. At this point, some studies have argued that the growth effect of inflation is directly dependent on the level of inflation. In this context, empirical findings that started with the work of Fischer (1993) and continued with the work of De Gregorio (1993) and Bruno and Easterly (1995) suggested that the effects of different inflation levels on the economy are different.

In this study, the relationship between inflation and growth in 27 EU countries was investigated using Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality approach between the years 1996 and 2019. In the analysis, CPI and GDP deflator were used as inflation indicators. According to the results of the causality test, there is a bidirectional causality relationship between inflation and growth. According to the findings of the study, there is a bidirectional causality relationship between inflation and economic growth for both inflation indicators.

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