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**THE EU AND TURKEY- STEPS TOWARDS CLOSER  
RELATIONSHIPS AND EVENTUALLY MEMBERSHIP? A  
HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE POST-1999 PERIOD.**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

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## ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'nin Helsinki sonrası dönemde AB ile ilişkileri, Türkiye'nin geçmiş deneyimleri ışığında incelenmiş ve Türkiye-AB ilişkisinin tarihsel arka planına özel bir vurgu yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Bu tezin ilk sorusuna cevap vermek için - AB ve Türkiye daha yakın ilişkiler ve nihayetinde üyelik yolunda adımlar atıyor mu? - ideolojik, politik ve ekonomik bakış açıları özel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, 1999 sonrası 11 Eylül saldırıları AKP'nin iktidara gelmesi, Kıbrıs sorunu, Kürt sorunu ve 15 Temmuz darbe girişimi gibi gelişmeler, Türkiye'nin üyelik hedefine doğru ilerleyip ilerlemeyeceğini araştırmak için incelenmiştir. Türkiye'nin, AB üyelik şartlarına aldırış etmeme sonucu üyelik hedefinden gerileme yaşandığı saptanmıştır.



## **ABSTRACT**

In this study, Turkey's relationships with the EU in the post-Helsinki era is examined in light of the past experiences of Turkey. It is intended to put a particular emphasis on historical background of the EU-Turkey relationship. In order to answer the initial question of this thesis – The EU and Turkey-steps towards closer relationships and eventually membership? – ideological, political, and economical perspectives were specifically analyzed. In this respect, the developments of post-1999 such as September 11, JDP coming to power, Cyprus issue, Kurdish question, and the 15 July coup attempt were scrutinized in order to find out whether Turkey is progressing towards its membership goal or not. It is discovered that Turkey is regressing from its membership objective as a result of disregard for EU membership conditions.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CU** : Custom Union

**CFSP**: Common Foreign and Security Policy

**DISK** : Turkey Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation (Devrimci İsci Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)

**ECHR**: European Court of Human Rights

**EU** : European Union

**EEC** : European Economic Community

**EC** : European Community

**IKV** : Economic Development Foundation (İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı)

**IR.** : International Relations

**NATO**: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**NPAA** : National Programme for the Adoption of the Acqui

**OECD**: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

**OSCE** : Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**PKK** : Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party)

**JDP** : Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP)

**JHA** : Justice and Home Affairs

**US** : United States

**USA** : United States of America

**UK** : United Kingdom

**TEU** : Treaty on European Union

**RPP** : Republican Peoples Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)

**NMP** : Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)

**PYD** : Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat (Democratic Union Party)

**YPG** : Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (Peoples Protection Unit)

**TISK** : Confederation of Employers' Union of Turkey (Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)

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## INTRODUCTION

Turkey's commitment to European Union is, without doubt, regarded as one of the most important developments of the past six decades in modern Turkish history. This engagement has its roots from the last Ottoman period of westernization that aimed at modernizing the empire to return it to its glorious past. Since it aims to play an assertive political role not only in its proximity but also in a broader context, Turkey has become involved in many international, intergovernmental, and regional institution in order to achieve her goals. European Union (Henceforth, EU) is one these organizations Turkey has engaged with. Turkey has complex interactions vis-à-vis EU since formal relations began in 1963 with the Ankara Association Agreement. Turkey wants to join in the EU thus enabling both the opportunity to play more efficient roles in the world affairs.

This research will make use of both qualitative and quantitative methods so that it can analyze and assess EU-Turkey relations. The focal points of the qualitative analysis are predominantly history, international relations, governmental and official statements. However, this study will make less use of quantitative analysis and rather focus on basic economic statistics for the sake of sophisticated understanding. The initial data will be acquired from official websites and publications. The secondary data will be gathered from academic journal articles, books, and others.

## 1.CHAPTER: A SEARCH FOR REVIVAL

### 1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE EU-TURKEY RELATIONS

Turkey's committing itself to European Union is one of the most significant developments of previous six decades of modern Turkish history, has its roots from the last Ottoman period of westernization that aimed at modernizing the empire so that it may return to its glorious past. Therefore, there was a strong tendency to emulate European institutions, education, and techniques in the declining phase of the empire in order to regain old strength and respect.



When the new republic was proclaimed in 1923, the charismatic leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), was keen to transform the whole society in cultural terms<sup>1</sup>, in terms of the system of governance, and that of institutions into European style foundations. He, therefore, initiated massive reforms aiming at the modernization of the newly created Turkey. For instance, the abolishment of the Ottoman monarchy and of the caliphate were the most important reforms that the Republic has achieved; Sharia, was abandoned, women were given extensive rights,<sup>2</sup> the Turkish Civil Code entered into force on 4 October 1926. Furthermore, Arabic scripture was replaced by Latin scripture, all men were demanded to wear hats instead of fez which was a “symbol of arrogance.”<sup>3</sup> Those reforms were clear indication that Turkey’s direction was towards Europe. Mustafa Kemal has started many revolutionary changes to achieve what he calls ‘muasır medeniyetler seviyesi’ meaning ‘level of contemporary civilization’ that in his eyes was Europe. After his death, the policy of attaining the level of contemporary civilization was kept by his successors because of eagerness of the Republican Turkey to be recognized as European. In line with those objectives, Turkish Republic applied to a number of European formations.<sup>4</sup>

Although Turkey has taken part in a number of European institutions, her relations with the European Economic Community (Henceforth, EEC) began in 1963 by signing Ankara Association Agreement. It was a crucial step because the agreement introduced the possibility of Turkish accession via article 28 of the Association Agreement that later enabled her to apply for full membership. Turkey also signed a supplementary document (Additional Protocol) allowing Turkey into the Customs Union. The document envisaged the lifting of custom duties reciprocally on processed goods, and a specific time period to adjust Turkey to the Customs Union.<sup>5</sup>

Turkey applied to be a full member on basis of article 237 of the Treaty of Rome which entitles European countries to apply to the Community. Although, it was confirmed that Turkey was eligible to apply, the Council conceded the top to bottom investigation for Turkey's application until the development of a favorable condition.<sup>6</sup> Turkey’s incorporation into the

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<sup>1</sup> Şükrü Mehmet Hanoğlu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011),.201

<sup>2</sup> Hanoğlu., 209

<sup>3</sup> Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003). ,49-50.

<sup>4</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu., 58

<sup>5</sup> Atila Eralp and Zerrin Torun, “The Europeanization of Turkey: Polity and Politics,” in *The Europeanization of Turkey: Polity and Politics*, ed. Ali Tekin and Aylin Güney (Routledge, 2015),17-18.

<sup>6</sup> “History of Turkey- EU Relations,” 2017, [https://www.ab.gov.tr/brief-history\\_111\\_en.html](https://www.ab.gov.tr/brief-history_111_en.html).

Customs Union in 1995 made it the first country to be a member of the Customs Union without having a full membership. Under such circumstances Turkey renewed its application for a second time which was discussed in Luxembourg Summit in 1997. The result was the same as the first but arose accusations from Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz of “the EU trying to be a Christian club.”<sup>7</sup> But, later in the Helsinki Summit, Turkey was unexpectedly granted candidacy status.<sup>8</sup>

The progress that Turkey made was noticeable towards achieving political criteria. In December 2002, the Copenhagen European Council resolved to commence accession deliberations in 2004 contingent upon Turkey meets the criteria. However, the accession process proved difficult from the very beginning. On numerous occasions, member states have opposed Turkey’s full memberships. For instance, referenda in France and the Netherlands for a Constitutional Treaty were exploited by Islamophobics and populist politicians as a tool against Turkey’s membership. In 2005 the accession negotiations started though minimum progress has been achieved since then. Given the conditionality principle Turkey needed to fulfill all 35 sections of the *Acquis Communautaire* for adjusting itself to the EU standards. The *acqui* covers EU legislation, all treaties, standards, verdicts, fundamental rights provisions etc. Any country must fulfill all the chapters in order to join the Union. However, for various reasons Turkey has made little progress. The chapters for science and research were met whereas the 15 other chapters open for negotiations remained pending.<sup>9</sup> Currently, the accession is in a deadlock where neither Turkey nor EU wants be the spoilsport. From time to time, both EU and Turkey release contradictory statement on the nature of the relations. Ostensibly, the parties take stance according to one another. However, it remains to be unknown whether Turkey will be a member or not, and if the pace of the past 20 years are something to go upon.

In this proposed study I ask the following question:

- What historical factors and events best explain Turkey’s long wait in the EU accession?

The proposed study will focus on three important factors to answer the questions. These are political, ideological, and economic factors. This thesis will try to produce a comprehensive conclusion.

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<sup>7</sup> Bozdaglioglu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, 83

<sup>8</sup> Erhan İçener, “Privileged Partnership : An Alternative Final Destination for Turkey ’ s Integration with the European Union ?,” *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 8, no. 4 (2007), 416

<sup>9</sup> “Current Status,” accessed November 2, 2018, <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/current-status-742>.

### 1.1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Turkey-European Union relations have been examined in a number of academic studies since Turkey's application to the EC which dated to 1959. The literature that has been cultivated focuses on key aspects of the EC/EEC/EU-Turkey relations. The arguments are mainly centered on identity, conditionality, domestic determinants, foreign policy, geopolitics, and temporality of the relations.

Identity studies under the domain of constructivism has been among the popular subjects. Scholars such as Neumann, Aydin-Duzgit, Diez, Morozov and Rumelili, Arkan have scrutinized identity issue in terms of Turkish membership to the EU. These studies emphasize the importance of self-definition of both actors. The focal point is that Turkey and the EU members have engaged in a process which led to construction of their identities. It is claimed that the Ottoman Empire and its successor Turkey have contributed to the making of Europe. For instance, Thomas Diez argues that Islam and the Turks have been considered the 'geographical other' of Europe<sup>10</sup> thus it is less contentious to be a barrier for Muslim Turkey accession to the EU. Müftüler-Baç, on the other hand, states that Europe has contributed to the identity construction of modern Turkey by including it into the western axis throughout the cold war. Also, it was a member of European founded organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ergo valued as a part of western security.<sup>11</sup>

However, Müftüler-Baç claims that Turkey's identity has been somewhat blurry since it was not fully "a part of Christian Europe nor a part of the Muslim, Arab, and Middle Eastern culture."<sup>12</sup> A more recent article of Morozov and Müftüler-Baç depicts Turkey and Russia as Europe's liminal others. In this representation both Turkey and Russia challenges Europe's self-perception of its identity. Nevertheless, it is stated that Turkey gets closer to Europe through "representational practices" while Russia challenges and thus distancing itself from Europe.<sup>13</sup> In their seminal work Neumann and Welsh assert that Ottoman Turks were perceived as

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Diez, "Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (2004): 329, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757042000245924>.

<sup>11</sup> Meltem Müftüler-Baç, "The Never-Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998): 243, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263209808701250>.

<sup>12</sup> Müftüler-Baç, 242.

<sup>13</sup> Viatcheslav Morozov and Bahar Rumelili, "The External Constitution of European Identity: Russia and Turkey as Europe-Makers," *Cooperation and Conflict* 47, no. 1 (2012): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836711433124>.

“dominant others of European states system” and helped in the notion of what Europeans are not in contrast to what they are.<sup>14</sup>

The identity has not always been a one-sided issue. Turkey has been facing difficulties at deciding where it belongs to. Although the founder of modern Turkish Republic embedded western style institutions and embraced western values and norms, some Islamic oriented factions within the Turkish political system tried to change this orientation towards Islamic values and culture. The 1997 so-called post-modern coup was an attempt to reverse this tendency of Necmettin Erbakan’s Welfare Party. Although the perception of the Turks or Muslims is not same as a couple of centuries ago, for Europeans identity matter is still a controversial phenomenon both for Turkey and European Union. Despite identity has been identified as detrimental for EU-Turkish relations, some academics argued that identity is an impediment for membership pointing to EU’s normative power which disregards all prejudices on the basis of identity. Those who disregard the identity, base their claims to article 49 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) according to which:

“Any European state which respects the values referred in article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union...”<sup>15</sup>

The values which are referred in the article 2 of the TEU are as follows;

“Respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men.”<sup>16</sup>

There are a number of studies on how Turkey deals with conditionality principle. As stated by Heather Grabbe, carrot was preferred to the stick with regard to EU relations with third countries and there has been no consistency regarding the conditionality. She also contends that Copenhagen conditions are in some manner dissimilar from conventional conditionality which are utilized by global financial establishments and they are not an

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<sup>14</sup> Neumann and Welsh, 330-331.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission, “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union,” *Official Journal of the European Union* C 326, no. 13 (2012): 31, <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1524-4733.2000.36032.x>.

<sup>16</sup> European Commission, 5.

uncomplicated instance of conditionality.<sup>17</sup> One of the claims Grabbe makes is that conditionality is useful as it changes the behavior of the applicant countries.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, conditionality may sometime hinder applicant countries' desire for membership. Schimmelfenning agree that conditionality is a necessary tool for the achievement of domestic transformation however the change may have political cost for the governing party. If the endurance of a regime or government is at stake conditionality may prove ineffective.<sup>19</sup>

Foreign policy is another determinant which affects the membership perspective of Turkey to the EU. Notably the relations with Greece and Cyprus are important parameters of the Turkish foreign policy. Particularly, Cyprus question is a substantial problem with regards to Turkish EU relations. Muftuler-Bac observes that Greece has successfully Europeanized the Turco-Greek dispute with acceding to the EC/EU since 1981. She asserts that Greece convinced 14 EU member on the preparation of Commission's Accession Partnership Document for Turkey to include settlement of Cyprus problem before commencement of membership negotiations.<sup>20</sup>

Geopolitics is also one important factor which has been substantially studied on. According to Ian Lesser, since Helsinki Summit which was held in 1999, United States support for furthering Turkish membership has decreased so far. Nevertheless, some European politicians voiced their anxiety that Turkey may be a 'Trojan Horse' for United States policy inclinations.<sup>21</sup> As it is stated, Turkey is placed as 'geographical other of Europe'<sup>22</sup> and due to its geopolitical location Turkey was assessed with security considerations. Turkey being an outer actor in security complexes encircling it, is considered to play the role as an 'insulator.'<sup>23</sup>

### 1.1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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<sup>17</sup> Grabbe, "A Partnership for Accession? The Implications of EU Conditionality for the Central and East European Applicants," 4.

<sup>18</sup> Grabbe, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Frank Schimmelfenning, "EU Political Accession Conditionality after the 2004 Enlargement: Consistency and Effectiveness," *Journal of European Public Policy* 15, no. 6 (2008): 918–19.

<sup>20</sup> Meltem Müftüleri-Bac, "Turkey in the EU's Enlargement Process: Obstacles and Challenges," *Mediterranean Politics* 7, no. 2 (2002): 82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/713869655>.

<sup>21</sup> Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics," *Survival* 48, no. 3 (2006): 86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396330600905460>.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Diez, "Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (2004): 329, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757042000245924>.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Diez, "Turkey, the European Union and Security Complexes Revisited," *Mediterranean Politics* 10, no. 2 (2005): 172, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629390500141600>.

By the Treaty of Paris in 1951 six European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg) agreed to create supranational institutions; signatory countries handed over their right of national sovereignty to enact legislation on the basis of common decision-making. This remarkable event confused students of international relations theories. Thus, the phenomenon gave rise to new debates over the role of state in international politics. The debate in the mid-1950s and 1960s equipped towards giving explanations about European integration. The EU has developed from a Western European union into a political organization in its approximately sixty years. Its borders extend from Central Europe into Asia Minor. While the EU's political rationales for integrating new member states differs, theoretical explanations try to produce a comprehending recipe in explicating why some countries are left out of the equation while others accepted.

There are contrasting meta-approaches in the academic discipline of integration theories. These theories facilitate to comprehend the world and help us understand differences about certain policy choices that typically appear from disagreements. The goal in this sub-section is to assess the theoretical approaches of EU enlargement, in general and the case of Turkey in particular will focus on historical institutionalism in this research, differs from extant approaches to the benefit of the Turkish case. Similar to a lot of theoretical international relations debates, EU enlargement narratives are derived from the larger and more fundamental rationalism versus constructivism debate. Therefore, it is inevitable to shortly elaborate this debate in order to comprehend its most basic characteristics and the way they play a role in the Turkey-EU case. After presenting the rudimentary discussion this sub-section will concentrate on how EU enlargement in the case of Turkey lay into it. Thereafter, historical institutionalism will be proposed as a more convincing and all-encompassing theoretical narrative for the Turkish case, explaining the theory, its concepts, and why it is applicable.

### 1.1.3. RATIONALISM VERSUS CONSTRUCTIVISM

Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, two influential IR scholars, presented an article in 1998 in which they foresaw the rationalism versus constructivism counterargument to wax the central discussion in IR.<sup>24</sup> Robert Keohane, Richard Katzenstein, and Stephen Krasner, were quick to joined them with a corresponding argumentation. The two authoritative articles claimed that constructivism and rationalism are two grand theories which have an essentially contrasting

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smith, "Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism," *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 3 (1998): 259–94.

apprehension on how societies and actors in IR interact.<sup>25</sup> The latter claimed constructivism and rationalism will quarrel in every study field. Alexander Wendt and James Fearon, in response, rejected the idea that the two approaches are incompatible. Instead Wendt and Fearon claimed the metatheories are complementary beside accepting their differences.

This difference is something that continues to be debated and will be essential for the rest of this research. The two theories can plainly be clarified by describing rationalism as an individualistic approach in which the whole solely exists because of the interaction of a number of individuals, while constructivists argue opposite.<sup>26</sup> In other words, both metatheories count on varying social ontologies. A rationalist unable manage without individualism and materialism, whereas for constructivist social and ideational ontologies are essential.<sup>27</sup> Hence, rationalists find actors' decisions centered on self-interest, while a constructivist behave in terms of norms, roles and rules.<sup>28</sup>

Accordingly, rationalists trace states' decisions to set foot in an international organization back to a positive cost-benefit calculation. If the state is expecting to materially profit from acceding, it will do as such when given the opportunity. Alternately, a constructivist might insist that this decision is states' normative compatibility with the organization, instead of plain economic calculation. A country may even join this organization even when cost-benefit reckoning is negative or it might possibly apply a positive cost-benefit calculation as a subordinate ingredient for its decision to enter. In this line of argumentation, as debated by Keohane, Krasner and Katzenstein- Reus-Smith and Price the two grand approaches appear to be ordained for conflict of paradigm.

Wendt and Fearon thinks differently. They accept that both approaches take differing facets of social life into their particular question. And they do not think both theories are incompatible thus it is not an inevitability for IR scholars to take a side, both metatheories can be used practically.<sup>29</sup> Since rationalist intellectuals tend to look at power and interest affecting actor behavior, constructivists view identity, norms, and culture as determining principles, both

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<sup>25</sup> Price and Reus-Smith, 270 ff.

<sup>26</sup> James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, "Rationalism v . Constructivism: A Skeptical View," in *Hnadbook of International Relations*, 2002, 53.

<sup>27</sup> Frank Shimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, eds., *The Politics of European Union Enlargement: Theoretical Approaches* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 10–11.

<sup>28</sup> Peter J Katzenstein, Robert O Keohane, and Stephen D Krasner, "International Organization and the Study of World Politics," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 681–82.

<sup>29</sup> Fearon and Wendt, "Rationalism v . Constructivism: A Skeptical View," 53–54.

theories can explain the IR developments without claiming to know facts about the way the world works.<sup>30</sup>

#### 1.1.4. HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM

EU-Turkish accession process has proven that EU does not consider only normative or rationalist imperatives in decision-making. Before acceding to the EU, candidate countries need to comply with Copenhagen Criteria, the economic and political criteria and the Acqui. The EU takes norm adherence seriously however it is ingeniousness to deduce that norm compliance would inevitably award the candidate country with membership. The EU should eventually benefit from an enlargement because of the burden it takes. Therefore, it is appropriate to employ a combining method where rationalist and constructivist premises are used to explain the process as justified by Fearon and Wendt.<sup>31</sup>

In this line of argumentation Historical Institutionalism (HI) is the modus operandi that is able to achieve this objective. Being a comprehensive theory HI put serious importance on historical processes because actors or agents take lessons from previous experiences. In other words, policies produced by a state in the past are restrictive and determinative in today's policy choices. Ergo, macro contexts are examined and combined effects of institutions and processes are hypothesized by HI scholars. Rationality, norms and most importantly history is taken into consideration in HI. Historical institutionalists' understanding of the institutions is formal rules, standard operating procedures, compliance procedures, understandings and routines. And they ask real world questions such as 'why have revolutions occurred in some times, places but not others?' or 'why have some countries become more stable democracies while others have not?'<sup>32</sup>

According to Historical institutionalists, behaviors and strategic choices occur in political, economic, social and cultural contexts. Thus, deepening our understanding of historical events and actors within it can offer more precise explanations. Likewise, historical institutionalists examine macro setting and theorize about the combining forces of institutions and processes.<sup>33</sup> Pierson, according to what he derived from historical institutionalism, states

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<sup>30</sup> Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner, "International Organization and the Study of World Politics," 674 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Fearon and Wendt, "Rationalism v . Constructivism: A Skeptical View," 52.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science" (Harvard University, 2002), 3-4.

<sup>33</sup> Pierson and Skocpol, 3.



that actors might be in a firm position, try to maximize their interests and yet implement institutional reforms that essentially transform their posture or their successors' with undesired or unintended outcomes.<sup>34</sup> The relationships between institutions and individual behavior are conceptualized by historical Institutionalists and integrating institutional analysis with the contribution of ingredients are analyzed. They also draw attention to asymmetric power with regard to development and functioning of institutions and tend to look at institutional development which underline path dependency.

The basic contribution of this approach leads reasonably to 'path dependence' which is a concept that assumes the same processes can produce varying outcomes on different locations. HI give an explanation of continuity with the help of path dependence. As Pierson and Skocpol suggests path dependency denotes to causal and responsive character of the decisions taken in the political processes at following time points and results in "critical juncture" precipitates response mechanism that strengthen recurrence of a specific pattern in the future.<sup>35</sup> In other words political preference made in particular circumstances causes path dependency and grows more and more complicated and costly to change paths further down the road.

HI does not disregard institutional change despite focusing on explicating institutional continuity. Institutional change takes place with critical junctures that appear when different factors pull together.<sup>36</sup> According to HI, institutional change can be understood; when new institutions are layered on the existing ones, the change of their goal or defining new task to them and replacing them with new ones.

## **1.2. TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIPS TO EUROPEAN ORGANIZATIONS**

Turkey has been considering itself as being a part of the West while reforming its institution and replacing ineffective ones with western style institutions in its system of government. As it is stated previously, it abolished a number of institutions which were religious oriented, discriminatory against non-Muslims and incompatible with western style governance. As the HI theory suggests, Turkey's integration to western organizations is an outcome of its strategic choices and behaviors which were affected by political, economic, social and cultural contexts.

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<sup>34</sup> Paul Pierson, "The Path to European Integration: A Historical Institutional Perspective," 1994, 5–6.

<sup>35</sup> Pierson and Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science," 6.

<sup>36</sup> Peter A. Hall and C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies*, 1996, 942.

The motivation in converting its old-fashioned institutions with western fashion was a part of Westernization process. For instance, the abolishment a number of institutions in the newly proclaimed Republic was such a move. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's, the founder of modern Turkey, discourses imply how he understand and how he values westernization. In an interview when he was asked that What would you like to acquire from westerners for your nation? He replied "we do not adopt western human progress as a mimetic. We receive what we see as great in our very own structure, we adopt within the level of world civilization"<sup>37</sup> In light of his views, it was inevitable to engage Turkey into Western/European organizations.

Turkey has become a number of these European organizations which are United Nations (UN), Council of Europe, OECD, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The motivation for these policy choices can be explained both by cost-benefit calculus and normative considerations. Especially, NATO and the Council of Europe memberships justifies Historical institutionalist which is a combining method where rationalist and constructivist assumptions are used to explain the processes. Likewise, Turkey's decisions to develop relations with the EC can justifies HI since the decision can not only be explained by constructivist or rationalist premises.

### 1.2.1. TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIPS TO UN AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Upon the end of Second World War United States initiated the establishment of United Nations in 1945. The aim of the creation of the UN was to prevent another war alike Second World War which eliminated nearly 79 million people. The UN also has several other missions which consist of peaceful resolutions to the conflicts around the world. The UN composed of several organs, the most important bodies are the Security Council, General Assembly, and General Secretariat. Turkey is one of the founding members of the UN, however, its membership has an interesting background. Due to devastation of the first World War Turkey did not enter the second World War although allied powers insisted her to participate the war with beside them. Her conditions obliged it to stay neutral during the course of the war. However, after the end of the war, victorious power established the UN and Turkey symbolically declared war on Germany in order to secure its membership to the UN. Turkey was not a pluralistic democracy

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<sup>37</sup> Erşan Mesut, "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün Batılılaşma Hakkındaki Düşünceleri," *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 8, no. 3 (2006): 43.

which was not popular after the war<sup>38</sup> therefore it was in favor of Turkey to participate to the UN and eventually it involved in San Francisco meetings in April 1945 as a founding member of the UN.

Council of Europe was founded in 1949 as a result of lack of democracy, rule of law, human right in Europe which led to the world wars and destruction in the European continent. It was constituted in order to defend human rights, democracy, and rule of law in Europe. Council of Europe is a result of a series conferences meetings and collaborations which aimed at creating a federal state of Europe. Consequently, the aforementioned deficiency of the norms in intra war period reinforced the initiation of the Council of Europe. Human rights abuses, genocides, and threat of communism are fortifying factors of in the establishment of this institution. The Council members aimed at promoting liberal ideas against totalitarian regimes such as Communism in the Soviet Union, intended to create common political ground against previous ideologies of fascists and Nazis.<sup>39</sup>

Turkey which still have problems with these norms applied to be a member of the Council of Europe as soon as it was founded. In the conference which was held on May 5 1949, the members discussed Turkey's inclusion alongside Greece and it was told that its application will be examined. The then foreign minister, Necmettin Sadak, held a meeting with his French counterpart Robert Schuman in London regarding Turkey's application.<sup>40</sup> Despite Norway, Denmark, Sweden opposed Turkey's membership, it was invited to Strasbourg in which Turkey joined on 8 August 1949 as a founding member of the Council of Europe. Despite its membership status has been suspended during 1980 military coup, it remained a member of the Council afterwards. The initiation of the Council of Europe which aimed to preserve democracy, rule of law, minority rights against ill-thought ideologies like Nazism, Fascism is still a defender of these norms. Turkey's primary goal was to secure itself against Soviet threat which had territorials claims on Turkey.<sup>41</sup> It is also important to highlight that the Soviet threat was not the sole reason which led to Turkey's involvement in the Council. It can be claimed that Turkey aspired to position itself in the western world and strengthen its place in it. Turkey's taking part in the Council of Europe can be considered a significant step in defining and boldening her European identity.

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<sup>38</sup> Erick J. Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2017), 210.

<sup>39</sup> Ali Servet Öncü and Erkan Cevizliler, "Avrupa Bütünleşmesi İçin Önemli Bir Adım : "Avrupa Konseyi" ve Türkiye'nin Konseye Üyeliği Meselesi," *Akademik Bakış* 7, no. 13 (2013): 23.

<sup>40</sup> "Avrupa Birliği: Konseye Türkiye de Kabul Edildi," *Akşam Gazetesi*, May 6, 1949, 1.

<sup>41</sup> Öncü and Cevizliler, "Avrupa Bütünleşmesi İçin Önemli Bir Adım : "Avrupa Konseyi" ve Türkiye'nin Konseye Üyeliği Meselesi," 43.

### 1.2.2. TURKEY'S NATO MEMBERSHIP

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded primarily to prevent Soviet threat and communism in the west Europe and in the United States, was spearheaded by the United States in 1949 to secure the western European countries in the face of hostile red menace. The members pledged to defend any member to any attack by a non-member country under article of 5 the Treaty of NATO. The United states, however, had several goals such as restraining Germany, preventing Soviet Union out of Europe, and helping European countries recover their economies. Turkey has shown its interest in joining the alliance out of growing sense of insecurity in the region and looked for some sort of alliance with the United states. Eventually, Turkey was added to Marshall Plan which sought to help European economies recover while preventing them to fall into the hands of Soviet Russia. In a such context Turkey has been successful to convince Europeans and Americans to accept it into the alliance.<sup>42</sup> It was not before 1952 that Turkey joined NATO despite the fact that there were some concerns that Turkey is in a region where border, and ethnic disputes are prevalent, and it would be inevitable in the future that NATO might be dragged into a conflict it has no interest. However, the United States perceived Turkey's strategic location as an asset in the containment of the Soviets.

According to Şuhnaz Yılmaz, security concerns was one of the major reasons for Turkey's NATO application, yet identity cannot be disregarded for Turkey's search of identity and its place in the West and its institutions<sup>43</sup> Because it wanted to be a part of alliance and to place itself in the West, it had to embrace western values. The break out of the Korean War became an opportunity for Turkey to show its good faith that it positions itself in the west and expected to be treated as such. The then president of Turkey Celal Bayar in a speech makes his country's willingness to send troops clear. He told the United States Ambassador that;

“Does your government not realize we Turks will consider further deferment of favorable action on our request by the Atlantic Pact powers as refusal and as unwillingness to accept us as equal partners in meeting jointly any threat of aggression? We have shown out good faith by forthright action towards

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<sup>42</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “Turkey's Quest for NATO Membership : The Institutionalization of the Turkish – American Alliance,” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 12, no. 4 (2012): 488.

<sup>43</sup> Yılmaz, 482.

meeting Korean crisis. I fear frankly that if the Atlantic Pact Council of Foreign Ministers turns down our request, our morale will be seriously affected [...] We feel our very future is at stake.’’<sup>44</sup>

The last sentence is very clear on how Turkey considers its future both in terms of identity and security. Eventually, the United States prompted democratic developments in order for Turkey to take part in the NATO. Turkey has launched democratic reforms such replacing one party system to multi-party system, changes in the voting system which pleased the United States.<sup>45</sup> These developments concluded on 18 February 1952 with Turkey’s membership to NATO. Turkey’s NATO membership can be seen as a historical progress both for herself and for the other member countries as it was the only Muslim country to be a member of NATO. That in the first place, sparked dissatisfaction among the other partners because it had been perceived as an outsider for almost seven centuries by the European countries but remained in the alliance as crucial partner until now.

### 1.2.3. TURKEY’S OSCE AND OECD MEMBERSHIPS

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development which has 36 members is an organization that aims to resolve economic social and governance problems that are caused by globalization. The organization was established after the Second World War in order to help recover European economies. On 14 December 1960 the organization was established under the Convention on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and development by 20 founding member states in Paris. Turkey was one of the founding member and is still a member state. Initially, Turkey have become interested in OECD due to the OECD Consortium to Aid Turkey. At the beginning of the 2000s Turkey’s appeal to OECD once again become apparent because of national reform process<sup>46</sup> which was triggered by the EU. Turkey still is an important member of this organization and while contributing to the organization, it aims to benefit from the institution.

Turkey is also a member of OSCE since 1975 from the very beginning of its foundation. OSCE was established in the relatively mild era of the 1970s which is also called détente period between western Europe and the United States and eastern bloc countries. At the beginning of

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<sup>44</sup> John M. Vanderlippe, “Forgotten Brigade of the Forgotten War: Turkey’s Participation in the Korean War,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2000): 96.

<sup>45</sup> Yılmaz, “Turkey’s Quest for NATO Membership : The Institutionalization of the Turkish – American Alliance,” 489.

<sup>46</sup> “İktisadi İşbirliği ve Gelişme Teşkilatı (OECD) : T,” n.d., [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iktisadi-isbirligi\\_ve-gelisme-teskilati-\\_oecd\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iktisadi-isbirligi_ve-gelisme-teskilati-_oecd_.tr.mfa).

the 1970s it was instituted as a forum to discuss timely matters between the two blocks. Currently it is the largest security and co-operation organization in terms of geographical area it covers. It stretches from easternmost border of Russia to Vancouver, Canada. The organization has a unique role in resolving political, military, economic, and environmental issues. Turkey plays an important role in its region. It provides technical and monetary support to OSCE. Moreover, it produces capabilities in particular, drug trafficking, border management, counter-terrorism, and as such in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Central Asia.<sup>47</sup> Turkey is a significant actor of the OSCE from the very starting of this organization through providing assistance in particular areas.

#### 1.2.4. ANKARA ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

Ankara Association Agreement or otherwise referred as ‘Ankara Agreement’ is another step to Turkey’s integration into the Western institutions. In 1959, formal relations started between the EC and Turkey. Turkey’s initial aim in concluding an association agreement was to counterbalance Greece’s influence to the EC, as Greek government had applied for the Association Agreement two months earlier. Accordingly, Turkish government thought it should make a similar application to the EC.

According to Bourguignon, broader political considerations equally impacted Turkey’s application decision. She claims, the conflictual situation between the East and West, threats from the Arab world and Soviets, and political void in the Eastern Mediterranean which endangered Turkey’s security have played significant roles in the decision.<sup>48</sup> Besides, EC’s decision to sign the Association agreement was a politically motivated change because the EC members avoided conveying the message that it is a close market. The United Kingdom’s unsuccessful application to be a member of the EC triggered the thinking that EC might be giving the impression of a ‘close shop.’ Hence, Turkey was given the opportunity to take part as an associate member in the EC.

The United States undoubtedly encouraged Turkey’s application and supported its policy of becoming an associate member. Its support was an outcome of the Truman Doctrine

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<sup>47</sup> “The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE),” 2019, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-and-the-organization-for-security-and-cooperation-in-europe-osce.en.mfa>.

<sup>48</sup> Roswitha Bourguignon, “The History of the Association Agreement between Turkey,” in *Turkey and the European Community*, ed. Ahmet Evin and Geoffrey Denton (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1990), 52.

which aimed at the containment of Soviet Union. When the then Turkish Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu summoned the US ambassador in order to ask Washington's comeback two weeks before the application, US administration conveyed its support to the Turkish government.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless a military coup that overthrown the Turkish government and led to a temporary suspension of democracy and interruption in the EC-Turkish relations regarding the Association Agreement. This situation did not prevent the US administration to maintain its support, rather it made clear its support in 5 October 1960 National Security Council that EC would be a beneficial factor in reconciling Greek-Turkish relations and would have an anchoring effect for Turkey in the 'Free World.'<sup>50</sup> Finally, Turkey and EC signed the Ankara Agreement on 12 September 1963 which came into force in 1964. Upon this event Walter Hallstein said "with this Association Agreement Turkey has tied her destiny and future with the European Communities."<sup>51</sup>

The treaty sought to established a Customs Union aiming to reinforce economic and commercial relations. Since Turkish economy was weak and had relatively less power to compete against other members, it was planned to proceed Customs Union gradually. The process envisaged to take place in three phases; preparatory, transitional, and final period. In the preparatory phase, which was planned to take five years, Turkey was given economic concessions. At this stage, Turkish agricultural and manufacturing sector was provided financial aid and trade advantages in order to boost the economy. For instance, 175 million unit was assisted as a part of First Financial Protocol. In the second phase it was gradually aimed to establish Customs Union and in the final period the parties were to determine the possibility of membership if Turkey were to fulfill all obligations stated in the treaty.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless the implementation did not happen as planned. The oil crisis of the 1970s, fragile Turkish economy, 1980 military coup, have impacted both EC and Turkish economies.

In this period critical views prevailed in the Turkish politics. For instance, Necmettin Erbakan, the chairman of National Order Party, professed that Turkey would become a colony. In such a context Turkey signed the Additional Protocol in 1970<sup>53</sup> and the EC had its first enlargement two years later in which three members joined the community. Meanwhile Greece made its application to get a seat in the club in 1975. The political circles in Turkey were not

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<sup>49</sup> Armağan Emre Çakır, *The United States and Turkey's Path to Europe: Hands across the Table* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 39.

<sup>50</sup> Çakır, 44.

<sup>51</sup> Haluk Kabaalioglu, "Turkey and the European Union: Converging or Drifting Apart?," *Marmara Journal of European Studies* 7, no. 1-2 (1999): 111.

<sup>52</sup> Bourguignon, "The History of the Association Agreement between Turkey," 53.

<sup>53</sup> Bourguignon, 54.

in favor of making such an application. Erbakan and his party were not the only opposition movement to challenge the EC membership and common market. For instance, left wing labor organization Turkey Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation (DISK) dissented as well. Again, a right-wing group Ideal Stove (Ülkü Ocakları) took up an antagonist position the CU. They claimed that “they are the partners we are the market.”<sup>54</sup> The opposition considered it as a different form of imperialism that should be refrained from.

However, Economic Development Foundation (İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı, İKV) and another labor union Confederation of Employers’ Union of Turkey (Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, TISK) were on the supporting position the Customs Union with the EC. Additional Protocol commenced the actual transition to the second phase which was implemented after the ratification process in September 1971. But as whole, it was not until 1973 that it came into force. The transitional phase projected to last 5 years, however it lasted 9 years due to weaknesses of Turkish economy. Consequently, the EC and Turkey have agreed to cut customs duties on good which are listed in the agreement, increase the volume of the goods in the finalization stage to a hundred percent in a gradual fashion.<sup>55</sup>

At the beginning of the 1980s Turkey has witnessed severe developments. The army chief of staff General Kenan Evren and the junta have overthrown democratically elected government and suspended the parliament. At first the EC was undecided how to react but it was stated by GAER Council that the relations would be maintained hitherto.<sup>56</sup> The relations decayed over the undemocratic situation. Military government headed by Evren drafted a constitution which contained very contentions issues like 10 percent threshold. Yet, it was accepted by the majority of the people in the referendum. When the parliamentary elections took place in November 1983 Turgut Özal’s assumed premiership. He immediately introduced significant reforms by opening up the economy for foreign investment and establishing the basics of free market economy. His government also decided to abandon fixed exchange rate with floating exchange rate. It is important to note that some of these reforms would later become preconditions for membership. Thus, reforms made by Özal government adjusted Turkey to the EC gradually.

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<sup>54</sup> Selim İlkin, “A History of Turkey’ s Association with the European Community A Note on the Basic Agreements , Favourable and Unfavourable Reactions ,” in *Turkey and the European Community*, ed. Ahmet Evin and Geoffrey Denton (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1990), 41.

<sup>55</sup> Muhsin Kar, ed., *Avrupa Bütünleşmesi ve Türkiye: Ortak Politikaların Oluşumu ve Uyumlaştırılması* (Bursa: Ekin Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2010), 63.

<sup>56</sup> Çakır, *The United States and Turkey’s Path to Europe: Hands across the Table*, 100.



Meanwhile, EC's Mediterranean enlargement that Greece was a part of. This event caused distress in Turkey because it did not want to be left behind Greece.<sup>57</sup> It was believed that it would be mindless to misuse any time not filing an application to the EC. In the government program of Özal administration it is stated that the main goal is to obtain full membership.<sup>58</sup> Özal, therefore, decided to apply to the EC as soon as possible. But the relations were tense and could not be stimulated due to human rights issues caused by the 1980 coup. Thus, a delegation headed by Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu dispatched to Brussels in order to revitalize the relations. Yet, the outcomes of the visit were not satisfactory for Turkey. British Member of European Parliament Richard Balfe prepared a report which touched upon human rights abuses, violation of Kurdish minority rights, existence of death penalty, basic freedoms. Having such circumstances Mr. Balfe recommended Council of Europe that Turkey's presence in the Parliamentary Assembly be suspended until democracy and human rights have been reinstated.<sup>59</sup> The report led to resentment but Turkish side reiterated their desire to apply to the EC.

The Turkish political elites were determined for filing an application to the EC even at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1981 National Security Council meeting the issue was discussed at length. The meeting that was chaired by Kenan Evren comprised of Undersecretary of Prime Ministry, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Ambassador of Turkey's Permanent Delegation to Brussels, and a number of other high-ranking officials. The discussion centered around whether Turkey should consider making an application. Most of the officials and politicians at the meeting were in favor of such a decision. The participants including Kenan Evren, Undersecretary Turgut Özal, Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu, Foreign Minister İter Türkmen, supported that Turkey should take the application into consideration but State Planning Department officials has shown their disagreement claiming that Turkey should not fall under the EC rule.<sup>60</sup> Despite Turkey's determination to proceed, the relations with the Community stayed inactive. Thus the government intensified its efforts until mid 1985 to convince the European capitals that the country is recovering its democratic deficiencies. At the same period the second phase of Mediterranean enlargement in which Portugal and Spain got access to the EC occurred, have had a catalyst factor for Turkey's decision to make application. But the EC's

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<sup>57</sup> Umut Karabulut, "12 Eylül Döneminde Gümrük Birliği Üyeliğine Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümetlerinin Avrupa Birliği Politikalarına Genel Bir Bakış," BELGI, 2011, 74.

<sup>58</sup> "İ. Özal Hükümeti Programı," accessed January 26, 2019, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/hukumetler/HP45.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> Richard Balfe, "Report Drawn up on Behalf of the Political Affairs Committee on the Human Rights Situation in Turkey, PE 98. 572/Fin." (Luxembourg, 1985), 22.

<sup>60</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, *Türkiye'nin Büyük Avrupa Kavgası 1959-2004*, 12th ed. (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 2005), 302.

the priority was the normalization of the relations before committing themselves to any legal obligation.

Turkish business elites such as Koç and Sabancı groups' support for government's position about the EC is important. The founder of Koç Holding Vehbi Koç claimed "Turkey has no option other than being a full member of the EC." Also, Sakıp Sabancı who led the Sabancı Holding stated that "whether you want or not Turkey will be a member of the EC."<sup>61</sup> In such a context Prime Minister Özal authorized a new ministry, which has been advised by the business circles, to manage EC affairs. The post was chaired by Ali Bozer who had been a former European Court of Justice member. He was assigned to learn the reaction of European countries if Turkey would have to make an application. It was important to learn the German reaction at that point because it was the mostly populated country for the Turkish migrant workers. There was the fear that, if Turkey becomes a member there would have been massive inflow Turkish workers to Germany. Thus, it was crucial to fish for information about EC members intention on Turkey's application. Consequently, the government instructed Ali Bozer to make the application at the end of the official trip in April 1987.<sup>62</sup> Legal basis of the application was not Ankara Association Agreement but rather it was based on the article 237 of the Rome Treaty.

At the beginning of the application process there was considerable optimism that there would be a positive result about the plea. However, the result was not what Turkey desired it to be. The EC responded belatedly stating that despite its eligibility, it is not ready. From the EC perspective it was obvious that Turkey's membership application would not be responded positively due to its internal affairs. Firstly, there was economic slowdown in the EC which led to fear that if Turkey were to be a member, there would be an influx of migrant workers. Secondly, there has already been a deepening process of the EC to achieve single market and other desired reforms. It has already been stated there would not be an enlargement until the attainment of single market objective which was projected in the Single European Act.<sup>63</sup>

The year 1989 has witnessed dramatic changes in international arena but also considerable changes in domestic politics of Turkey. The fall of Berlin wall that was built by the Soviets signaled the fall of communism. As Fukuyama suggests, it was the 'end of history' because of the changes it brought about. A year later East and West Germany, that had long been divided, reunified in 1990. This event became a precedent for Eastern and Central

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<sup>61</sup> Birand, 318.

<sup>62</sup> Birand, 334.

<sup>63</sup> Kar, *Avrupa Bütünleşmesi ve Türkiye: Ortak Politikaların Oluşumu ve Uyumlaştırılması*, 68.

European Countries that were part of the communist bloc. In the meantime, the relations that were strained by attitude of the EC took a new path. Turkey has focused its attention to the completion of the Customs Union. The reason was that if Turkey concludes the CU, no country would leave Turkey out of the EC. This idea came from the former French Prime Minister Keymond Barre while he was in a visit to Ankara.<sup>64</sup> However, with the Treaty of Maastricht massive reforms that transformed the structure of the EC have been introduced. Firstly, the EC altered its name as the European Union (EU). Secondly, the pillar system which consists of European Communities, CFSP, and JHA has been established. Thirdly, economic criteria have been instituted. Also, with the Copenhagen Criteria new standards have been inflicted upon the new candidate countries. According to Copenhagen Criteria which Turkey has been frequently criticized, a candidate country must preserve democracy, human rights, rule of law, and protection of minorities.

Turkish government finalized the long-desired Customs Union by 1995 but its resentment for not having been included to enlargement perspective become obvious at all level of the Turkish state. Thus, the government tried to dissuade the EU members not to exclude Turkey in a possible enlargement. In a joint meeting in Rome which Foreign Ministers of Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Turkey participated on 29 January 1997 Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Çiller reminded her counterparts the riskiness of her country's exclusion from the enlargement prospect. She stated that Turkey is a NATO member, Turkey's membership, therefore, should not be declined or delayed. Italian Foreign Minister verified Çiller's allegation by expressing that the EU might lose Turkey, but there would be no obstacle to its membership if it fulfils its obligations.<sup>65</sup> At this juncture Turkey's attitude was that if it were not to be included in the anticipated enlargement, it would block the envisaged NATO enlargement. This inclination created a positive atmosphere conceivably to prevent such a development. However, Turkey's expectation that it would be included in the enlargement perspective concluded to its dismay.

## **2. CHAPTER: TURKEY'S EU BID**

As the rationalist approaches claim that when states enter international organizations they employ a cost-benefit logic hence behave accordingly. But, it may not always be the case. They

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<sup>64</sup> Birand, *Türkiye'nin Büyük Avrupa Kavgası 1959-2004*, 360.

<sup>65</sup> Birand, 373.

sometimes take normative compatibility into consideration instead of a basic calculus logic. Turkey's decision to develop relations encompasses both approaches.

Turkey's membership application had its rational reasonings besides normative motivations. With the Greek application to the EC in 1957 in order to sign an Association Agreement Turkish government was of the opinion that it would not be in the interests of Turkey to leave EC under Greek influence. In order to understand Turkey's decision to make an application to the EU its relations with Greece should be analyzed from the 1960s onward. In this chapter it is aimed at explaining the political reasons and economy that have shaped Turkey's decision to apply to the EU for full membership.

## 2.1. GREECE'S APPLICATION TO THE EC

Greece is the first European country to sign an Association Agreement with the EC in June 1961. It is considered as a first step for Greece in the direction of integration with the EC. The article 72 of the Treaty foresaw the possibility of Greece accession to the Community if Greece make progress on its obligations that arises from the treaty. Having fulfilled its obligations Greek government applied for full membership in 1975 after a period of dormant relations due to coup d'etat, and application resulted with its accession to the Community in 1981. However, during the same periods Turkey was in a confusion whether it should apply for full integration.

Historically, Greece was one of the first countries to gain its independence from Ottoman Empire after a series of revolts. Also, During World War I Greece, has pursued a revisionist policy towards Turkish territories by which it, as a result, acquired strategic islands in Aegean Sea. According to Bahar Rumelili, Turkish-Greek conflict relations can be analyzed in three time periods. The first period which she describes the most important reconciliation period that was between 1930s and 1950s. In this period a there has been a remarkable change in the main discourse in terms of the identity politics besides normalization of the affairs. Second period have begun when the two countries applied for association with the EEC at the end of 1950s. Despite the elites maintained to stress Turkish-Greek alliance which they shared an identity. However, she states, with the mobilization of public discourse through national representations and discerning historical memories their rhetoric was overwhelmed. At the same time the relations were growing bitter regarding Cyprus issue. During this phase which lasted until 1999 the dispute between the countries have oscillated between conflict of subordination and identity clash. Greece and Turkey were nearly on the brink of war for several

times over Cyprus issue and small island in Aegean Sea.<sup>66</sup> Also, they have disputed over the Aegean continental shelf which led crises twice in 1976 and 1987. Turkey and Greece were nearly going to engage war in 1996 over small rocky islets in the Aegean Sea.

Turkish-Greek relations have long been antagonistic towards each other, hence Greece's decision to sign the Association Agreement, and later its full membership application played a substantial role in Turkey's EU membership application. Subsequent to Greece's application the motivation for Turkey was to prevent a 'Greek factor' which is employed to describe leverage of Greece of EC/EU. Turkey has sought to dilute Greek influence by being a member of the Union. Yet, Greek Cyprus become another gate keeper in the EU which can block Turkey's accession to the Union. Turkey still has not been able to counter-balance the 'Greek factor' by acceding to the Union.

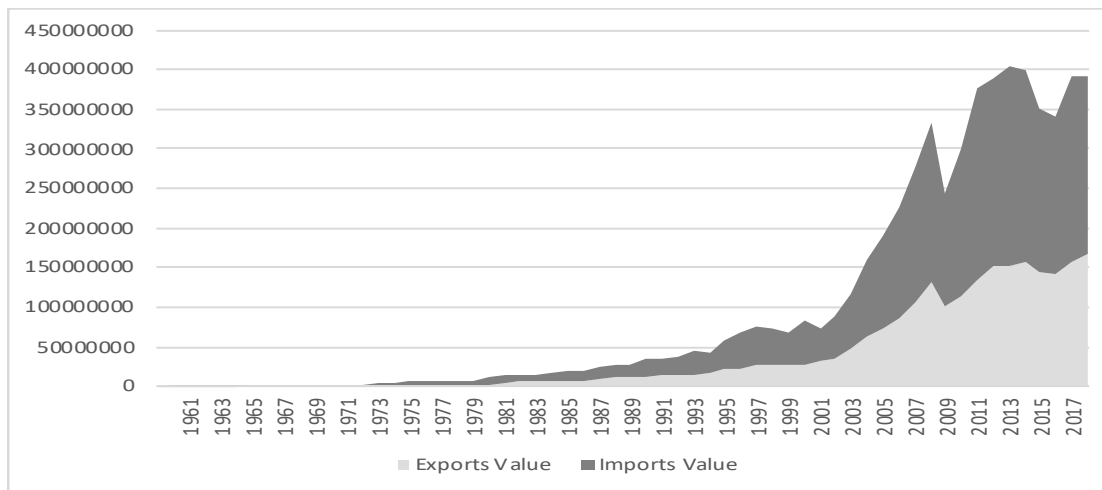
## 2.2. ECONOMIC REASONS

When the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, its economy was primarily rural and agricultural. However, Turkey has transformed itself into a predominantly urban economy over the last century. Founders of the Turkish Republic have devised an etatist economic policy in which they tried to import substitute industry. Import substitute industry policy has continued until 1980. However, it did not help Turkey to achieve a welfare economy for the Turkish citizens. Currently, Turkey with a population of more than 80 million, is one of the largest economies in the world. According to World Bank statistics, its GDP accounted roughly 851 billion US dollars and ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in terms of nominal GDP by 2017. In addition, GDP and GNI have been increasing exponentially from the 1960s onward. GNI has increased from 470 US dollars to almost 11.000 dollars between the years 1967 and 2017. As a result, poverty rate has been decreased rapidly.

Figure 1. Foreign Trade by years, 1960-2018 (Thousands, US \$)

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<sup>66</sup> Bahar Rumelili, "The European Union's Impact on the Greek-Turkish Conflict: A Review of the Literature," Working Papers Series in EU Border Conflicts Studies, 2004, 2–3.



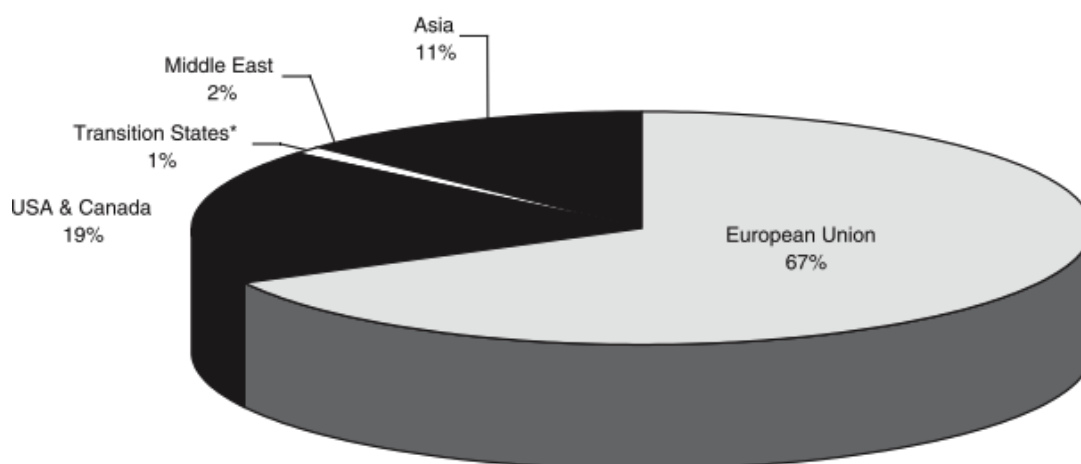
Source: The authors calculations based on Turkish Statistics Institute, (TUIK)

However, Turkey is still considered to be a developing country by scholars. Besides, there are regional inequalities which create massive problems such as migrant flow from underdeveloped East and South East Anatolian regions to relatively developed West Anatolian regions. Migration is not only within the country but also there has been a considerable flow of migration to the EU countries since the 1960s onward.

Turkey has a quite fragile economy due to its economic choices thus it experiences economic crisis almost once in ten years periods. It is because Turkey imports more than it exports and that creates trade deficit. The graphic (Figure 1.) above is the trade balance of Turkey since 1960s. Despite the fact that both imports and exports have been in an increasing trend, imports' increase has been sharper than exports' increase. In order to finance its trade deficit Turkey needs a significant inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and at this point EU becomes a relevant actor in this matter. Hence, FDI is crucial for sustainability of the Turkish economy.

There has been a substantial inflow of FDI from the EU to Turkey. Between 1980-2001 EC/EU countries have significantly contributed to the development of Turkish economy through various investments.

Figure 2. Origins of FDI in Turkey through 1995.



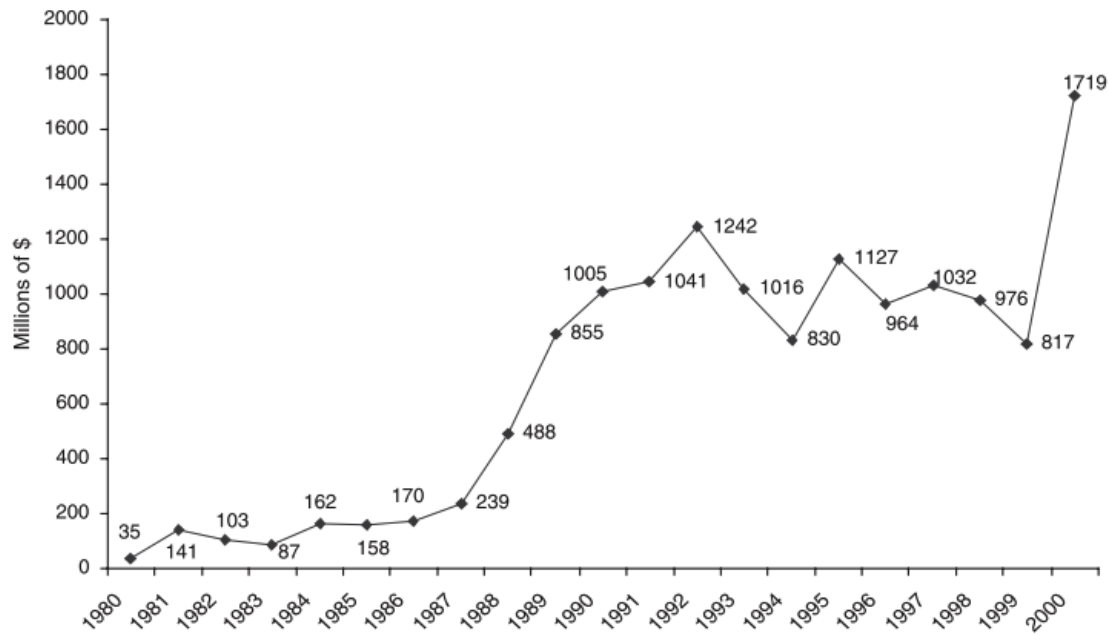
Source: Deichmann et al. ‘‘Foreign Direct investment in Turkey: regional determinants’’ p.1776

As it is shown in the graphic (Figure 2.) the EU plays a crucial role in terms of investment in Turkey. This contributes to spillover effects for Turkish economy in various ways. For instance, as a consequence of investment foreign capital firms have increased from 78 to 5328 between 1980-2000. Again, during this period, the inflow of foreign capital increased from 35 million US dollars to 1,719 billion US dollars (Figure 3.). Although slightly, the aforementioned investments have contributed to help decrease regional inequalities.<sup>67</sup> In the case Turkey’s EU membership not only will investments augment employment, GDP, and decrease regional disparities, but also will lead to a migration outflow which will be profitable for Turkey. According to Flam, if migration were to be allowed freely, Turkish workers will move to countries where they can earn more money. Until such a time when there is a wage equilibrium the migration will continue. This situation will result a surplus for Turkish capital owners.<sup>68</sup>

Figure 3. Spatial breakdown of FDI inflows to Turkey, 1980-2000

<sup>67</sup> Joel Deichmann, Socrates Karidis, and Selin Sayek, ‘‘Foreign Direct Investment in Turkey : Regional Determinants,’’ *Applied Economics* 35, no. 16 (2003): 1768–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0003684032000126780>.

<sup>68</sup> Harry Flam, ‘‘Turkey and the EU: Politics and Economics of Accession,’’ *CESifo Economic Studies*, 2003, 13.



Source: Deichmann et al. ‘Foreign Direct investment in Turkey: regional determinants’ p.1768

It has partly achieved economic integration via CU in 1995 and has been benefiting from various funds provided by the EU.

### 3. CHAPTER: ROAD TO MEMBERSHIP?

As Pierson and Skocpol suggested, political preference made in particular circumstances causes path dependency and becomes difficult and costly to change paths further down the road.<sup>69</sup> Micro settings like, JDP rule, 2007 presidency election, Kurdish peace talks, 15 July abortive coup and actors within it can offer us precise explanations with regard Turkey’s path towards membership. Likewise, critical junctures such as 9/11, Iraq war, Constitutional Treaty, and Arab Spring can offer detailed explanations in examining the combining forces of institutions and processes.

#### 3.1. COPENHAGEN CRITERIA

When the Treaty Establishing European Coal and Steel Community was signed, there were just six signatory countries. The Community members steadily increased from six to twelve countries until 1995. Except Mediterranean enlargement in which Greece, Portugal and Spain were acceded in (Greece in 1981, Portugal and Spain in 1986) to the Community other nine countries had relatively stable economies and democracies. In the cases of Greece, Portugal,

<sup>69</sup> Pierson and Skocpol, “Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science,” 6.



and Spain democratic credentials were weak but they had functioning market economies in which Community members could compete. The war in Yugoslavia and the breaking up of Communist bloc proposed new opportunities and challenges. The two phenomena forced the EU to engage with Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) because its security, economic and geopolitical interests, can be considered critical junctures for the EU. From the economic perspective, the benefit of a widening to CEECs would contribute to a total increase in EU's gross national product and strengthen European competitiveness in the world markets.

However, given the communist past of the CEECs, enlargement was a risky business since their economies were weak, uncompetitive and poor democratic credentials. It would also complicate decision-making, it could cause collapse of integration process and dilute particular common policies.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the EU could not have absorbed them without setting some sort of conditions for the prospective countries. In the 1993 Copenhagen European Council, the EU has instituted membership criteria for upcoming enlargements. According to these criteria any acceding country must have:

- Stable institutions that guarantee democracy
- The rule of law, human rights, respect and protection for minorities
- A functioning market economy, and ability to deal with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU
- Ability to undertake the requirements of membership that include the capacity to effectively implement rules, the *acquis*, the adherence to economic, political and monetary union objectives.

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Union's capacity to absorb new members is another important condition. If taking new members would threaten the momentum of the integration, the Union may decide to block accession even if the country is ready to assume membership criteria. Besides, the EU reserves the right if a country has met the conditions and when it is ready to accept new members. Since these criteria are still applicable for both members and acceding countries, the implementation of conditions can be a guideline whether Turkey is driving away from the accession process or not.

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<sup>70</sup> Sonia Piedrafita and Jose I. Torreblanca, "The Three Logics of Eu Enlargement : Interests Identities and Arguments," *Politique Européenne*, 2005, 37.

<sup>71</sup> "European Council in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993, Conclusions of the Presidency" (European Union: Council of the European Union, 1993), 13.

### 3.2. LUXEMBOURG TO HELSINKI: ROAD TO CANDIDACY

The Eastern and Western Europe, which have been separated for a long time due to ideologic polarization, had the chance to unify with West Europe with the unexpected dissolution of Soviet Union in 1990s. Germany was the first to benefit from weakening of the Soviets. East and West Germany reunified on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1990. The years 1990s were the beginning of a new era for Europe because the broke up of the Soviets has caused CEECs to turn their faces to West Europe. While the broke up of the Soviets caused fundamental reorganization in the international arena, EC needed to make adjustments to this phenomenon. Therefore, the Community has signed Maastricht Treaty which introduced a number of structural changes. The legal basis to embrace those countries was established under the article 49 of the TEU. The article stated that “any European State which respect the values referred to in article 2 and is committed to promoting them, may apply to become a member of the Union.”<sup>72</sup>

The treaty put forward financial criteria for countries wished to join the Union. Following the Treaty of Maastricht that assigned applicant countries with economic conditions, Copenhagen Criteria were put forward. The Copenhagen Criteria obliged applicant countries to fulfil a number of political conditions such as rule of law, democracy, minority rights, functioning market economy. Consequently, these criteria have become a road map for CEECs that wanted to join the EU. In the meantime, having being included in the customs union in 1995, Turkish political circles believed that it was the right time for Turkey to make another application for full membership because it did not want to miss this opportunity. Nevertheless, Turkey’s desire for full membership concluded with frustration because it was not included in the enlargement perspective. Agenda 2000 which included themes such as “for a stronger and wider Union, reinforcing pre-accession strategy” failed to meet Turkey’s expectations, though praised Turkey’s achievements in the Customs Union. It was stated that the search for political dialogue have not been realized because political conditions had not allowed such a decision. Turkey was criticized for undemocratic behaviors. A part of the assessment of the Commission in Agenda 2000 as follows:

“Despite political recognition of the need for improvement and certain recent legislative changes, Turkey’s record on upholding the rights of the individual and freedom of expression falls well short of

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<sup>72</sup> European Commission, “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union,” *Official Journal of the European Union* C 326, no. 13 (2012): 34, <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1524-4733.2000.36032.x>.

standards in the EU. In combatting terrorism in the south east, Turkey needs to exercise restraint, to make greater efforts to uphold rule of law and human rights to find a civil not a military solution...”<sup>73</sup>

The argument of Islamist government of Erbakan that EU is a ‘Christian Club’ ostensibly justified by EU’s Agenda 2000. However, unpleasant was to come at Luxembourg meeting of the European Council on 12-13 December 1997.<sup>74</sup> In the Presidency conclusion of the Luxembourg meeting the Council decided to start accession procedure with ten CEECs plus Cyprus. According to the Conclusion, the twelve countries were assured that they will join the EU on the basis of Union criteria. Therefore, a pre-accession strategy was devised for these states. Accession partnerships were signed with candidate states with the aim to prepare and organize all sorts of aids to the applicant states inside a particular frame. In addition, it is asserted that civil peace and reconciliation would be brought about by the accession of Cyprus into the Union. Then, accession deliberations will lead to a pursuit for political dialogue.<sup>75</sup>

In the document a separate strategy ‘A European strategy for Turkey’ has been drawn up, indicating its eligibility for membership, it was declared that Turkey will be assessed on the same principals as other prospective countries. It was expressed that political and economic conditions are not satisfying, the European council will nevertheless formulate a strategy to prepare Turkey for accession and narrow the gap between the Union and Turkey. The strategy included; “intensification of the Customs Union, implementation of financial cooperation, approximation of laws and adoption of the Union *acquis*, participation in certain programmes and in certain agencies.” Moreover, document notified Turkey that if it wants to have strong relations with the Union, Turkey needs to pursue political adjustments that comprises of human rights, respect for minority rights, build decent relations with Greece in order to solve conflicts. The then Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz has reacted to it by stating that:

“Turkey will have no political dialogue with the European Union from now on [...] for those countries including Cyprus there is a very clear prospect of membership and even a time table. For Turkey there

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<sup>73</sup> Unspecified, “Agenda 2000 - For a Stronger and Wider Union. Document Drawn up on the Basis of COM (97) 2000 Final, 13 July 1997. Bulletin of the European Union, Supplement 5/97. [EU Commission - COM Document],” 1997, 56.

<sup>74</sup> William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, 3rd ed. (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 178.

<sup>75</sup> European Council, “Luxembourg European Council 12 and 13 December 1997 Presidency Conclusions” (European Union: Council of the European Union, 1997), 6, <https://doi.org/10.1/11 REV 1>.

is none. We see this as very clear discrimination. If the European Union persists in such discrimination, we will have no place in such an organization”<sup>76</sup>

However, the attitude of the EU has changed slightly by 1998. In Cardiff the European Council attempted to appease Turkey by making modest but insufficient changes. The Commission, included Turkey among countries that it prepares regular reports for measuring progress they have taken. The first regular report has evaluated Turkey on the basis political and economic criteria. Turkey’s specific problems such as extra-judicial executions, torture, have been marked. Also, stressed in the report was that fundamental freedoms which are necessary for a democracy are not assured and declared constitutional reforms insufficient.<sup>77</sup> However, the Presidency Conclusion underlined that Turkey’s report will be based upon article 28<sup>th</sup> of the Ankara Association Agreement which introduces the possibility of Turkey’s accession to the Community. Presidency conclusion approved the Commission’s communication of March 1998 to advance a European Strategy to make Turkey ready for membership. In order this to happen the European Council asked both from Turkey and the Commission to take necessary measures.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, it was not until 1999 that the relations between Turkey and the EU have changed positively.

On December 12-13 in the Luxembourg European Council it was agreed upon strengthening the relationship but it was not admitted as a candidate.<sup>79</sup> This conclusion infuriated Turkey due to contradictory statements by the Europeans. Turkish Prime Minister employed a threatening language to warn the EU of the consequences of the decision. On his way to Washington he declared “Turkey would not have political dialogue” if the EU would not change its attitude. He added that Turkey was being discriminated and even if Turkey meet all the criteria there still would have been argument unfavorable to Turkish membership.<sup>80</sup> In fact it was clear that there would be no Turkish candidacy even before the Luxembourg Council was held. In Agenda 2000, which has drawn a road map for the 2000s in specific areas, has assessed countries like Hungary, Poland, Slovenia Estonia, Czech Republic, and Turkey. Despite these countries have been evaluated positively, there were significant criticism about Turkey regarding freedom of expression, cases of torture, extra-judicial implementations. Also,

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<sup>76</sup> Stephen Kinzer, “Turkey, Rejected, Will Freeze Ties to European Union,” *New York Times*, December 15, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/15/world/turkey-rejected-will-freeze-ties-to-european-union.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Unspecified, “Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey’s Progress Towards Accession,” 1998.

<sup>78</sup> Unspecified, “Cardiff European Council 15-16 June 1998. Presidency Conclusions and Annexes” (European Council, 1998).

<sup>79</sup> European Council, “Luxembourg European Council 12 and 13 December 1997 Presidency Conclusions,” 7.

<sup>80</sup> Kinzer, “Turkey, Rejected, Will Freeze Ties to European Union.”

the role of military and National Security Council in defending the secular nature of the Turkish state and other aspects in the society was criticized. It was recommended to develop friendly relations with its neighbors, and to find a solution to Cyprus question in accordance to the UN resolutions.<sup>81</sup>

The situation has changed swiftly in favor of Turkey. Turkey pressed the EU leaders to take Turkey in the candidate list which 11 countries included. Turkey criticized the EU's attitude asserting that Turkey meets the conditions more than others on the list. Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz raised the questions: "Does Turkey have a less free market than Bulgaria? Does Turkey have less democracy than Slovakia."<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the questions were legitimate thus the EU needed to re-evaluate its stance towards Turkey. At this point the United States effort to exert influence on the Europeans to change their antagonistic position vis-à-vis Turkey is important. In a state visit to Germany President Clinton expressed that the EU's doors should be opened to Turkey.<sup>83</sup> Fortunately, when the Social Democratic Party of Germany and Greens coalition elected Gerhard Schröder as Chancellor in 1998, the government declared its support to Turkish candidacy and Schröder vowed to work with Turkey.<sup>84</sup>

### **3.3. FROM 1999 TO 2010.**

#### **3.3.1. HELSINKI SUMMIT**

In 1999 the government changed and Democratic Left Party came to power. Bülent Ecevit led the new government, however no reference about the EU were included in the government program<sup>85</sup> But the EU's stance towards Turkey changed after the 1999 earthquake in Marmara region. The earthquake left millions of people homeless and many others injured therefore millions of people needed humanitarian aid. Greece has immediately offered help. Greek offer was significant since issues like Cyprus question Economic Exclusive Zone, and Aegean islets

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<sup>81</sup> Unspecified, "Agenda 2000 - For a Stronger and Wider Union. Document Drawn up on the Basis of COM (97) 2000 Final, 13 July 1997. Bulletin of the European Union, Supplement 5/97. [EU Commission - COM Document]," 56.

<sup>82</sup> Lally Weymouth, "A Turning Point for Turkey," Washington Post, December 23, 1997, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1997/12/23/a-turning-point-for-turkey/26929323-efcc-427f-afa4-abb00fe681b4/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.a04fbe894b26](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1997/12/23/a-turning-point-for-turkey/26929323-efcc-427f-afa4-abb00fe681b4/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.a04fbe894b26).

<sup>83</sup> Çakır, *The United States and Turkey's Path to Europe: Hands across the Table*, 153.

<sup>84</sup> Çakır, 154.

<sup>85</sup> "5.Ecevit Hükümeti Programı(28.05.1998)," n.d., <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/hukumetler/HP57.htm>.

were still constituting problems between the two. Nevertheless, the tremor has contributed a rapprochement between the neighbors.<sup>86</sup> Also, one of the traditional dissidents of Turkey Teodoros Pangalos left the Foreign Ministry. Greece's calculations over Cyprus candidacy have led abandonment of its traditional policy towards Turkey. The Council welcomed Turkey's positive developments with regard implementing reforms toward complying with the Copenhagen Criteria.<sup>87</sup> Finally, towards the end of 1999 Turkey was granted candidate status.

Atila Eralp points out that since the 1970s the EU-Turkish affairs have come to be conflictual due to economic and political issues and gained momentum by the Cold War. And it was possible that Turkey would be marginalized and excluded from the Union. However, it was neither in the advantage of the EU nor Turkey's. He claims, there was a trend of trans-regionalization of security matters and growing deterioration of traditional distinctions between Europe and its surrounding regions. Thus, in such a context it would be hard to preserve a steady economic and political system in Europe. Turkey's role to certain extent was decisive for promoting stability because of its relations between east and west. That being the case, her exclusion might have led to instability in the region which was not in the interests of the EU.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, it was inevitable for the EU to include Turkey in the enlargement perspective.

Apart from systemic necessities that pressurized EU's decision other factors have also impacted their choice to embrace Turkey. For instance, the 1999 Marmara earthquake and change of Greek attitudes towards Turkish accession are two important cases. The change of Theodoros Pangalos from the post of Foreign Ministry of Greece was an important development for Turkey. Greece's traditional antagonism towards Turkey and Pangalos's approach to Turkey and the Turks has been hostile and vindictive.<sup>89</sup> In February 1999 having being accused of collaborating with Turkish authorities in the process of arresting Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan) leader Abdullah Ocalan, Pangalos was forced to resign due to national humiliation he and two other cabinet members have caused.<sup>90</sup> Georges Papandreou

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<sup>86</sup> Paul Kubicek, "The Earthquake, Civil Society, and Political Change in Turkey: Assessment and Comparison with Eastern Europe," *Political Studies* 50, no. 4 (2002): 761–78,

<sup>87</sup> Unspecified, "(1999) Helsinki European Council 10-11 December 1999. Presidency Conclusions" (European Council, 1999).

<sup>88</sup> Atila Eralp, "Turkey in the Enlargement Process: From Luxembourg to Helsinki," *Private View* 8 (2000): 4–5, <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Atila-Eralp.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> "Ex-Minister Pangalos Makes Controversial Comment about Turks," *Ekathimerini*, March 13, 2018, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/225782/article/ekathimerini/news/ex-minister-pangalos-makes-controversial-comment-about-turks>.

<sup>90</sup> Alessandra Stanley, "3 Greek Officials Removed Over Rebel Kurds Capture," *The New York Times*, 1999, <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/19/world/3-greek-officials-removed-over-rebel-kurd-s-capture.html>.

was charged to run the post of Foreign Ministry. During his term in the Foreign Office, Papandreou has made an effort to develop friendly relations with Turkey.

The rapprochement during this period has pacified the pressure. Marmara earthquake of the 1999 which caused nearly 18.000 deaths soothed relations and eased the tension. In the aftermath of the Marmara quake. Greece was one of the first countries to send rescue teams for help. Greek people also have taken a lead by raising money, collecting food, and medicines. Besides, the Greek media which have had a tendency of promoting nationalistic and anti-Turkish feelings have made coverage about the disaster.<sup>91</sup> Ergo, the relations between the two countries have progressed positively over the next months. The ‘disaster diplomacy’ have consequently culminated with the Greece’s support to Turkish candidacy in the Helsinki European Council.<sup>92</sup> However, it does not mean that the earthquake diplomacy was the only reason for Greece’s attitude of supporting Turkish candidacy instead there were tactful moves and sensitive deliberations with regards to Cyprus issue.

Actually, after Luxembourg Council Turkey vowed to downgrade the relations with the EU and declared its determination at the highest level. Nevertheless, the letter written by Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Liponen on December 6, 1999 changed the course of the affairs. In the letter Liponen invites Turkish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to Helsinki for a formal lunch with the purpose of “offering an opportunity to hear at first hand the outcome of the discussions.”<sup>93</sup> Unpleased with content of the letter, Turkish government expressed its disappointment that invitation that was offered to Turkey was under the title of applicant country instead of candidate country. Prime Minister Ecevit highlighted Turkey’s contribution to the security of Europe and the West through NATO. He has underlined the fact that his country has been the only one to be in the customs union. Reminded that Turkey has been a European country for 600 years implying to Turkey's importance in cultural, political, and geographic terms. However, he conceded that his country has fallen behind the European Union standards in terms of human rights, democracy and economy but hold separatist terrorism accountable for the deficiencies. However, the result of the Helsinki Summit which took place six days after this letter extended the invitation to Turkey, granted Turkey with candidate status

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<sup>91</sup> James Ker-Lindsay, “Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of ‘Disaster Diplomacy’?,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 14, no. 1 (2000): 220–21.

<sup>92</sup> Ker-Lindsay, 226.

<sup>93</sup> “Press Release Regarding the Letter by Finnish Prime Minister H.E. Liponen to the Turkish Prime Minister H.E. Ecevit No:235 ;December 7, 1999,” accessed April 1, 2019, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/\\_p\\_press-release-regarding-the-letter-by-finnish-prime-minister-h\\_e\\_liponen-to-the-turkish-prime-minister-h\\_e\\_ecevit\\_br\\_no\\_235--\\_december-7\\_-1999\\_\\_p\\_en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/_p_press-release-regarding-the-letter-by-finnish-prime-minister-h_e_liponen-to-the-turkish-prime-minister-h_e_ecevit_br_no_235--_december-7_-1999__p_en.mfa).

for full membership. The decision which led a wave of optimism about the future of Turkey in the EU was welcomed by the then Prime Minister Ecevit. He made following statements:

“The official recognition of Turkey’s candidate status for full-membership to the European Union is a land mark event not only for Europe, but also for the world as well. This candidacy, and in due time, full-membership to the European Union is Turkey’s birthright by virtue of Turkey’s historical development, its geography, and its present-day attributes as well as the provisions of the 1963 Association Agreement.”<sup>94</sup>

In general, the decision that was taken in Helsinki European Council to acknowledge Turkey’s candidacy has opened a new chapter in the decades old affairs between the parties. This conclusion has led fundamental changes in the domestic politics. Also, a psychological barrier created in the minds of ordinary that it is impossible to get membership has been overcome by the official candidate status. A new period which comparatively would be as tiresome as before has begun with the conclusion of the EU to designate Turkey as a candidate country. From HI perspective, it can be deduced for the EU it was difficult and could be costly to reverse the process. That is why Turkey was granted candidate status despite rising opposition to Turkey’s membership.

### 3.3.2. NEW GOVERNMENT: JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY

After a series of ineffective coalition governments, a nascent party which would dominate the Turkish politics until present came to power. But, concurrently Turkey has experienced an economic crisis which has demolished the economy and decreased the living standards of the Turkish citizens. Alongside economic causes, the rift between the president and the government has equally triggered the 2001 economic crisis. In 2000 the Coalition government which consisted of Democratic left Party, National Action Party, and Motherland Party could not reach an agreement to nominate any member of parliament for the post of presidency after President Demirel’s term in the office finished. The Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit came up with the idea to nominate the Constitutional Court president Ahmet Necdet Sezer who was very sensitive about the rule of law.

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<sup>94</sup> “Statement of Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit In Helsinki On Turkey’s Candidacy to the EU December 11, 1999,” accessed March 31, 2019, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/statement-of-prime-minister-bulent-ecevit-in-helsinki-on-turkey\\_s-candidacy-to-the-eu\\_br\\_december-11\\_-1999-.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/statement-of-prime-minister-bulent-ecevit-in-helsinki-on-turkey_s-candidacy-to-the-eu_br_december-11_-1999-.en.mfa).



Sezer's nomination was supported by political parties and led to his presidency. He was sensitive about the rules; he used to instruct his chauffeur to respect traffic lights, refused to sign presidential decrees authorizing the sacking of public workers for political purposes and this was uncommon to his predecessors. President Sezer engaged in a critical stance against the executive due to his conviction that the government performs poorly to prevent corruption. This attitude of Sezer led to a dispute with the cabinet in February 2001. When Sezer challenged Prime Minister and accused him for ignoring corruption during a National Security Council meeting, the Prime Minister responded with the same manner. When he briefed the press about the attitude of the President the political crisis has triggered an economic crisis.<sup>95</sup>

Consequently, the government has signed an accord with International Monetary Fund (IMF) that imposed austerity measures having fundamental impact on Turkish society. The crisis put credibility of the coalition government under scrutiny. Because the coalition governments frequently mismanaged the country since it moved from single party system to multi-party system in 1946, the coalition governments used to have a bad reputation due to their inability to solve economic and political problems. As a result, the coalition government could not withstand the massive pressures and decided to call for early elections to be held in November 2002. The newly established Justice and Development Party (JDP) which its cadres mostly stem from Islamic leaning party of Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party has won a significant victory. The Party's success in the elections enabled it to form a government without coalition partners. Thus, as soon as the JDP assumed the power it pledged to improve Turkey's democratic and economic indicators. Indeed, before taking over JDP has published a party program where its core principles and policies have been manifested. The party pledged in the document to solve a number of problems regarding statutory rights, economy, public administration, social and foreign policies. Its attitudes with regards to fundamental rights and political principles were different than that of its rivals, Accordingly, it is declared in the party program that:

“Freedoms form the basis of democracy. No individual and institutional pressure is acceptable [...] freedom of thought and expression will be built on the basis of international standards, thoughts can be expressed freely and differences will be seen as richness [...] our party regards religion as one of the

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<sup>95</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History*, 328–29.

most important institutions of humanity, and secularism as the indispensable condition of democracy, as a guarantee of freedom of religion and conscience...”<sup>96</sup>

Additionally, the program has contained a number of remarkable standpoint regarding what kinds of policies it will pursue and what its views are on specific issues. In the same year JDP has published an election manifesto displaying its policies and essential reforms which it committed to undertake. JDP promised to broaden democratic participation which requires constant improvement. Thus, it secured pluralist and participatory democratic process to non-governmental organizations. And, that the views and recommendations relevant fragments of the society will be taken on the matters to be resolved. Therefore, the political process will be more inclusive since the citizens will have the possibilities to reflect their will.<sup>97</sup> With these commitments JDP has entered the Turkish political arena with a strong emphasis on democracy, civil society, fundamental rights, rule of law and other vital issues. It also committed itself to fulfill the EU criteria. This was emphasized in the party program of 2002 as such:

“Turkey, with its geographic, and historical perspective has been in close relations with Europe. Therefore, relations with European countries in Turkey’s foreign policy agenda will continue to take place in the top rankings. Turkey, in its relations with the European Union, will immediately ensure the fulfillment of the conditions which are also demanded from other candidates...”<sup>98</sup>

JDP’s discourse has found positive response from the voters by gaining 34,42 percent of the votes which enabled the it to form a single party government and a majority of the seats in the Parliament. After being elected, JDP has maintained the reforms for the EU membership which the previous government had already started. The role of military, the judiciary, the National Security Council, were the fields that JDP carried out changes. As it is stated, the previous coalition government has already accomplished significant alterations in the Constitution such as adoption of the Civil Code which attempted to initiate gender fairness. Also, the Turkish Penal Code has been subjected to alterations: The death penalty was abolished, and broadcasting permitted for other languages.

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<sup>96</sup> “AK Parti Kalkınma ve Demokratikleşme Programı” (Ankara, 2002), 13–14, <https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11543/926/200205071.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>97</sup> “AKP Seçim Beyanamesi” (Ankara, 2002).

<sup>98</sup> “AK Parti Kalkınma ve Demokratikleşme Programı,” 107.

The JDP likewise carried out a number of constitutional changes spanning from the role of civil-military relations to anti-terror law, and education. Subsequent to its election victory, on December 12-13 2003 the EU leaders have gathered in Copenhagen. In the summit the members states have decided on several issues in the scope of enlargement, European security and defense policy, and Middle East. With regard to EU enlargement there were several important remarks drawn up in the presidency conclusions of the Copenhagen summit. In the document Turkey's candidacy was conjured up and was stressed that Turkey destined to become a member of the EU. And, the progress in meeting the Copenhagen criteria through enacting new legislations and putting essential steps into action framed in the Accession Partnership document was welcomed firmly.

The EU acknowledged JDP's determination in taking further strides for reforms and encouraged the government to address its persisting weaknesses with regards to the political criteria. However, the most important remarks in the document was that if Turkey fulfills Copenhagen political criteria the Union would open accession negotiations immediately on the Commission recommendation in the European Council in 2004.<sup>99</sup> In summary, the JDP came to power in relatively favorable conditions which enabled the party to strengthen its hold. Thus, it has undertaken extensive reforms that paved the way for democratization and liberalization in the country. These reforms have contributed closing the gap between the EU and Turkey both politically and economically. JDP benefitted from the results of reform process that contributed a positive image for the party and its cadres both domestically and internationally in the first period of its rule in Turkey.

### 3.3.3. SEPTEMBER 11 AND IRAQ WAR

In his seminal work, Samuel Huntington predicts that the wars in the future will be fought along the cultural fault lines rather than ideological or economic ones. According to this thesis, he frames eight different cultures which the Western and Islamic cultures are the two components of this setting. He maintains that "The US must forge alliances with similar cultures and spread its values wherever possible. With alien civilizations, the West must be accommodating if possible, but confrontational if necessary"<sup>100</sup> Indeed, the American response to the attacks in the US in 2001 has earned credibility to Huntington's thesis. In this respect, the attack on

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<sup>99</sup> "Copenhagen European Council 12-13 December 2002. Presidency Conclusions and Annexes. Revised Version. 15917/02, 29 January" (European Union: Council of the European Union, 2003), 5.

<sup>100</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 31.

September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center in the United States was one such important incident. To a large extent, the US reaction to the attack not only affected US domestic politics but also the EU politics was affected.

With regards to Turkey, Huntington uses the term ‘torn country’ referring to uncertainty which civilization it belonged to. However, in the aftermath of the September 11 attack Turkey was one of the countries to declare its support to the US war on terror and sent 90 soldiers to Afghanistan. Turkey positioned itself in the West by taking part in the coalition, yet EU-Turkey relations have been affected by 9/11 incident. One of the results of the incident was Turkey’s EU bid in which its role in preventing instability arising from terrorism, religious extremism, and illegal migration entered to a new course. As Turkey was the only NATO member and the EU candidate at the time it was possible that Turkey could function as bridge between the West and Islamic countries of the Middle East. According to Müftüler-Baç, the Iraq war in 2003 gave prominence to difference of perceptions in the Union in terms of the Transatlantic cooperation. The divergence occurred as Atlanticists and Europeanists had an influence in the EU regarding Turkey’s membership in opposing directions. For instance, this division resulted with support of the Atlanticists, namely United Kingdom, for Turkey’s membership.<sup>101</sup>

While the 9/11 attacks on Madrid and London have shown the importance of Turkey’s cooperation in security framework of the EU and the West, having 99 percent Muslim population have led the Europeans to question the status of Turkey in the EU. These attacks have contributed a rhetoric of ‘us and them’ in many EU countries. Especially, in countries like France and the Netherland the attitudes towards Islam and immigrants from Islamic countries have changed negatively. In other words, the ramifications of these attacks had not produced desired results for Turkey because the perceptions against Muslims in Europe have changed dramatically. For instance, between the years 2000 and 2005 the crimes that are committed against Muslims in the EU countries like Slovakia, the UK, and Germany increased noticeable.<sup>102</sup> In such a context the EU has adopted the Common Positions and Framework in December 2001 to counter terrorism in which the Muslims were perceived as ‘internal threat.’

The 9/11 and the following attacks in Madrid and London has made Turkey’s membership hard to support in the face of European publics. Indeed, Turkey’s image was already poor even before these incidents. For instance, the former French President Valéry

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<sup>101</sup> Meltem Müftüler Baç, “Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: Institutional and Security Challenges,” *Perceptions* 8, no. 41 (2004): 36–37.

<sup>102</sup> “Trends and Developments 1997-2005 -Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union” (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 2007), 39.

Giscard d'Estaing in an interview has made important remarks in 2002 by stating that “many European politicians believe Turkey must never be allowed to join the EU.” He also made references to Turkey’s Muslim identity and claimed that Turkey “has different culture, a different approach, a different way of life.” d’Estaing blamed the EU countries that support Turkey’s membership as the enemies of the EU.<sup>103</sup> Owing to the fact that Turkey shares borders with Iraq, Iran, Syria which has been embroiled in ethnic and religious conflicts makes the situation more difficult for the EU. In the case of Turkey’s joining to the EU the latter would inevitably be party of a dispute since the Amsterdam Treaty highlighted the territorial unity of the Union and its security, it would be possible that the EU would find itself a party to a dispute because of Turkey.<sup>104</sup>

One significant consequence of the 9/11 and Iraq war is that it increased the US support for Turkish membership to the EU. Seemingly, the developments such as 9/11 and Iraq war has considerably become a bargaining power for Turkey to demand more from the US government to increase its weight for the membership. For instance, when the leaders of the NATO member countries have gathered for a two days summit in Istanbul the President Bush made important remarks on Turkish inclusion to the Union. The President Bush’s statement is as follows:

“I would remind the people of this good country that believe you ought to be given a date by the EU for your eventual acceptance into the EU. I also look forward to working with you on matters regarding the neighborhood, Iraq and elsewhere...”<sup>105</sup>

The 9/11 and Iraq increased the significance of Turkey’s geopolitical value and made the US government to assist the former in its EU endeavor. George Bush express this by stating that:

“By March 2003, the battle plan was ready. [...] The one remaining uncertainty was the role of Turkey. For months, we had been pressing the Turks to give us access to their territory so that we could send fifteen thousand troops from the Fourth Infantry Division to enter Iraq from the north. We promised to [...] maintain our strong support for Turkey’s admission to the European Union.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ian Black, “Turkey Must Be Kept out of the Union, Giscard Says: Ankara Backers Condemned as ‘Enemies of Integration,’” *The Guardian*, 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/nov/09/turkey.eu>.

<sup>104</sup> Baç, “Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: Institutional and Security Challenges,” 41.

<sup>105</sup> Çakır, *The United States and Turkey’s Path to Europe: Hands across the Table*, 188–89.

<sup>106</sup> Çakır, 190.

In short, the September 11 and Iraq war can be considered important phenomena, increased the geopolitical prominence of Turkey for the maintenance of the Western security system thus resulting with the US and some EU countries like the UK's support for Turkey's membership. But at the same time, the incidents have caused question marks in the minds of Europeans whether to allow a country which its Islamic credentials are very strong.

### 3.3.4. CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY: ITS IMPACTS

Treaty of Rome in 1957 brought European Union into being officially but the idea of a United States of Europe originates to 18<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, German philosopher Immanuel Kant's "Society of Nations based on rule of law" can be attributed to this idea. Also, French intellectual Victor Hugo's speech at the Pacifist Congress in Paris in 1849 is an example on the idea of a unified Europe. Hugo expressed at the congress his renowned words: "The day will come when weapons will fall from hand guns and bombs will be replaced with the words [...] The day will come when the two groups: United States of Europe and the United States of America and giving hand of friendship across the ocean."<sup>107</sup>

However, the idea of a United Europe gained prominence in the aftermath of the first and second World Wars. It can be inferred that the destruction of the two wars led the idea to garner support. For instance, Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, a diplomat and a member of the Austrian aristocracy, worked for the Unification of Europe after the first World War by initiating a movement, Pan-European Union, in 1923. The movement was a non-party movement and strived for the unification of Europe. Later, in 1929, Aristide Briand who served as the Prime Minister in the Third Republic suggested the formation of a European Federal Union at the Assembly of League of Nations. Likewise, one interesting proposal came from British statesman Winston Churchill who advocated United States of Europe shortly before World War II.<sup>108</sup> At the University of Zurich, on September 19, 1946 he uttered the famous word: "We must re-create the European family in a regional structure, it may be, the United States of Europe ... If at first all the states of Europe are not willing or able to join the union, we must nevertheless proceed to assemble and combine those who will and those who can."<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Loan-Doru Apafaian, "The United States of Europe : Realistic Vision or Pipedream ?" (United States Army War College, 2012), 3-4.

<sup>108</sup> Martin Dedman, *The Origins & Development of the European Union 1945-2008: A History of European Integration* (New York, USA: Routledge, 2009), 29.

<sup>109</sup> Apafaian, "The United States of Europe : Realistic Vision or Pipedream ?," 5.

But the proposal did not achieve the desired support for realization of such an objective at first. The destruction that the Second World War has caused, made these ideas to be deliberated among the Europeans. Consequently, the French-German tandem plus Benelux countries have crossed the critical point to establish a prototype of a United Europe with the Treaty of Paris in 1951.

As the aim has been to create a closer union, the EU has undergone a number of treaty changes since the onset of its foundation. With each treaty changes the union got closer to its objective of 'ever closer union' which was set by the Maastricht Treaty. The Constitutional Convention that started to meet from February 2002 for the following 16 months thus could have the potential to attain this goal. Since the late 1980s there were continuous amendments to the founding treaties. No fewer than five founding treaties were concluded: The Single European Act, the Treaty of Maastricht, the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Treaty of Nice and the Treaty of Lisbon.

Each treaty furthered the union and the leftover issues were discussed in the following treaties. The Single European Act laid the foundations of the freedoms that were promised in the Rome Treaty in 1957. It also paved the way to the implementation of the Common Market and precipitated transition from unanimity to qualified majority voting. The Maastricht Treaty, likewise, produced massive changes by introducing pillar structure, EU citizenship, and laying the foundation for currency Euro. The Amsterdam Treaty have sought to increase the powers for the union and envisaged a stronger position for Parliament. The Treaty of Nice introduced revisions in order to prepare Union for the next enlargement. Accordingly, changes in weighting votes in the Council, distribution of seats in the Parliament were included in the treaty. The founding treaties have introduced significant departures in terms of ripping a share of signatory states' sovereign rights. As in the case of in 1951 the Treaty establishing European Coal and Steel Community pooling coal and steel resources under control of a supranational body called the High Authority. The Treaty of Nice nevertheless was considered to be a failure in the eyes of Europeans because of the fiasco for Constitutional Convention and for Central Europeans it was the fulfillment of the promise welcome them as full members. With regard to the Constitutional Convention they were not able to agree on the term 'constitution' itself. The Convention eventually decided to call the outcome a Treaty on Constitution. The Constitutional Treaty is a historical moment for the EU because it envisaged a number of vital changes for the legal architecture of the EU. The definition and objectives of the Union laid down in the article 1 states that:

“Reflecting the will of the citizens and the States of Europe to build a common future, this Constitution establishes the European Union, on which the Member States confer competences to attain objectives they have in common...”<sup>110</sup>

The term constitution by itself poses a number of problems with regards to the sovereign rights of the Members States. Besides, the constitution provided the Union with an anthem, a flag, and a currency by the article 8. Moreover, there were modifications with regards to voting system. Prior to the Constitutional Treaty, in the Nice Treaty in 2001 the voting system was somewhat designed to protect the countries who have comparatively small population. The Council decisions which based on Qualified Majority Voting required 74 percent of the member states and 62 percent of the total population of the EU represented by member countries in order the Council to make decisions. However, in the Constitutional Treaty a qualified majority was defined as 55 percent of the member states and 65 percent of the total population needed in order for the Council to take decisions. Those adjustment in the Treaty meant that the role of the densely populated countries in the EU would increase. In a scenario which Turkey were to be a member it would be the second country after Germany to have the most votes. And that would increase of Turkey’s power in the decision-making mechanisms of the EU. Clearly, such a scenario the voting power of France would fall behind that of Turkey. Therefore, it can be deduced that this would not be in the interests of France, Germany, and Italy as well.

Additionally, the EU’s willingness and capacity to enlarge has dramatically decreased since the failure of the Constitutional Treaty. Integration capacity, within the scope of enlargement, is defined as the capability to enlarge its membership by turning non-members states into member states whilst sustaining functioning and unity. Integration capacity has two aspects: internal and external integration capacity. While the former is about maintaining the cohesion and operating, latter is about the ability to support associates until they are ready for membership. If the members are prepared better there will less likely be disruption in the cohesion thus more successful will be integrating new members. The Parliament and the European Council, in the post-2004, underlined EU’s absorption capacity, drawing attention to danger of a possible widening can undermine coherence of the Single Market, citizens’ insights on broadening and the functioning of EU institutions.<sup>111</sup> Icener, Phinnemore and Papadimitrou

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<sup>110</sup> “European Union, Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, 16 December 2004,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, no. C310 (2004): 17.

<sup>111</sup> Tanja A Börzel, Antoaneta Dimitrova, and Frank Schimmelfennig, “European Union Enlargement and Integration Capacity : Concepts, Findings, and Policy Implications,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 24, no. 2 (2017): 160–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1265576>.



reveal that the EU has always behaved carefully and unhurriedly in expanding and this slow and cautious approach for enlargement in the post-2004 should not be surprising. And, some member states changed their positions against Turkish accession. Austria and Cyprus have blocked opening of accession negotiations; France, beside vetoing eight key chapters, confirmed a national referendum for the accession. German Christian Democrat favored a ‘privileged partnership’ or comparable agreement short of membership. All in all, brakemen are not at ease with obtaining enlargement but willing to stop it.<sup>112</sup>

Also, the Constitutional Treaty did not include any legal bases on how a member state could leave the Union once all the countries ratified it. The implications of the Treaty for all these reasons strengthened the arguments of Euro-skeptics who disfavours European Union. Consequently, the referendums that took place in France and the Netherlands concluded in rejection by appreciable margins and that made the process to be withdrawn. Among several other motivations which affected the French and Dutch voters’ decision for the no campaign was anti-Muslim sentiment and opposition to Turkey’s EU membership. Thus, Turkey’s membership possibility played a part in the success of no campaign for the Constitution. In summary, the Constitutional Treaty which would change the legal architecture of the Union was not implemented due to the French and Dutch governments’ failure to convince their publics. At the same time, the oppositions success to use public fears such as anti-immigration and anti-Muslim sentiments are impactful factors in shaping the results of the referenda. In all these regards, though not directly, no campaigns the Constitutional Treaty which were run in France and the Netherlands had a negative impact on Turkish membership.

### 3.3.5. CYPRUS ISSUE

Cyprus island is located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, 64 kilometers south of Turkey. Because of its strategic location the island has been occupied by a number of empires ranging from Greeks, Romans to Ottomans. Ottoman Empire captured the island in 1571 and remained on the island until 1878 when the United Kingdom take over without assuming sovereignty. The island was made a British colony in the First World War on the pretense that Turkey sided with Germany. The First World War gave rise to Greek Cypriots struggled for enosis (union

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<sup>112</sup> İçener Erhan, David Phinnemore, and Dimitris Papadimitriou, “Continuity and Change in the European Union’s Approach to Enlargement : Turkey and Central and Eastern Europe Compared,” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 10, no. 2 (2010): 208 ff., <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2010.486948>.

with Greece) and that created problems for Great Britain, Greece, and Turkey. The idea of enosis activated ethnic conflicts, led to upheavals against British and, in 1931 Greek Cypriots rebelled against Britain in order to unite with Greece but fell flat. However, the Cyprus conflict was addressed to the United Nations (UN) in the 1950s. Over time, the Greek and Turkish governments internalized the conflict which increased the tension between the two communities of the Cyprus island.<sup>113</sup> In the 1950s the conflict which has already turned into an ethnic armed conflict obliged Great Britain to reconsider the legal status of the island.

The Greek government made an application to the UN for the self-determination though was rejected in 1954. In the following year, Great Britain, Greece, and Turkey decided to discuss the matters in a Tripartite Conference yet no concrete solution has been found. At the same time Turkey has shown that it will not accept any framework that it is not part of. Subsequently, the parties agreed on building of a federal state at the Zurich Conference in 1959. The Agreement allowed Turkey, Greece and the Great Britain to be guarantor states of the Constitution. According to the Constitution, the President would be Greek, Vice-President Turkish. Both reserved the right to veto any proposal with regard to security, defense, and foreign affairs. However, the new status quo was not appreciated by the Greek Cypriot leader. And, President Makarios made public a proposal which would diminish constitutional powers of the Vice-President Fazil Küçük without consulting him.<sup>114</sup> Makarios' proposal to change the constitution has increased the tension. Despite the fact that the Greek government has made a number of attempts to convince Turkey for enosis this objective could not be achieved. Regardless of the previous failures neither Greek attitudes nor their outlook change for the future of the island. For instance, Makarios in a speech in 1971 stated that:

“Cyprus has been Greek since the dawn of her history and will remain Greek. Greek and undivided we have inherited her. Greek and undivided we shall keep her, and Greek and undivided we shall hand her over.”<sup>115</sup>

On 5<sup>th</sup> July 1974 a Makarios was overthrown by paramilitary organization EOKA-B (National Organization of Cypriot Struggle) which was supported by military regime in Greece. EOKA-B declared Nicos Sampson as president, aiming to ‘undivided hand her over’ as Makarios expressed it. This move has sparked furry in the Turkish government and announced

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<sup>113</sup> Clement Dodd, *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 18–19.

<sup>114</sup> Dodd, 48–49.

<sup>115</sup> Dodd, 96.

the coup unacceptable.<sup>116</sup> The Turkish government conducted a military intervention, three days after the coup. The military campaign culminated with the partition of Cyprus and a military presence of Turkey in the island. A year after Turkish interference, the Turkish Federative State of Northern Cyprus was declared. In 1983 two years after Greece inclusion to the EC the Turkish side of the Cyprus declared its independency. However, the independence was not recognized almost by all UN member states. The UN Security Council declared the independence declaration of Northern Cyprus as a separatist movement with the decision no.550 on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1984. Since then the UN has launched a number initiative in order to find a resolution to the problem.

Cyprus has been a problematic matter for the EU-Turkish relations. When Greece joined the EC, the issue has entered a new phase contributing to ‘European Unionization’ of Cyprus issue because of the of decision-making mechanism of the EU and Greece’s role as member in the Union. Therefore, Turkey’s EU bid has made Cyprus problem somewhat complicated for its EU endeavor. Besides, EU’s standpoint towards solving the issue and linking it to the membership made matters even difficult. For instance, In the Luxembourg European Council conclusion under the section a European Strategy for Turkey, it was stated that Turkey should act for a resolution in accordance with UN resolution.<sup>117</sup> In the same document Southern Cyprus was included among the ten countries for launching accession process while Turkey was excluded. Similarly, Helsinki Presidency Conclusion on the section 4, 9(a), and 12 implied solving Cyprus conflict as a precondition for accession negotiations. The paragraph 4 displays EU’s eagerness for a political solution at the latest by the end of 2004. Eventually, the parties decided for a fresh round of negotiations under the UN guidance in November 2002. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan introduced the plan for a resolution to the problem that envisage politically equal two constituent practicing legal equity and sovereign rights in their zone of jurisdiction. According to the plan, a small Turkish military presence would be allowed and suggest political equality to the Turkish Cypriots alongside Greek Cypriots through the creation of a common state. However, the parties could not come an agreement thus the negotiations ended on 11 March 2003.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Hasan Kösebalaban, *Turkish Foreign Policy: Islam, Nationalism, and Globalization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 106.

<sup>117</sup> European Council, “Luxembourg European Council 12 and 13 December 1997 Presidency Conclusions,” 7.

<sup>118</sup> Ziya Öniş, “Domestic Politics , International Norms and Challenges to the State : Turkey-EU Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era Domestic Politics , International Norms and Challenges to the State : Turkey-EU Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era,” no. February 2012 (2010): 30–31.

Upon this development, some adjustments have been made on the plan and it was presented to the parties anew. According to the new plan, it was decided to put the plan to referendum on both sides which to be accepted by both parties. Turkish Cypriots accepted the plan nonetheless Greek Cypriots rejected it on April 24<sup>th</sup> 2004. The parties missed the chance to joined the EU as a single entity at the last moment. A week after the referenda the Greek Cypriot entered the EU, becoming a veto player on the way for Turkish membership if it would not secure a favorable deal with regard to the unification of the island. Indeed, since Turkish accession negotiations began in 2005 it has fulfilled on one chapter out of 35. Cyprus, after joining the EU, has unilaterally blocked 6 chapters which consist of Free movement of workers, Energy, Judiciary and fundamental rights, Justice, freedom and security, Education and culture, Foreign, security and defense policy. In so far, there is still no political settlement despite the encouragement both from the EU and the UN.

On the contrary, recent discovery hydrocarbons off the coast of Cyprus will likely to make a settlement difficult due to the posture of Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus on the matter.<sup>119</sup> Recent drillings of Turkish ships in the Eastern Mediterranean are increasing the tension between EU and Turkey. The Council calls Turkey to cease its illegal activities in the region and reiterates immediate negative effects will have on the relations. It therefore decided to sanction Turkey for not respecting Cyprus' sovereign rights in accordance with the international law.<sup>120</sup> In summary, Cyprus problem which has been on the political agenda of Turkey since 1950s remains unsolved in so far. Since Greek Cypriot who is a party to the conflict, obtaining the EU membership, it constitutes an obstacle on the way for Turkey's entering the EU. On the face of it, Greek Cypriot government will have significant leverage on the EU to fend off Turkey unless it achieves an auspicious settlement. Thus, current circumstances dictate Turkey to beat a retreat on its position if it wants to proceed further on the way to the EU.

### 3.3.6. 17 DECEMBER 2004: DATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

As aforementioned details revealed, after Turkey was designated as an official candidate by the EU the Turkish governments have made significant reforms in order to adjust itself to the EU

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<sup>119</sup> Helena Smith, "Cyprus: Likely Gas Field Find Raises Prospect of Tension with Turkey:Expected Announcement by ExxonMobil of Discovery off Island's South Coast Seen as Potential Game Changer," The Guardian, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/feb/25/cyprus-gas-field-find-raises-prospect-fresh-tension-turkey-exxonmobil>.

<sup>120</sup> "Turkish Drilling Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean: Council Adopts Conclusions" (European Union: Council of the European Union, 2019), <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/07/15/turkish-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-council-adopts-conclusions/>.

criteria. Subsequent to Turkey's reform measures the EU has adopted Accession Partnership Document with Turkey on 8 March 2001 together with the former adopted the NPAA. The Acquis which constantly transforms is a collection of common rights and duties. It basically contains legal adjustment in order to join the Union. Thus, Turkey adopted the Acquis in 2001. However, even though it has made considerable progress in initiating reforms, the results were not sufficient or lacked basic standards according to 2001 Regular Report. The report contends that Turkey present simple properties of a democratic system though it is slow in putting into effect the bureaucratic adjustments required to assure democracy and the rule of law. Besides, the report claimed that various details of the human rights are still worrying and torture and mistreatment remains to exist.<sup>121</sup>

Similarly, the 2002 Progress Report have evaluated Turkey's pace with a balanced view with regards to the political criteria. The Report contends that Turkey does not fully meet the political criteria" because of the limitations that the reforms carry respectively in the justice and freedoms domains, albeit it acclaimed the progress achieved.<sup>122</sup> The Commission has made almost identical evaluation in the 2003 and 2004 Regular Reports beside commending to field where it attained advancement. Ultimately, the Council of the European Union decided to open membership negotiations on 17 December 2004. Its findings and recommendations were received by the Council for the membership perspective. Prior to the Presidency Conclusions which granted Turkey membership talks, the EU tried to convince Turkey to recognize Greek Cypriot administration though, failed. Turkey had to agree to extend its EU customs union agreement to Cyprus which can be considered a de jure recognition of Greek Cypriot administration. Turkey's consent to extend its customs union agreement to Greek Cyprus has caused confusion, whether it could be considered a success or not, the Turkish media has communicated it as a success story.<sup>123</sup> In addition, the EU leaders have made remarkable statements about the EU's determination to begin accession talks with Turkey. For instance, after the EU's decision the statements made by some EU leaders are as follows;

Schröder (German Chancellor) "I am very pleased. Turkey's first obstacle was overcome. The negotiations will start on 3 October 2005."

Chirac (French President) "Europe has taken a very important decision for the future."

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<sup>121</sup> Commission of the European Communities, "2001 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession" (Brussels, 2001), 12.

<sup>122</sup> Commission of the European Communities, "Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession {COM(2002) 700 Final}" (Brussels, 2002), 46–47.

<sup>123</sup> Birand, *Türkiye'nin Büyük Avrupa Kavgası 1959-2004*, 480–81.

Barroso (The EU Commission president) “We made a new start for the EU and Turkey.”

Papadapoulos (Greek Cypriot President) “What I want is different, the decisions I have to make as a country leader are different. And we can't do anything. We have a veto right. If Turkey does not sign the protocol to the Ankara cannot begin negotiations.”

Blair (The UK Prime Minister): “The deal showed there was no fundamental clash of civilization. On the Contrary, If [Turkey] fulfills the same principles of human rights, then Muslims and Christians can work together.”<sup>124</sup>

Likewise, the Turkish press has reflected the conclusion quite enthusiastically to the audience. Some of the columnists' headings in the Turkish press are as follows;

Milliyet (Hasan Cemal) “Yes, Turkey, eventually took a date from the European Union. ... As Prime Minister Erdogan said, this is a historical step, it is a success. On December 17, I have no doubt that our history will be a great turning point ... Come on, ghouls out the door! This country will continue its historical march towards civilization, peace and democracy. Once again...

Radikal (Ismet Berkan) “Turkey is a country that has taken the decision and the date to start negotiations. Moreover, this aspect of the decision is clear: full membership. There are no special requirement, no blocking.”

Hürriyet (Ertugrul Özkök) “An exact date has been given for the start of negotiations at the EU summit is of historic importance to pave the way for Turkey's full membership perspective.”<sup>125</sup>

As it is seen the decision was considered as a historical moment both in the EU and Turkey. Subsequent to the Presidency conclusions in Brussels summit, the EU and Turkey started accession negotiations on October 3, 2005. Unfortunately, the process has entered an impasse posterior to accession talks due to a number of reasons such as the Turkish government inability to proceed reforms, Cyprus issue, decline in the short and medium-term inducements for the ruling party.

### 3.3.7. PRESIDENCY ELECTIONS: ITS IMPACTS

Turkey's Westernization process starts in the late period of Ottoman Empire. However, this process has frequently been interrupted by Islamist-traditionalist opponents whose primary reference point was Islam. For this cause, Islamist-traditionalists have murdered some Ottoman

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<sup>124</sup> Birand, 478–79.

<sup>125</sup> Birand, 481–82.

Sultans alleging that they deviated from Islam by modernizing Ottoman empire in western style. When the modern Republic of Turkey was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends abandoned the role of religion and traditions within the society by abolishing ages-old institutions such as Caliphate, Sharia Courts, Arabic scripture and the like. In this transformation Islamists were outcasted and marginalized.<sup>126</sup> According to Dogan, the Islamists tried to find a compromise with modernity, still claim to be protector against modernizing upper class.

With Turkey's shift from single party system to multi-party system the Islamists found a relatively habitable place and flourished since then. One of the main concerns of the Islamists is to 're-traditionalize' social and cultural life on the essence of Koranic morals, and Islamists in Turkey often describe their ideology as the 'national view.' But the laic nature of the Republic and the constitutional barriers has not empowered their ideology. They have been kept under surveillance by the army which assert guardianship of Turkish Republic and the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's revolutions. Thus, JDP refused, to any extent being described as the continuity of 'national view' even avoided using the term 'Muslim democrat' label when characterizing itself.<sup>127</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that JDP agreed that secularism is a precondition for democracy, assertive secularists who think that religion must be privatized and individualized or banned, believes that JDP as an Islamist party has a hidden agenda. In other words, JDP in order to consolidate its power immersed in a game of dissimulation.<sup>128</sup> On that account, the 2007 April presidential election was of particular importance because the party had the chance to fortify its power within the state and to put its 'camouflaged' agenda into practice. Therefore, the presidency election and the candidacy Abdullah Gül who had served as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, became a contentious issue. According to the Constitution, the president is elected by two-thirds of majority of the parliament for a seven-year term. Accordingly, the candidate must obtain 367 votes out of 550 in the first and second rounds and for the third and fourth rounds however 276 is sufficient to elect the president. Though Abdullah Gül acquired 357, when 361 members of parliament in attendance, the Republican Peoples Party (RPP) boycotted the voting and petitioned to the Constitutional Court to nullify the election. The

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<sup>126</sup> Erhan Doğan, "The Historical and Discursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU Stance The Historical and Discursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU Stance," *Turkish Studies* 3849 (2007): 423.

<sup>127</sup> Ergun Hale, William & Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey* (New York, USA: Routledge, 2010), 20.

<sup>128</sup> Hale, William & Özbudun, 22.

RPP's pretext was that in order for the vote to be valid a quorum of 367 participants should be present in the parliament. Meanwhile, the army, which considers itself the protector of the republic and Atatürk's revolutions, came into play by publishing a memorandum on April 27, 2007. The General Presidency memorandum by the Chief of Staff Yasar Büyükanıt as follows:

“It has been observed that there is a part of this society that is in an ongoing struggle to undermine the basic values of the Turkish Republic [...] In the recent days, the outstanding problem in the Presidential elections has been the discussion of secularism. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces is not neutral in these discussions and is the absolute defender of secularism [...] The Turkish Armed Forces still maintains its firm determination to fully carry out its clear duties assigned to it with laws in order to protect these qualifications and its commitment and faith in this determination are absolute.”<sup>129</sup>  
(General Chief of Staff, April 27, 2007)

The government responded back with a harsher reaction, yet it felt obliged to call for early elections that resulted with JDP's victory by acquiring the 46,58 percent of the votes and 341 seats in the parliament. Yet, that victory did not provide the JDP to elect the president in the parliament and at that point the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP) which got 71 seats, declared its support for whoever JDP nominates. The NMP's move put an end to the crisis and Abdullah Gül ultimately became the 11<sup>th</sup> president of Turkey. However, preparatory to the early elections, the government decided to make constitutional changes with regards to the election procedure of the presidency election to prevent a possible crisis in the future. The amendment envisaged that the president will be elected by popular vote for a term of five years and can be re-elected for a second term. The amendment was heavily criticized by a number of academics that such a change would alter the political system from a parliamentary system to semi-presidential system. Prior to the amendment the president has already been endowed with substantial constitutional powers ranging from appointing the members of Constitutional Court, Higher Education Board, to University rectors and a number of other executive powers. That being the case the president if elected by popular vote would undermine the parliamentary system. A president who does not share fundamental principles of democracy and secularism would take control of the political system by misusing the powers designated to him/her in the constitution. The Constitutional amendments, which introduced a number of changes beside the procedure of presidency election, was put in to referendum by the then president Ahmet Necdet

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<sup>129</sup> Abdullah Ural, “Results of the April 27, 2007 Turkish Military's E-Memorandum,” *IJCRB* 4, no. 8 (2012): 729–30.



Sezer on the pretense that the amendments were going to change the political system in to a semi-presidential system. And consequently, the amendments were agreed on by 68,9 percent of the voters on October 21, 2007.

Posterior to 2007, the JDP has not failed the skeptical opposition who believed that as soon as the Islamists consolidate their power, they will carry out their ‘hidden’ agenda. Actually, the undemocratic effects of this political constellation were not felt until 2013 Gezi protests by the masses. Journalists, academics senior officers were persecuted on false allegations in a bid to silence them. JDP has made revisions in the education system, mainly aimed at broadening the schools that offer weighted religious education. In 2012, the governing party submitted the bill no.6287 which has been referred as 4+4+4 education system, came into force the same year in April. The bill envisioned to replace uninterrupted eight-year compulsory education with the new system that offers students religious courses starting from elementary grade. The redesign in education was justified by Erdogan as to “create pious generations that will work for the construction of a new civilization.” Thus, from 2012 onward there has been a considerable increase in the number of Imam Hatip schools and budget increase for these schools.<sup>130</sup> Although Erdogan claims that Imam Hatip schools were opened to create a “pious generation” the mainstream belief in the opposition is that these reforms aimed at forming an Islamic base of devouts.<sup>131</sup> In summary, the process which started with 2007 presidency election has contributed the JDP to drift gradually from democratic principles as it has been witnessed during Gezi Park protests. With Abdullah Gül’s presidency the checks and balances have been eroded steadily, leading to Turkey’s estrangement from Copenhagen criteria.

### **3.4. A TIME OF DIFFICULTIES: FROM 2010 TO PRESENT**

#### **3.4.1. ALTERNATIVES TO FULL MEMBERSHIP**

Having the fact that Turkey has a long history of association with the EU, its bid to be a de jure European country remain a very contested matter. Socio-cultural dissatisfaction, limited integration capacity and national preferences of the members compelled the EU to put forward some sort of alternatives short of full membership to Ankara. Since the onset of accession talks

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<sup>130</sup> Deren Butler, “With More Islamic Schooling, Erdogan Aims to Reshape Turkey,” Reuters, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/turkey-erdogan-education/>.

<sup>131</sup> Bekir S. Gür, “What Erdogan Really Wants for Education in Turkey: Islamization or Pluralisation?,” Al Jazeera Center for Studies, 2016, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2016/03/160317094912447.html>.

only one out of 35 chapters has been concluded. At the moment 16 chapters are under negotiation whereas the remaining chapters are blocked either by the Commission or member states. Since the EU Commission described the negotiations as an open-ended process<sup>132</sup> some academic and political discussions focus on the level of integration.

The origins of a special status for Turkey in the EU can be traced back to Ankara Association Agreement and Additional protocol that aimed to establish economic and political relations. Later, these documents were taken as reference points for drawing up a special status to substitute Turkey's membership. The very first document that offered Turkey a special status was prepared by the Spanish member of the EU Commission Abel Matutes on June 7, 1990. Matutes package, as was called, proposed four basic points for a cooperation model which included;<sup>133</sup>

- co-operation on the political and cultural level
- encouraging the transfer of technology and capital from the EC to Turkey
- entry into force of the fourth Financial Protocol
- full establishment of the Customs Union

When the CU was extended to Turkey in 1995, it acquired a de facto special status by being the only non-member in the CU. Turkey regarded the CU as the first step into the realization of its full membership objective. The term 'special status' was used by groups who did not favor Turkey's accession thus become a popular term and evolved to privileged partnership after 2005.

Indicators like dominant religion Islam, population size (it has the potential to be the most crowded), poverty (poorer than the poorest EU member), and rising Islamophobia encouraged opponents of Turkish accession to formulate alternatives. The German Chancellor Merkel, the then French interior Minister Sarkozy, former French President d'Estaing, the Austrian Government, and European People's Party, all considered to put forward privileged partnership instead of full membership as a workable alternate destination for Turkey.<sup>134</sup> But they failed when the Commission set a date for negotiations. Yet, EU's absorption capacity, stress on the open-endedness of the talks and the lengthy process of the negotiations give credibility to alternative scenarios short of full membership.

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<sup>132</sup> "Presidency Conclusions, Brussels European Council, 16/17 December 2004" (Brussels: European Union: Council of the European Union, 2005), 7.

<sup>133</sup> Siret Hürsoy, "On the Edge of the EU : Turkey ' s Choice between ' Privileged Partnership ' and Non-Accession," *Asia Europe Journal* 15, no. 3 (2017): 321, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-017-0468-3>.

<sup>134</sup> İçener, "Privileged Partnership : An Alternative Final Destination for Turkey ' s Integration with the European Union ?," 420.

‘Turkish-skeptics’ legitimate privileged partnership and brand it as an attractive alternative to membership by using a number of reasons:

- possible cost of Turkey’s accession
- tension between deepening and widening
- the lack of absorption capacity
- strong public opposition

Yet, the EU does not want to lose its leverage on a strategically important ally. Because both Turkey and EU have common interests, the latter seeks some sort of alternatives such as privileged partnership if the negotiations fall through. And those who favor privileged partnership challenge Turkey’s eligibility, believe that Turkey’s accession can lead to the collapse of the EU project. Thus, the privileged partnership is the best option for them.

Although the concept and the content of privileged partnership remains unclear, what a privileged partnership involve possibly can be distinguished from Angela Merkel’s statements on what a privileged partnership ought to include. When Merkel visited Ankara as the leader of Christian Democratic Party in 2004, she stated common agricultural policy, free movement of workers, structural and regional funds should not be included in such a framework. She added that Turkey otherwise can participate in the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Whereas d’Estaing proposed structures of political co-operation and creating economic zone. Wissmann and Gutenberg suggests a more comprehensive plan which covers:

- bolstering security partnership by participation of Turkey to CFSP and European Defence Policy
- creating a comprehensive free trade zone through extending the CU
- increased institutional co-operation between Turkey the EU
- the possibility of facilitating the existing visa regulations under special conditions
- strengthened co-operation in JHA

Given the fact that extant EU treaties does not include legal provisions with regard to privileged partnership, it is uncertain whether the EU can offer more than it has offered with the Ankara Association Agreement. And, if Turkey left out of EU decision-making in this form of relationship, the privileged partnership may not be an appealing. But despite all the

uncertainties of the privileged partnership, it can yield deeper political and economic integration through advanced participation in EU programmes and policies, further financial assistance.<sup>135</sup>

### 3.4.2. KURDISH ISSUE: PEACE TALKS WITH PKK

Turkey is remarkably diverse in terms of culture and ethnic groups. According to CIA World Factbook, Kurds are the largest ethnic group, make up 19 percent of the whole population that equates roughly to 16 million people in modern day Turkey. It is estimated that there are between 25 to 35 million Kurds in the world who mainly inhabits in the mountainous region that lies between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Armenia.<sup>136</sup> In the late nineteenth century Kurds who were mainly under the Ottoman empire's control embarked on the campaign for establishing their own state. The defeat of the Ottoman empire in the World War I produced a significant opportunity for the creation of a Kurdish state. The Treaty of Serves that was imposed on Ottoman empire included provisions for a Kurdish homeland, nonetheless these provisions were nullified by the Treaty of Lausanne. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923, defined the current borders of Turkey and the status of the Kurds inside the country. They were subjected to consistent assimilation although Turkey agreed setting no limitations for Turkish nationals for the use of any language in private, commerce, in the press in publications or in public meetings according article 39(4) of the same treaty.

The Kurds who were driven by the idea of a nation state have made a number of rebellions both in Turkey and in the neighboring countries. Only in Turkey, they have rebelled 17 times between 1920 and 1938 that were suppressed by means of brutal force. However subsequent to the last rebellion in 1938 there has been a comparatively tranquility until 1984. According to Ergil, when the army seized the power in 1980 military coup it has initiated oppressive practices against the Kurds. For instance, banning use of Kurdish language, and forcing Kurdish families to put Turkish names to their newborns were prevalent. Thus, it was under these circumstances that PKK came into existence in 1978.

PKK carried out it first armed action in 1984 in which 12 people killed.<sup>137</sup> Since 1984 the government forces intensified their efforts to eliminate separatists PKK militants but in the meantime the security forces involved in illicit activities such as destruction and evacuation of Kurdish villages, extra-judicial killings, and enforced disappearances. These unlawful practices

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<sup>135</sup> İçener, 421–27.

<sup>136</sup> "Country Policy and Information Note Turkey: Kurds, Version 2.0" (United Kingdom: Home Office, 2018), 12.

<sup>137</sup> Dogu Ergil, "The Kurdish Question in Turkey," *Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 3 (2000): 127, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2000.0054>.

were committed as means of counter-terrorism. Likewise, Turkish government also has put significant pressure on Kurdish political parties on the pretense that they politically subordinate to PKK. On other hand PKK has also committed horrendous crimes not only against government forces but also against the Kurds whom it claimed collaborated with the government forces.<sup>138</sup> To repeat, throughout 1980s and 1990s there were widespread human rights abuses especially in the Kurdish dominated South East region of Turkey. However, when Turkey applied to the EU for full membership the situation of the Kurds and ill-treatment of minorities became one of the main issues that the EU forced Turkey to find democratic solutions. The Copenhagen criteria compelled Turkey to take democratic solutions into consideration for entering the EU. The EU performs a crucial role through setting conditions and providing recommendations for the solution of the problem thus stimulating democratic answers to the Kurdish question. In the EU regular reports of 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 Turkey was criticized that it should recognize cultural and political rights of its Kurdish citizens. When PKK's founder Abdullah Öcalan was given death sentence after his arrest in 1999, the European the Court of Human Rights (EHCR) called for suspension of his execution until a complete review of the verdict of the EHCR. Turkey complied with demand of EHCR on the condition that PKK put a stop to all fighting against Turkey.<sup>139</sup>

PKK unilaterally declared cease-fire against Turkey which lasted until 2004. During this period, Turkey has realized a number of reforms with regard to resolution of the Kurdish problem. For instance, a reform package that was passed in 2004 allowed the teaching of Kurdish language and broadcasting in Kurdish. Also, state funded TRT launched Kurdish broadcasting television TRT 6 in the same year. Although, PKK restarted armed fighting in June 2004, the government's secret talks with Öcalan through National Intelligence Agency paved the way for formal talks later. On December 16, 2012 Chief of Intelligence, Hakan Fidan, visited the İmralı island where the PKK leader is imprisoned. The then Prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan acknowledged in an interview that they conduct meetings with PKK leader. The process named differently in the media but frequently framed as 'Reconciliation Process.' With the Reconciliation Process as was called, it was aimed at to resolving the problem in three phases. In the first phase PKK would realize a gradual withdraw from Turkey and then, the government would initiate democratic reforms in second phase. In the final step PKK would

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<sup>138</sup> "Human Rights Watch World Report 1990 - Turkey" (Human Rights Watch, 1991), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/467fca3ab.html>.

<sup>139</sup> Ergil, "The Kurdish Question in Turkey," 132.

disarm and integrate to civil and political life.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in different occasions admitted, firstly in 2005, that Turkey has a Kurdish problem and that needs to be addressed through democratic means. That affirmation by Erdogan meant Turkey officially recognition of its Kurdish problem. Consequently, the peace talks proceeded with Öçalan letters to one for the Turkish government and the others for two branches of PKK. In March 2013 Newroz gathering which over a million people participated Öçalan's letter has been announced to public. Öçalan's declaration is as follows:

“We have now reached a point where guns must go silent and ideas and politics must speak. We will unite in the face of those who try to split us. From now on, a new period begins when politics, not guns, will come to the fore. It is now time for armed elements to withdraw outside the country.”<sup>141</sup>

During the talks, nevertheless, the guns did not go silent as PKK leader pointed out. Yet, the Kurdish political movement and the government made progress to draft an agreement which was named ‘Dolmabahçe Mütabakatı.’ But, Erdogan's refusal on the agreement came as a big shock. The government having faced pressure from the nationalist block RPP and NMP felt that it cannot bow down to the demands of PKK.<sup>142</sup> Following the assassination of two police officers in Ceylanpınar government put an end to the peace process.

Political gains of PKK affiliates, PYD/YPG in Syria which increased the expectations of the PKK from the Turkish government, determined the fate of the talks. PKK's attempt to establish a self-ruled zone in Kurdish dominated cities and the government forces reaction to it, have added an extra dimension to Kurdish issue. In these urban clashes youth affiliated with PKK demanding more autonomy faced with harsh military counteraction. Nevertheless, civilians were targeted in these clashes as well. The government needed to establish curfews that lasted sometimes as long as 14 days. The footage taken from areas where clashes took place has made the impression of a civil war that tanks were deployed. According to 2017 UN report, in total 2000 people which include 800 security members and 1200 local citizens were killed,

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<sup>140</sup> Talha Köse, “AK Party's Kurdish Reconciliation Initiative ( 2013-2015 ): Logic of the Process and the Reasons of the Failure,” *Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 1 (2017): 17, <https://doi.org/10.26513/toed.315152>.

<sup>141</sup> Cemal Ozkahraman, “Failure of Peace Talks between Turkey and the PKK : Victim of Traditional Turkish Policy or of Geopolitical Shifts in the Middle East ?,” 2017, 58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347798916681332>.

<sup>142</sup> Köse, “AK Party's Kurdish Reconciliation Initiative ( 2013-2015 ): Logic of the Process and the Reasons of the Failure,” 22–23.

almost half a million residents displaced, big proportions of private properties destroyed in places where clashes took place.<sup>143</sup>

According to Kirisci, EU has been able to de-securitize the Kurdish question. Especially, the European Parliament had taken a critical outlook of Turkey's immoderate approach to the problem. It thus has frequently asked for political solution and advocated minority rights.<sup>144</sup> For instance, Öcalan's historic statement in Newroz celebrations in 2013 was appreciated by EU officials. The Commissioner for Enlargement Stefan Füle and the High Representative Catherine Ashton contended that the EU is ready in assisting Turkish government in the process. Despite the supportive statements from the EU officials there was practically no strong incentive based on EU conditionality.<sup>145</sup> To put differently, the EU did not promise for any reward which otherwise would create incentive to push Turkish government to progress in solving the Kurdish question. Meanwhile, since the Kurdish question is an internal matter and related to sovereign rights of Turkey, it is hard for EU to directly interfere, thus uses the Copenhagen Criteria as a tool in overcoming the conflict.

In summary, the resolution of Kurdish question as condition of membership could not be achieved. On the contrary, the geopolitical developments in the Middle East especially in Syria compelled Turkey to view its Kurdish problem through security lenses which negatively impacted its democratic standards. This outlook to the problem conceivably will decrease the possibility of joining the EU.

### 3.4.3. ARAB SPRING, SYRIAN CIVIL WAR AND REFUGEE CRISIS

Arab Spring which began as a reaction to social, economic and political conditions in Tunisia spread quickly through other Arab countries. In December 2010 when street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, set him on fire as result of police's arbitrary seizure of his vegetables on the pretense that his license to sell the vegetable expired. When the media covered the incident, it promptly triggered street protest resulting with President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's escape after 20 years ruling the country. Algerians followed Tunisian case, accusing the government

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<sup>143</sup> "Report on the Human Rights Situation in South-East Turkey, July 2015 to December 2016" (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2017).

<sup>144</sup> Kemal Kirisci, "The Kurdish Issue in Turkey : Limits of European Union Reform," *South European Society and Politics* 16, no. 2 (2011): 338, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2011.577954>.

<sup>145</sup> Deniz Can Akkaya, "The European Union as an Actor in the Turkish-Kurdish Peace Process," EU/6/2013 (Istanbul, 2013), 6.

of corruption, limiting freedoms, and poor living standards. Then, on 25 January, Egyptian who mostly organized on the social media started demonstrations in Cairo's Tahrir Square against President Hosni Mubarak. The protesters demanded accountability and democracy. Though they were successful in removing the president 18 days subsequent to protests, many have been killed by security forces. Last, but not least was Syria where demonstrations erupted. The uprisings in Syria were the most consequential of all Arab Spring demonstrations. Firstly, the Syrians who wanted to avoid the brutality of the regime and of the civil war made their way to Europe. Secondly, the situation in Syria has created security problems both for Turkey and the EU. Thirdly, the phenomenon increased xenophobic and Islamophobic reactions that threatened the EU values. Fourthly, Turkey tried to take the advantage of the Syrian refugees as a bargaining chip for the EU membership.

The demonstrations in Syria sparked only one day after Egyptians take to the streets. Apparently, the demonstrations could have been remained peaceful if the security forces had not attacked the protester in the city of Deraa. Although the President Bashar al Assad announced appeasing measures which consist of releasing some political prisoners, discharging the government, and revoking the 48-year-old state of emergency, his maneuvers could not prevent people from revolting against the regime. In May 2011 the Assad regime resorted to use of army to halt the demonstrations. From then on army's indiscriminate targeting of all protestors developed into a full scale civil war that led massive internal and external displacements of the Syrian people. The first group of 252 refugees fleeing Syria entered Turkey in April 2011 which was considerably small in scale. However, when the clashes intensified the number of Syrians who crossed the Turkish borders become larger and larger to this day.

According to the UNHCR data, by April 25 2019 there are 3.6 million refugees in Turkey. There are a number of problems with regards to the future of the Syrian and other refugees in Turkey, thus, many refugees want leave Turkey for Europe. Although the government has been supportive of the refugees unlike Turkish society, integration is still a problem. Most of the refugees live by government aid which is gradually becoming a burden for the taxpayers. According to the report prepared by Review Commission on Human Rights in the Turkish Grand National Assembly until now Turkey has spent 25 billion dollars on refugees.<sup>146</sup> This situation is creating unease in the Turkish society amid the deteriorating economic conditions. The booming numbers of refugees that was caused by the Arab Spring, between 2011 and 2015 who were mostly Syrians, people across African continent and South

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<sup>146</sup> "Göç ve Uyum Raporu" (Ankara, 2018), 195.



West Asia are trying to make their way to Europe. Turkey has become a significant passage way for the refugees who dreamed of a prosperous life in one of the West European countries. The phenomenon created massive flows irregular migrants that created social, economic, and security problems both in Turkey and Europe.

#### 3.4.4.EU-TURKEY REFUGEE DEAL

The massive irregular migrant flow that mainly caused by social and political unrest in the Middle East and North African countries compelled the EU to take action. Thus, in 2015 the European Commission drafted a plan titled as ‘A European Agenda on Migration’ so as to handle the crisis. Accordingly, the EU pledged to undertake a number of initiatives which comprised EU-wide resettlement scheme, emergency funding and cooperation with third countries. The EU aimed at reducing the incentives for irregular migration by cracking down on smugglers and providing clarity and predictability in return policies. In order to achieve this objective, the EU committed to established partnerships, bilateral and regional cooperation frameworks with countries of origin and transit countries. In accordance with this outlook, it is declared that there is greatly to be attained from strengthening cooperation with Turkey and that it has allocated 96.8 billion Euros for 2014-2020 period under the framework of EU external cooperation assistance to tackle root causes of irregular migrant flows.<sup>147</sup>

The 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2015, the EU and Turkey concurred on a joint action plan to address the crisis in three ways; Firstly, “by addressing the root causes leading to the massive influx of Syrians. Secondly by supporting Syrians under temporary protection and their host communities in Turkey. Thirdly, by strengthening cooperation to prevent irregular migration flow to the EU.” And, in order to achieve these objectives Turkey was given Visa Liberalization Dialogue incentive in return for burden sharing.<sup>148</sup> Likewise, the EU and Turkey have agreed to sign a deal on 18 March 2016 in order to manage Syrian refugee crisis. The Council released on 18 March 2016 a statement with regard to refugee crisis stating that the EU and Turkey is committed to the realization of their action plan which was operated on 29 November 2015. According to the 18 March Council press release, Turkey, starting from 20 March 2016, will accept all new irregular migrants who travel across Turkish soil to Greek island. And, all the

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<sup>147</sup> “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions a European Agenda on Migration” (Brussels: European Union: European Commission, 2015), 6–7.

<sup>148</sup> “EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan,” 2015, 1.

migrant will be sheltered according to the international standards. In addition, Turkey will receive migrants whose asylum application denied or have not applied, hinder sea and land passages for illegal migration from its territory. In exchange, the EU declared to speed up visa liberalization road map, disburse 3 billion Euros which previously allocated for Syrians until the end of the March, and mobilize an extra 3 billion Euros to the end of 2018. Furthermore, the parties agreed working on upgrading the Customs Union and most importantly EU and Turkey reaffirmed the dedication to re-energizing of the accession process.<sup>149</sup>

Nevertheless, Turkey received the desired results with regards to visa liberalization, financial assistance for the refugees, and re-vitalizing the accession process. It criticized the EU for not complying with the commitment it made. President Erdogan has blackmailed the EU with cancelling migrant deal. In G20 summit of 2016 Erdogan reportedly expressed his attitudes to EU Council President Donald Tusk and the Commission President Juncker by stating that “we can open the doors to Greece and Bulgaria anytime and we can put refugees on buses... So how you will deal with refugees if you do not get a deal? Kill the refugees?”<sup>150</sup> Again, in November 2016, Erdogan expressed his frustration over the unfulfilled financial promises of the EU by declaring “we are the ones who feed 3-3.5 million refugees in this country. You have betrayed your promises. If you go any further those border gates will be opened.”<sup>151</sup> There have been a number of other instances where President Erdogan repeatedly threatened to tear up the migrant deal and accused the EU countries of breaking their promises over visa free travel and other issues related to the accession process. Therefore, the deal quite often was politicized not only by Turkey, but also by the EU.

In summary, the repercussions of the Arab Spring have impacted EU-Turkey relations in terms of the flow of irregular migrant to Europe. The crisis compelled both EU and Turkey to cooperate on the issue that led to the discussion of revitalization of the accession process, upgrading of the Customs Union, and the visa liberalization for Turkish citizens. Turkey attempted to utilize the migrant crisis in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, but it did not attain any of these objectives except a limited financial aid for the refugees. Yet, the issue still have the potential to influence the future of EU-Turkey relationship.

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<sup>149</sup> “EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016” (European Union: Council of the European Union, 2016), 1–2, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/pdf>.

<sup>150</sup> “Turkey’s Erdogan Threatened to Flood Europe with Migrants: Greek Website,” *Reuters*, February 8, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-eu-turkey-idUSKCN0VH1R0>.

<sup>151</sup> Laura Pitel and Arthur Beesley, “Erdogan Threatens to Let 3m Refugees into Europe,” *Financial Times*, November 25, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/c5197e60-b2fc-11e6-9c37-5787335499a0>.

### 3.4.5. 15 JULY COUP ATTEMPT

Turkey has experienced three successful, two abortive and one 'postmodern' coup d'états between the years 1960 and 2000. Turkey, being in the Western security architecture through NATO membership since 1952, has been governed to a large extent by democratic principles. But whenever the army believed that the country deviated from these democratic principles which were closely linked to the association of Western organizations, it has intervened to the civilian rule. Thus, in the three successful instances the army took over the power claiming that the country deviated from democratic essentials. Indeed, the 15 July putsch coincided with a similar time period of political uncertainties. The putsch was allegedly masterminded by the Gülen Movement affiliates in the army. It was not successful, though the consequences of it have profound impacts in EU-Turkish affairs. Respectively, domestic and foreign policy choices of Turkey have been affected in the wake of the abortive coup. In this regard, there are a number of important consequences of the abortive coup attempt which the two are relevant for the thesis. Firstly, the governing party weakened the democratic institutions by purging thousands of public servants of all ranks under the state of emergency rule. Secondly, Turkey has distanced itself from the West by expressing its willingness to forge close relations with Russia at the expense of weakening its ties with the West.

In the aftermath of the coup attempt, the government took drastic measures. Subsequent to declaring the state of emergency, the government closed down all the Gülenist linked establishments consisting of private schools, universities, unions, businesses, charities and designated the movement as a terrorist organization. The assets of the movement were confiscated through state of emergency decrees. Gülen movement affiliates have been sacked from the government institutions whether they were school teachers, doctors, or army officers who took part in the putsch. State of emergency practices have exceeded beyond the legal framework. For instance, the first decree that Emergency Decree Law No.667 on 23 July 2016 enabled the executive to dismiss civil servants, prosecutors, and judges without right to defense for the accused. The state of emergency, legally considered to be exceptional, has become normal. The government has prolonged the state of emergency eight times in every three months between 21 July 2016 and 19 July 2018.

As of December 2018, 135,000 public workers including more than 4,500 judges and prosecutors who were members of high courts were sacked, the government acquired the opportunity to shape the judiciary according to its needs. By the same token, 15 private universities, 70 newspapers, 20 TV channels, 6 news agencies and in total 3070 institutions

immediately closed by the emergency decree laws. Press freedom has been affected quite negatively during this period. Many journalist, whether they were linked to Gülen Movement or not, have been prosecuted and jailed for various accusations. This has worsened Turkey's reputation since it is ranked as the worst jailer of journalists leaving China, Egypt and Saudi Arabia behind. According to Committee to Protect Journalists data there are 68 journalists behind the bars as of December 1, 2018.<sup>152</sup> The European Court of the Human Rights articulated that the purges in Turkey creates "a punishment criminal in nature".<sup>153</sup> Consequently, the government has asserted its control on the media by confiscating media outlets. In the 2016 Turkey progress report the EU Commission forewarn that the seizure of media outlets and dismissals in the public institutions and the changes in the legislation will have consequences beyond the state of emergency. The EU urged Turkey to comply with the highest standards in the rule of law and fundamental rights and that it should address the advice of the Human Right Commission of the EU. It was communicated in the report that Turkey backslide in the rule of law and freedom of expression in the aftermath of the coup attempt.<sup>154</sup>

The dismissal of the senior officials, members of the high courts and public servants has destabilized democratic institutions and made the functioning of these institutions vulnerable to the demands of the government. For instance, the government has appointed trustees to municipalities of South East regions as well as several municipalities in the west including Ankara and Istanbul. Appointing trustees have become commonplace especially in the South Eastern cities, even the candidates who has won the majority of the votes in the 2019 local elections has been denied of their right to govern the cities.

The failed coup has also hindered the relations between the West and Turkey. Turkish government accused both the EU and the USA that they responded unreasonably late and acted according to the results of the coup. This conclusion has been widely expressed in the Turkish media. President Erdogan has publicly criticized the west and its media implying that they supported the coup. For instance, in the early hours when the coup was still underway, a reporter from the American media outlet MSNBC posted on twitter that Erdogan has requested asylum

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<sup>152</sup> Niall MacCarthy, "Where The Most Journalists Are Imprisoned Worldwide," *Forbes*, 2108, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/12/13/where-the-most-journalists-are-imprisoned-worldwide-infographic/#458208156332>.

<sup>153</sup> "Failure of Strasbourg Against Turkish Encounter: An Investigation on the Controversial Rulings of the European Court of Human Rights on the State of Emergency Measures in Turkey," 2018, 1, <http://www.platformpj.org/wp-content/uploads/Failure-of-Strasbourg.pdf>.

<sup>154</sup> "Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2016 Report: Accompanying the Document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions" (European Union: European Commission, 2016), 8–9.

in Germany.<sup>155</sup> Similarly, the US based Fox News website published an article titled as “Turkey’s last hope dies” referring to the failure of the coup. The same article also suggested that “Erdogan will use the coup as an excuse to accelerate the Islamization of his country and to lead Turkey deeper into the darkness engulfing the Muslim world.”<sup>156</sup> In the pro-JPD media the argument that NATO backed the coup has been prevalent. Even Erdogan himself stated that the coup was done by foreign powers, implying to NATO countries and the USA. Despite the implicit accusations from Erdogan the then Labor Minister Suleyman Soylu was clear that the United States was behind the coup.

Given the conviction of the JDP circles that the NATO and the United States backed the 15 July coup d’etat, the relations with the EU and the United States has gradually deteriorated. Accordingly, Turkey developed close relations with Russia especially in military terms. In December 2017, Turkey signed an agreement with Russia on the procurement of S400 air defense system which the United States and NATO has clearly objected. The argument was that the system is not compatible with NATO systems and could potentially harm the NATO countries’ security. The United States, as the leading country of NATO, has warned Turkey of consequences of buying Russian military hardware and urged Turkey to withdraw from the agreement. Nevertheless, Turkey deployed these systems on the pretense that it was not able to acquire the opportunities of its own defense strategy within NATO. Another sensitive issue is the extradition of criminal members of the Gülen movement which the government declared as a terrorist organization following the failed coup. Turkey has repeatedly demanded the extradition of Gülen affiliates, who were involved in coup attempt, both from the United States and the EU. With regard to the EU, Turkey demanded from member countries to designate the Gülen movement as a terrorist organization and to hand over the followers residing in their countries. However, Turkey’s demands were not regarded as legitimate by the EU and the latter stated that it does not share Turkey’s consideration that Gülen Movement is a terrorist organization. In an Interview EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Kerchove expressed his disagreement with Turkish authorities’ claiming that the Gülen network is a terrorist

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<sup>155</sup> Nick Gutteridge, “Did Erdogan Try to Claim Asylum in Germany? Claims Merkel Rejected Turkey Leader’s Plea,” Express, 2016, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/690120/Turkey-coup-claims-Erdogan-claimed-asylum-Germany-rejected-Merkel>.

<sup>156</sup> Ralph Peters, “Turkey’s Last Hope Dies,” Fox News, July 16, 2016, <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/turkeys-last-hope-dies>.

organization and added that he believes the EU will not likely change its position without substantive evidence.<sup>157</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The EU and Turkey are sharing almost a six-decades long and complicated history which has become even more complex since the EU opened accession talks with Turkey in 2005. The relationship between the two parties begs the question of if they diverge or converge on the accession process. This study discussed the EU-Turkey relations, scrutinized the external and internal drivers as causal and facilitating factors (inputs) to explain whether Turkey steps towards closer relationship that naturally lead to membership or not? In order to find an answer, I looked at the matter in question from a historical perspective and analyzed a number of important topics which shaped Turkey's EU journey.

The inputs within the causal are analyzed shows Turkey moves away from its membership perspective due to;

- Turkey's disregard for Copenhagen Criteria and partly economic criteria
- JDP's stance for membership
- Internal drivers like Kurdish question, minority rights, insufficient democratic standards
- Authoritarian tendencies of the current government
- Identity issue
- External drivers; Cyprus issue, refugee problem, member states' attitude towards Turkish membership (proposals for alternatives to full membership)

In 1999 Helsinki European Council the European leaders took a historical decision to nominate Turkey as a candidate for full membership. However, Turkey's inclusion to the EU has not been a monolithic objective of the member states. The EU member states have been fragmented whether Turkey should be in the EU or not, yet it was designated as a candidate country. When JDP come to power in 2002, has launched massive reforms that the EU decided

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<sup>157</sup> Tulay Karadeniz and Tuvan Gumrukcu, "EU Says Needs Concrete Evidence from Turkey to Deem Gulen Network as Terrorist" (Reuters, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-turkey-security/eu-says-needs-concrete-evidence-from-turkey-to-deem-gulen-network-as-terrorist-idUSKBN1DU0DX>.

to start accession negotiations in 2004. Given the JDP's Islamist orientation, it was subjected criticism that EU reforms were used to weaken secularism and to realize its hidden agenda. Kemalist establishment and the army, in response, strictly opposed any changes which would damage the secular nature of Turkey. Thus, Islamist parties have been subjected to the strict control of the Kemalists in the state machinery. Indeed, the implication of the EU process did not prove wrong the ones who defended this hypothesis. When the post of presidency was occupied by JDP deputy Abdulla Gul, a vital powerhouse that functioned as a balancing power within the state architecture, has lost its balancing function. JDP afterwards has boldened its control over the state institutions ergo lost the incentive to pursue the EU bid. Needless to say, JDP needed less and less the legitimizing power of the EU after this period. In other words, having established its control over the state bureaucracy JDP shown tendency towards authoritarianism in its dealing with Kurdish problem, Gezi Park protests, and its practices after the failed coup attempt. Thereby, these policies have led Turkey to move away from the EU with respect to Copenhagen political criteria. The progress reports which have been prepared by the EU since 1998 demonstrates this deviation particularly after 2010 and the EU has frequently criticized Turkey to maintain the reforms.

Notwithstanding the JDP's policy of using the EU process to ensure its political future, the EU underpinned this by pursuing undecisive policies. The EU members voicing privileged partnership instead of full membership have justified JDP's drift away from the EU. Besides, conservative groups, who oppose Turkey's integration both from the Turkish political spheres and from the European political circles, have contributed negatively to the ongoing accession process. The arguments of the Turkish political circles who oppose can be summarized as the fear that EU membership poses a fundamental threat to sovereignty and territorial cohesion of Turkey, the claim that the EU is a Christian club. These claims gained prominence especially in the Islamist and far right-wing parties that the EU is Christian club and Turkey should form an Islamic Union with the Muslim countries.

The constructive move towards Turkey with the Helsinki Council meeting faded just in five years. Extremes, both in the national and EU level shaped the positioning against Turkey. The identity discourse quickly dominated conservative spheres on the pretense to preserve social and cultural solidarity of Europe. Also, the clash of the civilizations which gained prominence after September 11, the US wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, contributed to the negative attitudes against Turkey. In this regard, some leaders in the EU member countries have publicly declared their opposition to Turkish membership. For instance, the leaders of Franco-German tandem which constitutes the backbone of the EU, Merkel and Sarkozy voiced

that they are against Turkey's joining the Union. This attitude has contributed to the narrative of the Islamists that the EU is a Christian club and somewhat legitimized their drift away from the EU.

Turkey's dealing with its minority issue (especially Kurds) have been an important parameter for Copenhagen criteria and an important indicator of its democratic standards. The input that are analyzed shows that Turkey fails to find a concrete solution to its Kurdish question that hinders its EU membership. Cyprus issue remains to be another barrier against Turkish membership. Turkey does not recognize Greek Cyprus but Republic of Cyprus is a member of the EU and can veto Turkish membership. The Greek Cyprus demand that Turkey should recognize its sovereignty over the whole island and that it should open its ports to Greek Cyprus in line with Additional Protocol. However, Turkey does not adhere to the Additional Protocol by closing its customs and ports to the Republic of Cyprus. Cyprus is still a problem which contributes to divergence of EU-Turkey relations. The current conditions demonstrate that the two side do not want to change their attitudes to reach a compromise and may agree to proceed on a different framework if the accession negotiations fails.

The biggest challenge that this research exposed was the scope of time that had to be covered, in combination with the limited amount of research time and restricted capacity of this thesis. This meant that choices had to be made and that not everything could be analyzed in as much depth as ideally would have been the case. In order to be thorough, this research selected the crucial documents capable of contributing to an answer to the main research question. Still, all the external and internal variables included in this study can be individually, more elaborately analyzed as all recently developed initiatives set forth long term goals, further studies need to keep monitoring the developments. Although the narrative that was selected after careful research ideally lines up with every single event that transpired perfectly and brings order into the chaos that is history, the search for a more appropriate and convincing theoretical approach is difficult thus poses a fundamental challenges to this research. Therefore, a new theory that is more suitable to the unique nature of the EU can be conceptualized.



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