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**CHANGING PATTERNS IN TURKEY-EU RELATIONS: FROM
ELIGIBILITY TO CANDIDACY AND BEYOND**

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JUNE 2004

**CHANGING PATTERNS IN TURKEY-EU RELATIONS: FROM ELIGIBILITY TO
CANDIDACY AND BEYOND**

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N. ARMAĞAN KIRIŞMAN

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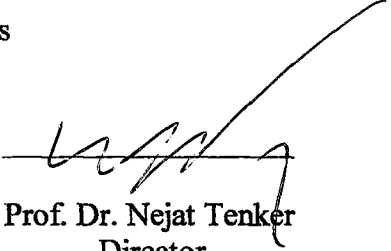
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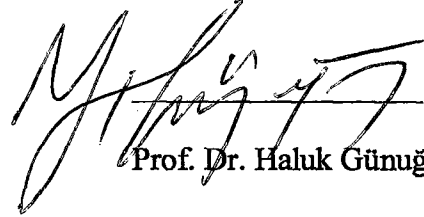
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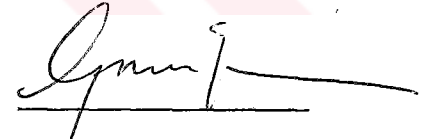
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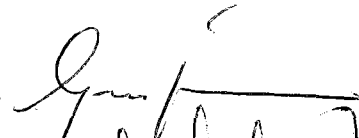
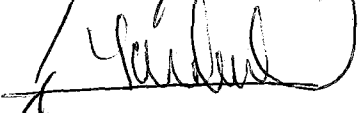

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ABSTRACT

CHANGING PATTERNS IN TURKEY-EU RELATIONS: FROM ELIBILITY TO CANDIDACY AND BEYOND

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This thesis analyzes the changing patterns in the evolution of Turkey-EU relations. Turkey's long march to Europe has demonstrated three different patterns. The first pattern includes the period from the establishment of association relations to the Helsinki Summit. Turkey was confirmed to be eligible for membership in this period. The second pattern starts with the period in Helsinki Summit, in which Turkey gained a candidacy status. The third pattern determines the road-map for Turkey on the way to the EU. This thesis argues that Turkey is closer to the EU than ever. The growing optimistic atmosphere in Turkey-EU relations could culminate in membership provided that Turkey willingly continues implementing the reforms in political and economic areas.

Keywords: pattern, association, eligibility, candidacy, membership, reform

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE-AB İLİŞKİLERİNDE DEĞİŞEN YAPILAR: EHİLLİKTEN ADAYLIĞA VE ÖTESİ

Kırışman, N. Armağan

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Bu çalışma Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin gelişiminde gözlenen yapıları incelemektedir. Türkiye'nin Avrupa'ya doğru yaptığı yolculuk üç farklı model sergilemiştir. Türkiye-AB ilişkilerini içine alan ilk model ortaklık ilişkilerinin kurulmasından Helsinki Zirvesi'ne kadar geçen süreyi kapsamaktadır. Türkiye bu süre zarfında adaylığa ehil olarak görülmüştür. İkinci model Türkiye'nin adaylık statüsü edindiği Helsinki Zirvesi ile başlamaktadır. Üçüncü model ise Türkiye'nin AB'ye giden yol haritasını belirlemektedir. Bu çalışmada Türkiye'nin AB'ye her zamankinden daha fazla yakın olduğu savunulmaktadır. Türkiye siyasi ve ekonomik alanlarda yaptığı reformları uygulamaya devam ettirdiği takdirde, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinde gözlemlenen iyimser havanın üyelikle sonuçlanması kaçınılmazdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: model, ortaklık, ehillik, adaylık, üyelik, reform

TO MY FAMILY



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CHANGING PATTERNS IN TURKEY-EU RELATIONS: FROM ELIGIBILITY TO CANDIDACY AND BEYOND

Introduction

Turkey, born out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, has directed its foreign policy towards westernization and Europeanization since its very inception. When Mustafa Kemal Atatürk created modern Turkey, he was aware of the fact that there was a big gap between Turkey and the West. He believed that Turkey needed to be developed into a secular country that was shaped under the values of nationalism. He also believed that the transformation of Turkey from an Islamic state into a secular country was essential for modernization. He made the required reforms keeping in mind that modernization was only possible through Westernization and Europeanization. Therefore, one can claim that Turkey's vocation for linking its future to that of Europe has a much longer history as opposed to the common belief that Turkey initiated its Europeanization process when it signed the Association Agreement with the EEC in 1963.

The values, lifestyles, the ways of thinking and the technological development of Europe, as a matter of fact, were considered to be the only ways that would prevent the Ottoman Empire from losing its superiority. That is why the Ottoman Empire had already started its Europeanization process. The demise of the Ottoman Empire, however, was inevitable. The process of modernization and Europeanization did not come to an end when the Turkish Republic was formed in 1923. On the contrary, the process was accelerated, and it has become one of the determinant parameters of

Turkish foreign policy. Eliminating all the features of the Ottoman system and modernizing Turkey was feasible, as Atatürk regarded, by turning the country's face to the West.

After the end of the World War II, the process of gradual modernization and Europeanization became much more visible. Turkey was among the first countries to join the Council of Europe and was one of the founding members of the organization that became OECD then. During the early years of the Cold War, Turkey became a member of NATO mainly on account of its geo-strategic position. The establishment of the US-led NATO in 1948 as a bulwark against the Soviet expansionism was indeed what Turkey had already been aspiring for to secure its delicate geography. In addition, Turkey was considered to be a critical member of the Western defense system due to its pivotal nature. Mutual benefits made Turkey become closer to the US as well as to Europe.

The main argument in this study suggests that there are three patterns in Turkey-EU relations. The first pattern is “enduring association without accession”, which includes the period from the establishment of association relations to the Helsinki Summit. The second pattern is “enduring association with an indefinite accession”, which starts with the period in Helsinki Summit. The third pattern is “reinforcing dynamics towards full-membership”, which determines the road-map for Turkey on the way to the EU.

The study is divided into three chapters. In chapter one, the historical background of Turkey-EU relations is presented-a process starting from Turkey's application for

association and continues up to its address for EC membership. Turkey made its address to the European Economic Community in 1959. The main emphasis on this association relationship was economic rather than political although Turkey had some political considerations as well. At that time, the EEC was oriented towards economic factors more since political orientation was not regarded as possible for the European countries that had just come out of two World Wars. Turkey was a remarkably significant market for the organization within the borders of Europe. As for Turkey, the politicians believed that the backwardness of Turkish economy could be overcome by integrating its economy into the developed ones of Europe. Greek factor also played a vital role in Turkish application to the EEC. Greece had just signed an Association Agreement with the EEC. Turkish politicians and economists feared that Turkish goods would become less compatible to that of Greece's. Given the old rivalry between those two countries, it was impossible to accept such a situation for Turkey.

The second chapter discusses the first pattern in Turkey-EU relations, which is an association without membership perspective. With the end of the Cold War, the attention of the West deviated from Turkey to the Central and Eastern European countries. Military and strategic anxieties and considerations started to lose their significance gradually and Europe began to pay much more attention to economic, political and cultural factors. The EC started to give priority to political considerations, particularly stabilizing democracy, maintaining human rights and the rule of law, on account of its changing approach to enlargement. The EC then came to represent shared values and norms peculiar to it.

The fact that the EC was undergoing a massive change with the newly-born countries was not noticed in Turkey. As a matter of fact, when Turkey made its membership application in 1987, it was not aware of this great change in EC's way of looking to itself. The main emphasis in Turkey's approach to the EC was still on the economic aspects of the Community. Therefore, Turkey's address was rejected on the ground that the political, economic and social situation was not sufficient enough to cope with the standards of the EC. Instead, the EC preferred to intensify its relations with Turkey on the basis of the Association Agreement, which envisaged the completion of the Customs Union between two parties.

The Copenhagen Summit in June 1993 represented a new era in EU's approach to enlargement. The main emphasis from then on was on the specific economic and political criteria set out in the Summit. The Copenhagen criteria required that a candidate country achieve a stable democracy, maintain the rule of law, respect human rights, protect the rights of minorities and maintain a well functioning economy.

The new Europe and its requirements complicated Turkey's integration with the EU since Turkey was rather problematic in political areas. Membership perspective became much further than Turkey could reach. When the Luxembourg Summit in December 1997 confirmed that Turkey was only eligible for membership but was not a candidate country, the increased stalemate between Turkey and the EU put the two sides in great difficulty. Turkey, on one hand, lost its motivation and encouragement to integrate itself with Europe-which was the main objective of its foreign policy since the very beginning. The EU, on the other hand, took the risk of pushing Turkey

to the East by jeopardizing its relations with the country. The situation in the aftermath of the Luxembourg Summit was to the advantage of neither the EU nor Turkey.

The third chapter is devoted to the relations between Turkey and the EU with membership perspective, which gained momentum after the Helsinki Summit in 1999. The Helsinki Summit granted Turkey with candidate status despite not giving a particular time-table for accession negotiations. Having gained a membership perspective, Turkey was also provided with a pre-accession strategy. Pre-accession strategy involved the Accession Partnership Document issued by the EU and the adoption of the National Program by Turkey. The fulfillment of the political criteria became the main priority for Turkey in the aftermath of the Helsinki Summit. The accelerating reform process after Helsinki has proved that Turkey was headed towards an irreversible path of EU membership. Having the oldest pending application, Turkey was provided a stimulus to such devotion after becoming a candidate country.

The internal changes that took place in November 2002 also played a significant role in Turkey-EU relations. The triumph of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the elections generated a kind of reservation in the EU since the AKP was considered to be a radical Islamist party although it claimed it was not wherever possible. Although the AKP supported Turkey's entry into the EU from the very beginning, the EU wanted to make sure that the party did not pose a threat to the maintenance of democracy and Turkey would not become a radical Islamist country.

Turkey-EU relations were remarkably affected by the Iraq War despite seeming to be irrelevant in this context. The deterioration of Turkey-US relations helped Turkey to get closer to the two crucial members of the EU, namely Germany and France. Being against the war in Iraq, Turkey was on their side-an attitude that yielded positive outcomes in the course of its relations with Europe.

It is apparent that Turkey has still way to go on the road to the EU membership, however, the encouraging signals coming from the EU have improved the political and economic situation in Turkey, which will lead to positive outcomes in the global context.



CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE IN TURKEY-EU RELATIONS

A) Association Relations

The diplomatic relations between Turkey and the European Union has a long history since Turkey has always been in close rapport with Europe as an old economic and strategic partner. It is also because of the fact that Turkey had to make a choice between the western democracies and the old traditional legacy of the Ottoman Empire in order for modernization and westernization. Being geographically a part of it, Turkey has historically been involved in the making of Europe. As well as the economic bonds, Turkey had deep cultural and political exchanges with the peoples of Europe from the foundation of the Ottoman Empire to its decline in the early 20th century. Despite cultural and political differences, it would be misleading to exclude the Ottomans from European history.

With the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, embarked on the modernization of Turkey by eliminating all the components of the Ottoman legacy since he thought that the backwardness and the scramble of the Ottoman Empire mainly stemmed from those components. He made a series of reforms to transform Turkey into a modern Western state. Turkey's position on a geographical and cultural frontier was made all the more singular by the form of modern state created by Atatürk in the interwar period. The modern Turkish republic was not simply an administrative replacement

for the failed Ottoman empire, but also an explicit new national identity which sought to define a new vision of 'Turkishness' through the nature of the state.

The new Turkish Republic was founded on the basis of a unifying principle of Turkish nationalism. Atatürk's reforms transformed Turkey from a theocratic and multiethnic empire to a secular nation-state. Since then, the foreign policy of Turkey has been apparently directed towards the shared values of the West, especially after the Second World War.

1) The Ankara Agreement

Turkey initiated its efforts to develop close bonds with the European Community in 1959 with the address for Association Agreement. The formal relationship of the EU with Turkey results from the 1963 association agreement with the then EEC.¹ There were various political, economic and cultural factors that directed Turkey to engage in such an association relation with the EC. Turkish Republic, born out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, chose Western Europe as the model for its new secular and democratic structure.² Turkey began "westernizing" its economic, political and social structures in the 19th century. This was a deliberate choice made by the country to align itself with the West. The effects of this choice are apparent since Turkey is a founding member of the United Nations, a member of NATO, the Council of Europe, the OECD and an associate member of the Western European Union. These are significant organizations that devoted themselves to peace, security and economic

¹ Cameron, F., "EU-Turkey Relations", Speaking Points at the German-Turkish Conference, 1998, p. 2

² Öymen, O., "Turkey's European Foreign Policy", Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs, March-May 1997, Volume II-Number 1, available at www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/Vol.3-2

development in the world, especially in Europe. It cannot be denied that Turkey plays a vital role in European continent, both because of its alignment with Europe and its geo-strategic position as the crossroads of continents, civilizations, religions and different values.

In July 1959, one and half years after the creation of the European Economic Community in 1958, Turkey made its first application to join. On the other hand, there were important political reasons that pushed Turkey to make an application to join the EEC. It was not surprising that Turkey, a country that based its state policy on close relationships with Europe in terms of economic, political and cultural spheres, applied to the EEC for association agreement. However, there were other causes underlying Turkey's address to the Community. The fact that Greece, both the neighbor and the rival of Turkey, had made an application for association to the EEC compelled Turkey to carry out concrete steps on the way to Europe. Moreover, Turkey was exporting the same products with Greece to Europe that time, and this fact jeopardized Turkish competitiveness in European market.³ Greece factor played a vital role in Turkey's address as a political reason. There was also the fact that post-war period necessitated a "new world order", which was inevitable for Turkey to become a part of that new order.

It is a certain fact that one of the milestones in Turkey's integration with the West is the declaration of Truman Doctrine. Against a Soviet threat, Truman Doctrine provided support to the countries threatened by communist aggression. The initial phase was the granting of \$400 million to Greece and Turkey by the USA, who both

³ Bozkurt, V., Türkiye ve Avrupa Birliği, Alfa Basım Yayım Dağıtım, 1997, p. 275

faced Soviet pressure and threat.⁴ The second initiative conducted by the USA was the European Recovery Program, otherwise known as the Marshall Plan. Cooperation was necessary for Europe against the threat coming from the Soviet Union, and European countries were shaken by political uncertainty and they were on the edge of economic and social collapse. Marshall Plan offered European countries a financial aid of millions of dollars for economic recovery. 16 European states created the Organization for European Economic Cooperation in May 1948 to coordinate the USA financial aid. These sixteen states were Britain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Turkey, Netherlands, Switzerland, Iceland, Austria, Norway, Denmark and Sweden.⁵ This can be considered the first step towards integration in Europe. From the perspective of Turkey's integration process with the West, Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan are of great importance since The Truman Doctrine pulled Turkey towards the USA while The Marshall Plan pushed Turkey to Europe. Thanks to the Truman Doctrine, Turkey was able to enter NATO, but it is still struggling to complete the integration process with Europe, a process started by Marshall Plan.⁶

As it is stated above, Menderes government, right after the application of Greece to the EEC in July 1959, applied to the Community for association agreement after harsh debates among political circles on dependence concerns to the West. It is no doubt that Greece factor and the circumstances of the new world order forced Turkey

⁴ Armaoğlu, F., 20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi 1914-1990, Cilt I, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, pp. 442-443

⁵ Ibid. p. 444

⁶ Çalış, Ş., "Turkey's Integration with Europe: Initial Phases Reconsidered", Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs, June-August 2000, Volume V-Number II, available at www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/Vol. 5-2

to make such an address. Nevertheless, another significant element in Turkey's desire to integrate with the West was an economic one. Turkey wanted to remove its economic burdens by becoming an associate member of the EEC.⁷ One of the major economic driving forces that led Turkey to opt for an economic relation with the EEC was the difficulty to find new financial resources. Turkey saw the EEC as a new and strong financial centre to give her new credits.⁸

According to some environments, Turkey's address to the EEC was made in the framework of "westernizing and integrating with Europe" as it was throughout the 19th century. Menderes government neither conducted a research on the functioning of the EEC nor had information about the organization.⁹ However, the circumstances that pushed Turkey towards a newly-born integration unit should be kept in mind while analyzing the post-war period, which was a chaos not only for Europe but also for Turkey.

Taking all of these factors into consideration, it can be concluded that Turkey's opt for the EEC, which was, in essence, an economic development project on the continent, with keeping the threats of the bi-polar system in mind, to take place in western originated organizations and to attach itself more intimately to the system of western values acquires a stable economic and political environment.

⁷ Oran, B., *Türk Dış Politikası I-II, İletişim Yayınları*, 2002, p. 813

⁸ Özen, Ç., "Neo-functionalism and the Change in the Dynamics of Turkey-EU Relations", *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, September-November 1998, Volume III-Number III, available at www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/Vol. 3-3

⁹ Aydoğan, M., *Avrupa Birliğinin Neresindeyiz?*, Kum Saati Yayınları, 2002, pp. 113-114

After regarding all those factors that led Turkey to integrate with the newly-born economic and political model in Europe, it may be necessary to look at the picture from the Community's perspective. The Community applauded Turkey's application for association mainly due to political reasons. The EC Member States believed that association with the Community was a logical consequence of Turkey's membership of the Atlantic Alliance. Furthermore, it was a period when politicians and elites all over from the world held out the possibility to speculate on EC's nature. This speculation was resulted from the fact that the first membership negotiations with the United Kingdom collapsed, and the Community did not want to give the impression of being a "closed shop".¹⁰ In addition, expansion to the Turkish market and its cheap labor pool were considered to be positive factors by the EC since it would strengthen the influence of the EC in economic arena and would reveal the fact that the EC was open to developments in other areas as well.¹¹ Therefore, an association relation between Turkey and the EEC served the interests of both sides; however, whether the profits gained from this relation are equally fair for both parties is open to debate.

The EEC's response to Turkey's application in 1959 was to suggest the establishment of an association until Turkey's economic, social and political circumstances permitted its accession. After four years of negotiations, the Ankara Agreement was signed on 12 September 1963 and entered into force on 1 December 1964. The addresses of Turkey and Greece for association relationship were of great importance to the EEC due to the fact that Europe faced the confrontation with the

¹⁰ Günüçur, H., Profile 2001, "Turkey-EU Relations", European Economic Consultancy Center, 2001, p. 116

¹¹ Ibid.idem

Soviet bloc and those two countries constituted the milestones of European foreign policy at that time. The EEC, thus, paid tremendous attention to the preparation of the Ankara Agreement in order to keep the balance between Turkey and Greece. That is why Athens Agreement between Greece and the EEC was the model for the Ankara Agreement. Different from the other association agreement signed later, the Athens and Ankara Agreements assumed that association relation was an incremental process that prepared the countries for later accession.¹²

The Ankara Agreement envisaged the progressive establishment of a Customs Union which would bring the parties closer together in economic and trade issues. In the meantime, the EEC would offer financial assistance to Turkey.¹³ The 1963 Agreement, known as the Ankara Agreement, held out the possibility of later accession to the EEC, but according to Article 2 the principal objective was “*to promote the continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between the Parties, while taking full account of the need to ensure an accelerated development of the Turkish economy and to improve the level of employment and the living conditions of the Turkish people.*”¹⁴

Ankara Agreement is a progressive integration agreement, as pointed out by the Court of Justice of the European Communities. According to the same Court, the final aim of the Ankara Agreement is the full membership of Turkey to the EEC although it is not stated obviously. The so-called political aim was explained in the

¹² Eralp, A., “Soğuk Savaş’tan Günümüze Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkileri”, in, Türkiye ve Avrupa, (ed. Eralp, A.), 1997, p. 92

¹³ www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/adab/reasons.htm

¹⁴ see Ankara Agreement, Article 2

first paragraph of the Preamble of the agreement as *“Determined to establish ever closer bonds between the Turkish people and the peoples brought together in the European Economic Community... ”*¹⁵ Full membership of Turkey was also foreseen in other provisions of the agreement. The fourth paragraph of the Preamble touches upon this political aim again by stipulating *“recognizing that the support given by the European Economic Community to the efforts of the Turkish people to improve their standard of living will facilitate the accession of Turkey to the Community at a later date... ”*¹⁶

The Ankara Agreement has provided for three stages of development in the association relationship. The first stage was the preparatory stage during which Turkey should, with financial assistance from the EEC, strengthen its economy so as to enable her to fulfill the obligations which would develop upon it during the next two stages.

2) The Additional Protocol

Although Turkey had not made the necessary reforms, on May 16, 1967, it demanded that the negotiations should start in order to initiate the passage to the transitional stage. The economic motivations lying behind this demand were multiple. Once again, Turkey wanted to obtain new markets for the products of her small and medium size industries before Greek products reached those targets. Besides, overtime, the agricultural concessions obtained in the Ankara agreement had proven insufficient. But above all, Turkey aimed at augmenting its foreign

¹⁵ see Ankara Agreement, Preamble, Paragraph 1

¹⁶ see Ankara Agreement, Preamble, Paragraph 4

capital inflow. This target was to be reached by stimulating the flow of Turkish workers to Europe, and in particular to Germany, which would in turn increase the value of worker's remittances. Closer ties with the EEC would also allow it to obtain new funds for investment.¹⁷

The smooth functioning of the preparatory stage did not mean that the passage period from it to the transitional stage would work out perfectly. The approval, enforcement and the implementation processes of the Additional Protocol unveiled a new troublesome period in which problems and discordance started.¹⁸

The preparatory stage came to an end in 1973 when the Additional Protocol was brought into effect. The second stage was the transitional stage. In the Ankara Agreement, it was stated that during the transitional stage the main achievement of the association should be the establishment of a Customs Union. In compliance with the provisions of the Ankara Agreement and the Provisional Protocol attached to the Agreement, the transitional stage of Association started in 1973 since the Additional Protocol came into force in that year. The Additional Protocol was the basic text of the association which determined the conditions and procedures to be observed by both Turkey and the EEC during the transitional stage, as well as during the progressive establishment of the Customs Union in trade of industrial goods.

The Additional Protocol of 13 November 1970 provided that the EEC would abolish tariff and quantitative barriers to its imports from Turkey (with some exceptions including fabrics) upon the entry into force of the Protocol, whereas Turkey would

¹⁷ www.fatemi.com/CONFERENCES/turkey.html

¹⁸ Eralp, A., "Gümrük Birliği Tartışmasının Düşündürdükleri", Görüş, Özel Sayı, 1995, pp. 30-36

do the same in accordance with a timetable containing two calendars set for 12 and 22 years, and called for the harmonization of Turkish legislation with that of the EU in economic matters.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Additional Protocol envisaged the free circulation of natural persons between the Parties to be achieved by progressive stages between December 1976 and November 1986. Products included in the ECSC were not covered by this protocol. A separate agreement was signed for these goods, providing for trade barriers to be abolished in accordance with a timetable adopted by mutual agreement. According to the Additional Protocol, the transitional stage could not last more than 22 years.²⁰ This period was provided for the exceptional conditions only. Therefore, it was a requirement of the Additional Protocol that the Customs Union should be established as latest by 1995.

The economic circumstances of Turkey were not ready enough to enforce the Additional Protocol; however, Turkey had persisted in signing the Protocol due to the economic and political reasons mentioned above. Turkey could not foresee that the enforcement of the Additional Protocol would generate a deadlock between Turkey and the EEC. One of the major factors underlying behind this deterioration of relations between Turkey and the EEC was apparently the oil crisis. The extreme increase in oil prices resulted in economic crisis all over the world.²¹ Under those circumstances, the EEC was unwilling to give a preferential treatment to Turkish industrial products. The second factor, which created a stalemate in Turkey-EEC relations, was the adverse economic conditions in Turkey. Turkey, as a developing

¹⁹ www.ecsanet.org/conferences/ecsaworld3/kabaalioglu.htm

²⁰ Peers, S., "Living in Sin: Legal Integration Under the EC-Turkey Customs Union", available at www.ejil.org/journal/Vol17/No3/art.3.pdf, pp.3-4

²¹ Eralp, A., "Soğuk Savaş'tan Günümüze Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkileri", in, *Türkiye ve Avrupa*, (ed. Eralp, A.), 1997, p. 93

country, simply could not catch up with the industrialized and developed countries of the EEC with regard to the implementation of the Customs Union. When the political problems after Cyprus intervention broke out, the possibility of Turkey to fulfill its obligations in terms of the Customs Union weakened to a great extent. What is more, the military intervention in Cyprus resulted in the breaking of the tandem approach towards Turkey and Greece and the latter soon became the more favored nation in Europe and was included in the EEC. The negative impact of Greece's membership and its use of veto for every EU decision in favor of Turkey affected the entirety of Turkey's relations with Europe and also had serious disruptive implications for Turkey's internal public order.²²

When the motives for Turkey's application for associate membership back in 1959 are considered, it is quite surprising that Turkey failed to apply for full membership at the same time as Greece. There were a couple of reasons for this failure. Firstly, Turkey did not pay attention to the threats that Greece's integration with the Community would pose for the Turkey-EEC relations. Secondly, the Turkish policy makers could not anticipate that Greece would become a member so rapidly. Finally, the Turkish political elites were reluctant to accelerate the pace of integration and expose Turkish industry to the competitive forces of the other members of the Community.²³

In brief, the political environment in the early 1970s did not generate a convenient climate for the development of Turkey-EEC relations. The net outcome of those

²² Taşhan, S., "A Panorama of Turkish Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy, A Quarterly of the Foreign Policy Institute*, Vol. 28, Nos:1-2, pp. 6-7

²³ Öniş, Z., "An Awkward Partnership: Turkey's Relations With the European Union In Comparative-Historical Perspective", available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/partnership.PDF>, p. 11

political and economic adversaries was the suspension of all the obligations of Turkey arising from the Additional Protocol by Ecevit government vis-à-vis the EEC.²⁴ By the late 1970s, however, a certain change of position can be discerned on the Turkish side. The idea of applying for full membership gained increasing support in Turkey. The return to office of Mr. Süleyman Demirel, in November 1979, marked an upturn in the relations between Turkey and the Community. One of the first actions of the new government was to call for a revival of the association between Turkey and the EEC. Once again, the motivations were partly political and partly economic. The Dogru Yol Partisi (True Path Party), led by Demirel had traditionally stood for a pro western foreign policy. It was therefore not surprising that it should want to renew its ties with the EEC. However, neither Ecevit government nor Demirel government could prioritize the relations with the EEC in their agenda since the political climate in Turkey at that time was in a state of great agitation. The growing domestic and economic instability delayed the application process with the Islamist element in the coalition government in power, the National Salvation Party (MSP). On the other hand, the Community itself was undergoing a transition process in which it reshaped its policies with regards to democracy and human rights. Taking the addresses of Greece, Spain and Portugal into consideration, the Community dwelt upon the democratization processes in those countries due to their totalitarian legacies. Whereas those countries benefited from the transition process in the EEC and directed their economic and political elite towards the objective of full membership Turkey could not do the same.²⁵ The project was abandoned by the military takeover of September 1980, which resulted in the full

²⁴ Özen, Ç., *Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğu Gümrük Birliği ve Tam Üyelik Süreci Üzerine Etkileri*, 2002, p. 17

²⁵ Tayfur, F. M., "Yunanistan ve İspanya'nın Batılılaşma ve Avrupalılaşma Serüveni", in, *Türkiye ve Avrupa*, (ed. Eralp, A.), 1997, p. 226

suspension of EEC-Turkish relations and put an end to any chance of possible full membership in the foreseeable future.

Thanks to the return to democracy, Turkey decided to renew the association relations with the EEC, and the government of Turgut Özal applied for full membership in 1987. The relations with the West again became the main focus of attention in Turkish foreign policy.

B) Accession Process

1) The Legal Base of Accession

Turkey's membership to the EU has always been a controversial and a deep issue due to its geographical location. According to the Article 237 of the original Treaty of Rome, the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community, '*any European State may apply to become a Member of the Community*'. This implies the fact that the Treaty of Rome has clearly confirmed that enlargement is possible beyond the original Six by making it possible for any country qualified as 'European' to apply for full membership in the future. This poses the questions of where does the boundary of Europe lie and how European is Turkey? As Özdem Sanberk, the former undersecretary of Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Turkish ambassador, said,

Turkey always has been a major part of the European System since the earliest times...A Europe without Turkey is inconceivable...So, when we look at the problems

*of Turkey and the European Union, whatever some European leaders may think, we are looking at an intra-European problem, not an external one*²⁶.

Diplomatically, Turkey has been a part of the European state system since the 19th century when the Ottoman Empire was included in the Concert of Europe. At the Paris Conference in 1856, European states agreed that the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was crucial for European stability.²⁷ However, the Ottoman Empire was hardly ever seen equal with the other members of the European state system. Europe had its own culture, values and norms, and Turks did not constitute an integral part of the European culture. As Neumann argued, “Although ‘the Turk’ was part of the system of interstate relations, the topic of culture denied its equal status within the Community of Europe.”²⁸

Geographically, Turkey is not fully considered as a European country, but neither is it totally Asian. It is at the crossroads between two continents, two cultures and two destinies.²⁹

With the demise of the Ottoman Empire, however, the new Turkish Republic devoted itself to Europeanization and modernization. Starting from the late 1950s, Turkey aspired to become a member of European organizations in order to

²⁶ “The Outlook for Relations between Turkey and the European Union after the Cardiff Summit”, prepared remarks by Özdem Sanberk, Turkish ambassador to the United Kingdom, Monday, July 20, 1998, available at www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/sanberk.htm

²⁷ Lesser, I.O. and Larrabee, S. F., *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, RAND, 2003, p. 45

²⁸ Neumann, I., *Uses of Other: The “East” in European Identity Formation*, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 59

²⁹ Rhein, E., “Europe and the Greater Middle East”, in Blackwill R. and Stürmer M. (eds.), *Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies for the Greater Middle East*, MIT Press, 1997, p. 47

accomplish its Westernization goals. Among those organizations, the EU constitutes ‘that part of the world into which Turkey is today most strongly integrated, although it is not a member’.³⁰

Turkey’s opt for being integrated into the European system culminated in address for being an associate member of the Community in 1959. Looking back, one can easily infer that there were political motives as well as the economic ones in Turkey’s address. Closer relations with the Community seemed perfectly consistent with the fundamental goals of building a democratic and Western-oriented country.³¹ Furthermore, as it is mentioned above, the Greece factor played a vital role in intensifying Turkey’s relations with the Community.

The Ankara Agreement, which came into force on 1 December 1964, has been characterized as an association prior to accession as well as an association for the purposes of development. It envisaged a stage by stage integration process culminating eventually with the completion of the Customs Union. The Agreement also embodied a vague promise of full membership of the Community with Article 28. One of the most significant provisions of the Ankara Agreement is the Article 28th which foresees the accession of Turkey by stipulating that *“As soon as the operation of this Agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of*

³⁰ Kramer, H., “Turkey and the European Union: A Multi-Dimensional Relationship with Hazy Perspectives”, in Mastny, V. and Nation, R.C. (eds.), *Turkey between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power*, Westview Press, 1996, p. 203

³¹ Öniş, Z., “An Awkward Partnership: Turkey’s Relations With the European Union In Comparative-Historical Perspective”, available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/partnership.PDF>, p. 8

*Turkey to the Community.*³² Although this provision is not a certain and binding one directed towards the accession of Turkey to the EEC, the Agreement considers the fulfillment of the economic, social and legal obligations arising from a later accession possibility and the improvement of Turkish economy to a certain extent as a prerequisite of accession.³³ Article 28 can not be seen as a mere expression of intent. It is rather a statement of the joint commitment of the Contracting parties towards full membership. There is no automatic transition from the status of association to membership but Article 28th is interpreted as a stepping stone to accession of Turkey.

All the ongoing debates on Turkey's Europeanness lose their legitimacy and justification with the Article 28th of the Ankara Agreement. If Turkey had not been regarded as a European country, the Community would have rejected its application in 1987. Nevertheless, the application of Turkey towards accession resulted in disappointment not because Turkey was not considered as a European country but because of economic and political elements in its state system which will be looked through below. Thus, the legal base of Turkish struggle for accession arises from the very early 1960s with the entry into force of the Ankara Agreement. The Ankara Agreement recognizes that Turkish position in Europe is consistent with the requirements outlined in Rome Treaty to be a member of the Community, and offers the full membership perspective as the ultimate objective to be reached after association relationship.³⁴ Despite this perspective provided by the very early times

³² see Ankara Agreement, Article 28

³³ Özen, Ç., *Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğu Gümrük Birliği ve Tam Üyelik Süreci Üzerine Etkileri*, 2002, p. 12

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 119

of the relationship between Turkey and the EU, many Europeans are still not convinced that Turkey should be admitted, both for cultural and economic reasons.

Before debating on how Turkey's accession to the EU would affect the future of the Union, the European leaders should reach a consensus on whether Turkey belongs to the shared values of the West, say, Europe or not. Unless a settlement on Turkey's Europeanness is reached, it is useless to discuss the viability of Turkish acceptance in Europe.

2) Turkey's Application for Full Membership and Its Aftermath

The late 1980s represented a period of transformation for both Turkey and the European Community. As for the Turkish case, the heavily protected and closed economy of the 1960s and the 1970s was steadily changed into a far open economy in the 1980s and the 1980s with the liberal economic policies of Özal government. On the political front, the military control between 1980 and 1983 was replaced by a step by step return to democracy. Therefore, Turkey started to adopt a more positive approach towards the Community. As a result of all those encouraging developments, in 1987, Turkey applied for full membership to the EC in spite of the fact that the country received discouraging signals from the European countries. Prior to Turkey's application, the relations between Europe and Turkey were a bit problematic. That was why it was impossible for the EEC to appreciate Turkey's application. In addition, Turkey's address coincided with a period of reluctance, mainly because of the fact that the Community had undergone a wave of enlargement

with Greece, Portugal and Spain on one hand, and the problem of slowing down the decision-making mechanism.³⁵

Despite all those negative aspects mentioned above, the Council forwarded Turkey's application to the Commission for the preparation of an Opinion. The Commission's Opinion was completed on 18 December 1989 and endorsed by the Council on 5 February 1990.³⁶ There were various reasons why the Turkish application was not appreciated by the Community. First of all, the Community the Avis stated that *"it would be inappropriate for the Community-which is itself undergoing major changes while the whole of Europe is in a state of flux-to become involved in new accession negotiations at this stage."*³⁷ This meant that Turkey's accession was prevented by the EC's own situation since the completion of the Single Market hindered the consideration of further enlargement. The Commission's opinion noted that major gaps persisted in economic and social levels of development especially in areas of agriculture and industry, that deficiencies existed in democracy and human rights, and that the situation in Cyprus could not be ignored. The Opinion went on to underpin the need for a detailed cooperation program aiming at facilitating the integration of the two sides and added that the Customs Union should be completed in 1995 as foreseen by the Ankara Agreement. Turkey's eligibility for membership, however, was confirmed and the Community's interest in closer ties with Turkey was underlined.³⁸ In the Commission's argumentation, no reference was made to any of

³⁵ Eralp, A., "Soğuk Savaş'tan Günümüze Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkileri", in, Türkiye ve Avrupa, (ed. Eralp, A.), 1997, p. 103

³⁶ www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/adab/relations.htm

³⁷ Commission Opinion on Turkey's Request for Accession to the Community, available at www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/opinion.html

³⁸ Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye, T.C. Başbakanlık Dış Ticaret Müsteşarlığı, 2002, pp. 341-343

the obstacles nor was the fear expressed that with its accession Turkey would become the largest and one of the most populous countries of the Community, with the economic and political implications that would entail.³⁹ The critical factor in the EU's deliberations, however, was the fact that in recent years political considerations had become more important than economic ones. The rejection of Turkey's application was influenced by a number of these political factors, including the EC's plans for southern enlargement, an ongoing reformulation of its external identity, and the increased importance it gave to shared norms.

The Commission's Opinion put an end to the debates on Turkish full membership to the EEC. From then on, the Community prioritized the completion of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EEC as foreseen by the Additional Protocol. Moreover, the Community preferred to use miscellaneous concepts such as "strategic partnership" and "special relations" rather than "full membership" when defining the relations between Turkey and itself.⁴⁰

With the request of the European Commission on 6 June 1990, a series of interrelated measures were adopted that aimed to:

- *complete the Customs Union by 1995,
- *resume the provision of financial aid,
- *promote technological and industrial cooperation,

³⁹ Nunez Villaverde, J. A., "Turkey and the EU: An Endless Hurdle-Race", *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, September-November 1998, Volume III-Number 3, available at www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/Vol. 3-3

⁴⁰ Özen, Ç., *Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğu Gümrük Birliği ve Tam Üyelik Süreci Üzerine Etkileri*, 2002, p. 123

*strengthen the political and cultural ties.

All these measures were included in the “Matutes Package” that intended a cooperation program between the two parties. However, the transfer of this program to the Council was prevented by the blocking stance of Greece.⁴¹ These discouraging developments on Turkey-EU relations did not weaken Turkey’s ambition towards Europe but encouraged it to complete the Customs Union as soon as possible since the maintenance of the relations between the two parties could be carried out only by that way. Therefore, Association Council focused on the Customs Union in order to normalize the rapport between Turkey and the EEC.

C) The Completion of the Customs Union

After the Council of Ministers rejected Turkey’s application for membership in February 1989, Ankara’s relations with the European Community moved unsteadily for years without any definite direction. The EU was occupied with the internal reform proposal in order to contribute to the European restructuring after the end of the Cold War. Therefore, the Community began to offer new packages of measures such as the Matutes Package touched upon above for a comprehensive cooperation that led to closer relations and eventually to the establishment of a Customs Union between Turkey and the Community, as envisaged by the Ankara Agreement of 1963. The impediment of financial aid by Greece, however, did not prevent Turkey from developing closer bonds with Europe as it began to realize the outcomes of the changes in Europe after the end of the Cold War. Thus, Turkey speeded up its efforts

⁴¹ Avrupa Birliđi Geniřleme Süreci ve Türkiye, İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı Yayınları, No: 170, 2002, p. 105

at fulfilling its obligations to establish a Customs Union within the association framework.

The Customs Union entered into its final phase on 1 January 1996 following 6 March 1995 Decision 1/95 of the Turkey-EC Association Council after long debates in European countries. This was simply a “Decision” of the Association Council, declaring that the transition stage had been completed and that the final stage, which is based on a customs union, had commenced, so it was not a new agreement between EU and Turkey, as some commentators and experts claimed.⁴²

The Customs Union, as an economic integration model, foresees the elimination of customs duties, taxes having equivalent effect and quantity restrictions, and all of the measures having equivalent effect present in trade among the parties in addition to the application of a customs tariff towards third countries that remain outside the Union. The fundamental principle is the free circulation of goods that are in scope of the Customs Union, without being subject to any kind of preventions.⁴³ To put it in simple words, a Customs Union means that goods can move freely as within one customs territory and each party applies the same external tariff for imports from third countries and the same commercial policy.⁴⁴ The Customs Union covers trade in industrial goods and processed agricultural products.

⁴² Kabaalioglu, H., “Turkey and The European Union: Converging or Drifting Apart?”, *Marmara Journal of European Studies*, Vol.7, No:1-2, p. 111

⁴³ Dartan, M., “Turkey-EU Relations With Particular Reference to the Customs Union”, in, *The European Union Enlargement Process and Turkey*, (eds. Dartan, M. And Nas, Ç.), A Publication of Marmara University European Community Institute, 2002, p. 283

⁴⁴ www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/ei-gumruk-faq.html

Turkey had already established some institutions to run the relations with the Community. Among those, according to the Article 6 of the Ankara Agreement, an EC-Turkey Association Council was established so as to implement the Ankara Agreement. In this context, the Association Council is the highest decision-making body of the association between Turkey and the EU. The parties are compelled to follow the decisions of the Council; however, its decisions are not directly binding. Only when the Council decisions are transferred to the internal law system, they gain a binding nature for the parties.⁴⁵ The Council consists of members from the Governments of the Member States and members from the Council and the Commission of the Community on one hand, and of the members from the Turkish government, on the other.⁴⁶

Another institution founded was the Association Committee. Its main aim is to help the Association Council and to provide with the maintenance of the Council's works' continuity. The Association Committee determines the Council's agenda and tries to deal with the technical problems.⁴⁷

The Joint Parliamentary Commission was established by the relevant decisions of the European Parliament and the Turkish Grand National Assembly in the framework of the Ankara Agreement. The main goal of the Commission is to negotiate all the disputes arising from Turkey-EU relations. It consists of 36 parliamentarians from the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the European Parliament. It examines the

⁴⁵ Karluk, R., *Avrupa Birliđi ve Trkiye*, Beta Yayınları, 2002, p. 541

⁴⁶ Gnuđur, H., *Profile 2001, "Turkey-EU Relations"*, European Economic Consultancy Center, 2001, p. 117

⁴⁷ *Avrupa Birliđi Geniřleme Sreci ve Trkiye*, İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı Yayınları, No: 170, 2002, p. 102

annual report of the Association Council and makes recommendations for the implementation of the association.⁴⁸

Together with the Association Council Decision 1/95, the Customs Cooperation Committee was constructed to enable the harmonization of the Community legislation with the Turkish legislation on customs related issues. The principal objective of the Customs Cooperation Committee is to supply the parties with the exchange of information and to make recommendations to the Association Council to assure the well-functioning of the Customs Union.⁴⁹

With the Association Council Decision 1/95, Turkey is engaged to remove all the customs duties and also all the quantitative restrictions for the importation and exportation of industrial products coming from the EU member states as from 1 January 1996. Besides, the Community and Turkey have agreed to abstain from introducing new imports and exports duties.⁵⁰ Common Customs Tariff is another cornerstone of the well-functioning of the Customs Union. All the Member States have a common tariff in order to enable the free circulation of industrial goods between Turkey and the EU, as well as the goods coming from third countries.

To sum up, the 6 March 1995 document, which arranges the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU, obliges Turkey to comply with some procedures related to customs issues. In this respect, the following matters are of great importance:

⁴⁸ Günüğur, H., Profile 2001, "Turkey-EU Relations", European Economic Consultancy Center, 2001, p. 117

⁴⁹ Avrupa Birliğı ve Türkiye, T.C. Başbakanlık Dış Ticaret Müsteşarlığı, 2002, p. 330

⁵⁰ Özen, Ç., Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğı Gümrük Birliğı ve Tam Üyelik Süreci Üzerine Etkileri, 2002, p. 50

- a. Turkey must comply with the external trade policies of the EU (Article 64 and others);
- b. Turkey must comply with the trade agreements of the EU signed with third countries to date and others that will be signed in the future (Article 16);
- c. Restrictions to Turkey's preferential trade agreements with third countries (Article 16, paragraphs 2 and 3);
- d. Turkey must strictly comply with past and future EU Court of Justice decisions concerning the Customs Union (Article 64);
- e. Turkey must comply with the EU laws concerning issues related to the Customs Union.⁵¹

Turkey has fulfilled most but not all of its obligations arising from the Customs Union. For instance, the following issues have not been settled yet:

1. Removal of technical barriers to trade,
2. Harmonization of commercial policy: alignment of preferential customs regime of the Community,
3. Abolishment of state monopolies,
4. State aids to promote economic development and accomplishing structural adjustment.⁵²

⁵¹ Dartan, M., "Turkey-EU Relations With Particular Reference to the Customs Union", in, *The European Union Enlargement Process and Turkey*, (eds. Dartan, M. And Nas, Ç.), A Publication of Marmara University European Community Institute, 2002, p. 284

⁵² www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/ei-gumruk-faq.html

As for the EU, it has fulfilled all its obligations arising from the Customs Union except the financial aid promised in 1995. As a matter of fact, Turkey has benefited least of all from the EU financial aid foreseen in this framework as a result of Greece's obstructionism when compared to other candidate countries.

The Customs Union is the last phase of the three staged integration model foreseen in the Ankara Agreement that constitutes the legal basis of the partnership between Turkey and the EU. There are still ongoing debates on the Customs Union, a stage of association relationship that started in 1963 with a view to full membership and put into effect in 1996 with the enactment of the Association Council Decision 1/95. The controversial discussions mostly result from the fact that the Customs Union between the EU and Turkey is structurally different from a Customs Union in the classical sense. First of all, Turkey is the only country that has agreed to comply with the external policies of the EU although it is not a member of the EU. Second, the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU is not only restricted to the elimination of customs duties and quotas and the application of a common customs tariff against third countries, but also includes the harmonization of all the measures that can affect trade directly or indirectly. That is why the Customs Union agreement between Turkey and the EU should be examined carefully when the advantages and disadvantages of this relationship are discussed. Since the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU is not the main emphasis here the drawbacks and the benefits of this arrangement will not be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

TURKEY-EU PARTNERSHIP WITHOUT MEMBERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

A) Pattern 1: Enduring Association Without Accession

Facing the domestic and international challenges, Turkey found itself in a troubled environment as it entered the 21st century. During the Cold War, Turkey acted as a bulwark against the Soviet threat between the East and the West. As pointed out in the previous chapter, Turkey's geographic and strategic position made it a pivotal country in the variables of international relations. The choices made by Turkey in economic, political and security realms exerted their influence not only in Europe but also in other significant and problematic areas of the world such as the Balkans, the Caspian region and the Middle East. Located in such an important part of the world, Turkey encountered plenty of challenges, many of which stemmed from the changing internal and external dynamics. At the end of the 1990s, with the major changes that the world order underwent, Turkey had to redefine its domestic and foreign policy in accordance with the new global order. The same concern was also inevitable for the rest of the world.

The end of the Cold War represented a turning point in the structures of international politics, in the roles and functions of the nation-states as well as in international organizations.⁵³ Apart from the political chaos after the Cold War, the West faced a

⁵³ Baylis J., Smith, S., (eds.), *The Globalization of the World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 2001, p. 92

radically new security environment with the newly-born independent states. Instability and uncertainty were the key words in defining the political environment in the immediate post-cold war era. With the end of the East-West confrontation, the EU had to reconsider its approach to integration and enlargement. Whether integration was to occur through a process of either 'deepening' the cooperation between the existing members, or 'widening' the circle to bring in states from the East, was a contested issue.⁵⁴ What is necessary to point out here is that whether Turkey's role and significance has changed or not from the perspective of the EU in the post-Cold War period. Turkey is already a key country in the post-Cold War international arena. As a staunch NATO ally, as a member of OSCE, as a party to the CFE Treaty and as an associate member of the WEU, Turkey has played an active role in European security structures.

The position of Turkey in the early 1990s was interpreted in totally different ways by the analysts. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, some political scientists predicted that Turkey would be automatically sidetracked as a result of its shrinking role as a military ally since there was no threat coming from the East any more. However, the demise of the Soviet Union and, particularly, the Gulf War, revealed that Turkey's significance as an ally on security matters was reinforced by the new problems stemming from its region.⁵⁵ Within those complicated circumstances, Turkey found itself in limbo during 1990s. On one hand, Turkey was aspiring for full membership to the Union for ages despite the contradictions and burdens faced, on

⁵⁴ Wyn Rees, G., and Trine Flockhart, "A Core Europe? The EU and the WEU", in, *Rethinking Security in Post-Cold War Europe*, (eds. Wyn Rees, G. and Park, W.) 2002, p. 62

⁵⁵ Nunez Villaverde, J. A., "Turkey and the EU: An Endless Hurdle-Race", *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, September-November 1998, Volume III-Number 3, available at www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/Vol. 3-3

the other hand, with the crumbling of the Soviet Empire, the country saw new opportunities to play a leading role in Central Asia and even the Caucasus. However, there were many limitations of its influence on that region since becoming the regional leader was not as easy as the Turkish politicians thought. Therefore, Turkey chose to intensify its relationship with Europe, with the fulfillment of the Customs Union and its renewed European strategy.

1) Dynamics Preparing the Luxembourg Decision on Turkey

In order to understand the logic underlying behind the refusal of Turkish candidacy status in Luxembourg Summit, it will be necessary to touch upon the political dynamics in Europe in the early 90s. The collapse of communism in both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991, with the attendant dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, ended the bipolar security harness in Europe. This situation is often characterized as a 'security vacuum' or 'security limbo' by political scholars.⁵⁶ Those newly born, newly independent and newly sovereign states of Central and Eastern Europe generated global and continental problems for Europe itself and also for the rest of the world, and it was the western states who would come up with a solution to those problems. Integration of those countries to the new global order-or the new enlargement project- was the only way to maintain and reinforce stability and security in Europe. Starting from 1991, the Central and Eastern European countries signed Europe Agreements with the EU that were based on trade, political dialogue, industry, environment, customs regulation etc. The aim of these Agreements was to help those countries in restoring their economies and

⁵⁶ Latawski, P., "Central Europe and European Security", in, *Rethinking Security in Post-Cold War Europe*, (eds. Wyn Rees, G. and Park, W.) 2002, pp. 81-82

political institutions. The ultimate goal was enlargement which meant the economic and political integration of those countries to the Western model because this would be the smoothest way of stability and security in Europe. The Copenhagen Summit in June 1993 clearly underlined that the membership of Central and Eastern European countries-but not Turkey- was a major objective of the EU policy.⁵⁷ It also set out specific economic and political criteria for membership. The political criteria included a requirement that a candidate country has to achieve a stable democracy, maintain the rule of law, respect to human rights, and protect the right of minorities. The Copenhagen criteria, therefore, complicated Turkey's quest for EU membership. The whole new group of political criteria accentuated the difference between Turkey and the other aspirants and highlighted Turkey's "distinctiveness".⁵⁸

In the 1990s, what affected Turkey's relations with Europe was not only the fundamental transformation period in Europe but also the challenges that Turkey faced domestically and externally. At home, Turkey was exposed to severe Kurdish separatism and political Islam, both which posed serious threats to the territorial integrity and the secular nature of the Turkish Republic. The campaign against the separatist organization, PKK, forced Turkey to focus on its internal affairs instead of paying great attention to the integration process. In addition, the rise of the Islamic political parties added to the marginalization of Turkey in Europe. Being intensively occupied with the domestic issues, Turkey found itself in the periphery of Europe. The external factor that complicated Turkey's relations with Europe was the role of

⁵⁷ Lesser, I.O. and Larrabee, S. F., *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, RAND, 2003, p. 50

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* idem.

Greece as a member of the Union. Greece did have the political power to bloc the key decisions on Turkey taken within the Union.⁵⁹

Despite all those discouraging signals, Turkey insisted on its conviction of becoming a candidate country in the Luxembourg Summit, getting encouragement from the completion of the Customs Union. Nevertheless, the optimism of Turkish politicians culminated in failure due to some political developments just before the forthcoming Luxembourg Summit. The outbreak of Kardak-Imia crisis only one month after the completion of the Customs Union generated a new hardening in Greek's stance towards Turkey.⁶⁰ In January-February 1996, over the islets of Kardak-Imia, Turkey and Greece came close to armed conflict. Only the last-minute US diplomatic intervention prevented an arm confrontation. The diplomatic game played a critical role in defusing the crisis over Kardak-Imia in early 1996.⁶¹ When the conclusion of the financial protocol foreseen in the Customs Union agreement was blocked by the Greek veto and right after this, when the EU issued a Declaration on July 15, 1996, which asked Turkey to accept international legal arbitration by the International Court of Justice according to Greek demands, Turkey-EU relations were burdened again despite the positive developments started after the completion of the Customs Union.⁶² The deterioration of the relations between Turkey and the EU and the prospective eastern enlargement ended up with growing irritation among the pro-EU circles in Turkey. Turkish Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister,

⁵⁹ Öniş, Z., "An Awkward Partnership: Turkey's Relations With the European Union In Comparative-Historical Perspective", available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/partnership.PDF>, pp. 14-15

⁶⁰ Kramer, H., *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the US*, 2000, p. 192

⁶¹ Lesser, I.O. and Larrabee, S. F., *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, RAND, 2003, p. 90

⁶² Kramer, H., *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the US*, 2000, p. 192

Tansu Çiller, remained convinced of that the EU had to include Turkey in the next round of enlargement. Before her meeting with the EU representatives in Dublin in December 1996, she expressed the inevitability of Turkish accession as follows: *“There are three reasons, why Turkey will participate in the next round of EU enlargement: We are the first country to have signed an agreement that foresees accession. We are the only candidate which is already a member of NATO and we are also the only country to have reached the customs union stage of integration which took effect one year ago.”*⁶³

Çiller’s interest in EU membership, however, was not in harmony with the position of Necmettin Erbakan and his Refah (Welfare) Party. The fact that only the half of the Çiller-Erbakan coalition party-the DYP (True Path Party) and its leader Çiller-was willing to develop close ties with the EU handicapped Turkey’s stance towards the EU. The reluctance of Erbakan’s and his political party’s to agree to an eventual accession to the EU, stemming from ideological reasons, blunted Turkish aspire to integrate with the West in the eyes of European leaders.

Bearing the new world order and all those domestic and external negative developments regarding before the Luxembourg Summit in mind, it would not be misleading to claim that the EU paid more attention to those Central and Eastern states. Furthermore, it is fair to say that the EU in the 1990s has been far more receptive to incorporate the post-communist states such as Poland and Hungary into its orbit, because those countries did not pose the kind of boundary questions for

⁶³ “Çiller Lays the Cards on the Table”, Agence Europe, December 14, 1996

Europe that the Turkish membership entailed.⁶⁴ This can explain the reluctance of the EC to accept Turkey as a candidate country in early 90s. However, the unwillingness of the EC to recognize Turkey as a candidate did not mean that it totally wanted to ignore Turkey. For the EC/EU in the 1980s and 1990s, Turkey, rather than being a ‘natural insider’, was an ‘important outsider’ with whom relations ought to be developed on an arm’s length basis barring full integration.⁶⁵

The European Commission published “Agenda 2000” on 16 July 1997, which brought new dimensions to the European enlargement issue. The document contained the strategies of the European Union directed towards the future of Europe, namely, the structural funds, common agricultural policy, the financial framework and enlargement.⁶⁶ The most crucial part of this document was enlargement because the next enlargement of the Union was generally regarded more qualitatively different from the previous ones owing to the fact that there were so many applicants than the Union could digest and the entry of those states would pose a challenge to both the Union and those countries.⁶⁷ By that time, 13 countries had applied for membership including Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Cyprus and Turkey. In June 1993, the EC had declared that it was ready to accept applications if the applicants were able to *‘assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political*

⁶⁴ Öniş, Z., and Yılmaz, Ş., “Turkey-EU-US Triangle In Perspective: Transformation or Continuity”, available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/ONIS-YILMAZ-TURKEY-EU-US%20TRIANGLE.pdf>, p. 4

⁶⁵ Ibid.idem

⁶⁶ Günüçur, H., Profile 2001, “Turkey-EU Relations”, European Economic Consultancy Center, 2001, p. 56

⁶⁷ Nicoll, W., and Salmon, T.C., Understanding the European Union, 2001, p. 54

conditions required.' It also had said that the following conditions had to be met by the applicants. '*stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union...the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union.*'⁶⁸ These requirements are known as the Copenhagen criteria, which are applied to all candidate countries that want to be full members.

Whereas all the other countries were considered to be prospective candidates in Agenda 2000 Turkey was excluded from the enlargement process. However, it is a contradictory fact that the same Commission confirmed Turkey's eligibility for membership. Turkey's exclusion from the European project was regarded as a mistake among the Turkish politicians. Turkey's officials felt that Turkey had not been evaluated according to the same criteria as other applicants.⁶⁹

In the light of the Agenda 2000, the decision taken in the Luxembourg Summit should not have been a surprising one for Turkey because every single development before the Summit indicated that Turkey would not be regarded as a candidate state in Luxembourg.

⁶⁸ Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council, Copenhagen, June 1993, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 6-1993, OOP, 1993

⁶⁹ "Turkey Blasts EU Commission over 'Mistaken Decision'", Turkish Daily News Electronic Edition, July 17, 1997

2) The Status of Turkey in the Framework of Luxembourg Decisions

Luxembourg Summit that took place on 12-13 December 1997 was a turning point for the future of Europe since it opened a new era for the ex-communist states born out of the ashes of the Soviet Empire by announcing the enlargement process of the Union. It put an end to the East-West confrontation and developed a common strategy for the prospective members. In Luxembourg Summit, the European Council envisaged two waves of enlargement. Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia were included in the first wave commencing in the spring of 1998 while Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria were in the second.⁷⁰

For these eleven candidate countries, the Heads of State and Government decided to prepare three new documents on the road to EU membership. The first was Accession Partnership Document, which would determine a pre-accession strategy for the candidate states. The second document that should be issued was National Program, which would serve as a timetable for the reforms to be realized. Finally, the third document was Progress Reports submitted by the European Commission reviewing the progress line of the each candidate state towards accession.

Turkey was looking forward to the Luxembourg Summit because the political climate was optimistic than ever. The Luxembourg Summit frustrated Turkey since Turkey had expected a candidacy status after the completion of the Customs Union. According to Eralp, there were four possibilities for Turkey's relationship with the European Union before the Luxembourg Summit. The first scenario was the exclusion of Turkey from the enlargement process. The Union viewed the Customs

⁷⁰ Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council, Luxembourg, December 1997, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 12-1997, OOP, 1997

Union as the basic mechanism to improve the relationship between Turkey and the Union since Turkey would generate problems due to its political and economic problems as well as its size and the required financial aid from the Union. This attitude was apparent in Agenda 2000. The second scenario was to give Turkey a special status without commitment to full membership. This was what had already happened before the Summit because Turkey was the oldest applicant among the candidates. The third scenario was to give Turkey a special status, but with a prospect of full membership. Finally, the last scenario was to treat Turkey on equal conditions with all other applicants.⁷¹

The Presidency Conclusions of the Luxembourg Summit were in harmony with the third scenario because the European Council preferred to open a different chapter for Turkey called 'A European Strategy for Turkey'. The Council confirmed Turkey's eligibility for accession to the European Union. It also felt it necessary to point out that Turkey would be judged on the basis of the same criteria as the other applicant States.⁷² The strategy developed in the Presidency Conclusions was not however different from the strategy established by the Matutes package.⁷³

The most critical part of the Luxembourg Presidency Conclusions was the 35th point. For the first time, Cyprus dispute was shown as a prerequisite for Turkey's membership to the Union. The 35th point stipulated that "*The European Council*

⁷¹ Eralp A., "Turkey in the Enlargement Process: From Luxembourg to Helsinki", *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Volume V, No:2, June-August 2000, available at www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/Vol.5-2

⁷² Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council, Luxembourg, December 1997, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 12-1997, OOP, 1997

⁷³ Özen, Ç., *Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğu Gümrük Birliği ve Tam Üyelik Süreci Üzerine Etkileri*, 2002, p. 128

recalls that strengthening Turkey's links with the European Union also depends on that country's pursuit of the political and economic reforms on which it has embarked, including the alignment of human rights standards and practices on those in force in the European Union; respect for and protection of minorities; the establishment of satisfactory and stable relations between Greece and Turkey; the settlement of disputes, in particular by legal process, including the International Court of Justice; and support for negotiations under the aegis of the UN on a political settlement in Cyprus on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions."⁷⁴

As it is explicitly pointed out above, Turkey had to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria, but different from the other applicant states, Turkey had to solve its disputes with its neighbor, Greece. Many political scientists think that this was a double-standard, and the Union started to develop a subjective attitude towards Turkey although it consistently emphasized that Turkey was treated on equal foot with the other candidates.

In brief, despite having the oldest pending application for membership, Turkey could not find a place in the New Europe as the other applicants. The EU's Luxembourg Summit in 1997 essentially confirmed the process of differentiation of Turkey against the other aspiring candidates. Turkey was not accepted as a candidate country. Instead, in order to enhance its candidacy for membership, a pre-accession strategy was suggested for Turkey. What should be pointed out here is the fact that

⁷⁴ Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council, Luxembourg, December 1997, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 12-1997, OOP, 1997

the European approach towards Turkey became a little bit clearer in the Luxembourg Summit. It was neither inclusion nor exclusion of Turkey.

3) The Reactions and Developments after the Luxembourg Summit

The aftermath of the Luxembourg Summit was a political confusion period in terms of the relationship between the EU and Turkey. Turkey suspended its political dialogue (but not the functioning of the Customs Union) with the Union because the country's expectations contradicted with the results of the Summit. Furthermore, the Ankara government threatened Europe to withdraw its application for full membership.⁷⁵ Ankara boycotted the inaugural meeting of the (pan) European Conference held in London in March 1998. Turkey perceived the European Conference as a tricky device to make it accept Greece's position concerning bilateral disputes as well as the candidacy of the Republic of Cyprus, one of the most controversial issues between Greece and Turkey. Turkey was also disappointed by the EU's willingness to accept Cyprus as a candidate. Ankara had denounced this move as illegal before. There was also the factor of Greek blackmail the EU leaders saying it would veto the enlargement process if strict conditions were not imposed on Turkey regarding its disputes with Athens and Cyprus. Therefore, the EU leaders bowed to Greece, but they did not realize that what they were doing was going to hurt Turkey. This serious miscalculation caused furor in Turkey. Turks felt they were told to "sort out your differences with Greece or on other words make concessions on

⁷⁵ www.arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/hur/turk/97/12/14

the Aegean and then sell out on Cyprus and then we will allow you into the European Conference."⁷⁶

The Turkish government also began questioning the purpose of a Customs Union with the EU since Turkish politicians regarded that economic relationship was linked to a genuine prospect of full membership. At the same time, many Turks - including Motherland Party leader Mesut Yilmaz - began questioning whether pursuit of the country's traditional European aspirations was worth the humiliation that it seemed to entail.⁷⁷

Turkey's disappointment made Turkey an introverted country, and the problems of Turkey became more chronic.⁷⁸ It started to discuss the other alternatives to the integration with the West. Important political figures in Turkey kept on emphasizing that the EU was not an obsession for Turkey and Turkey had other foreign policy alternatives. In this climate, it became more and more difficult to implement the Customs Union arrangement between Turkey and the Union.⁷⁹

In the Government Report published on 14 December 1997, Turkish authorities declared the Presidency Conclusions of the Luxembourg Summit "unacceptable" for the following reasons:

⁷⁶ "Emotions Are Still Running High", Turkish Daily News, December, 21, 1997

⁷⁷ Wood, P. C., "Europe and Turkey: A Relationship Under Fire", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol.12, No. 1, 1999, p. 110

⁷⁸ Aktar, C., *Avrupa Yol Ayrımında Türkiye*, İletişim Yayınları, 2002, p. 15

⁷⁹ Eralp A., "Turkey in the Enlargement Process: From Luxembourg to Helsinki", *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Volume V, No:2, June-August 2000, available at www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/Vol. 5-2

- Turkey was not evaluated within the same framework, the same criteria and the same good-intentioned manner as the other applicant countries.
- Most of the points that had been put forward as new and positive steps for Turkey were in fact the commitments undertaken and not implemented by the EU.
- Partial, prejudiced and exaggerated assessments were made about Turkey's internal structure and its foreign policy, including Cyprus.
- With these erroneous approaches, attempts had been made to impose unacceptable political conditions that had concealed intentions.
- As long as this approach does not change, Turkey should not be expected to develop a multi-dimensional and constructive dialogue with Europe. The future of Turkey and the relations with the EU cannot be built on this unstable infrastructure."⁸⁰

In an interview with New York Times, Mesut Yılmaz, who was the Prime Minister of the 55th government of Turkey, claimed that Europe had built a cultural barrier between itself and Turkey.⁸¹

There was a significant question to ask in the minds of the political figures in Turkey after the Luxembourg Summit: If Turkey had been one of the belligerent countries in World War II, if it had been invaded by the Soviet Union, if it had given its army under the command of Warsaw Pact and its economy under the control of COMECON and if it had become an independent country after the collapse of the Soviet Union, would there have been a chance for Turkey to become a candidate country like Poland or Hungary?⁸² However, what nobody in Turkey could

⁸⁰ www.mfa.gov.tr/turkce/grupa/ab/abab/luxemburg1.htm

⁸¹ Aydoğan, M., Avrupa Birliğinin Neresindeyiz?, Kum Saati Yayınları, 2002, p. 160

understand was why the country had not been put on equal footing at least with such weak candidates such as Bulgaria and Romania. Turkey could not figure out that it had been put into another special category of candidate but perceive itself as having been put behind all others, and as having been excluded from the enlargement project.⁸³

Right after the Luxembourg Summit, debates on Turkey-EU relations centered on the reasons for Turkey's omission from the enlargement project. As Öniş put it, was it because of the poor governance and the country's deficits in spheres of economic reform, democratization and human rights, or alternatively, did the shortcomings of Turkey in these areas simply help to disguise a more inherent reservation, namely the fact that Turkey was not considered to be a European country?⁸⁴

The suspension of the political dialogue and the distant attitude of the Turkish politicians were to the advantage of neither the EU nor Turkey. Bearing this fact in mind, both sides felt it necessary to revive the relations because of the very fact that the parties found it impossible to talk about crucial issues such as Cyprus and Kurdish problem in a diplomatic way after Luxembourg Summit.

In the immediate aftermath of Luxembourg Summit, Ankara tried to play all its cards at once by threatening that it would withdraw its application for membership if the EU did not reverse its decision on Turkey in the Cardiff European Council of 1998,

⁸² Yetkin, M., *Avrupa Birliği Bekleme Odasında Türkiye*, İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2002, p. 14

⁸³ Kramer, H., *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the US*, 2000, p. 196

⁸⁴ Öniş, Z., "Luxembourg, Helsinki and Beyond: Towards an Interpretation of Recent Turkey-EU Relations, available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/helsinki.PDF>, pp. 2-3

without being aware of the fact that this strategy would make no good for the course of EU-Turkey relations and severe them more. As foreseen, the outcome of the Cardiff European Council did not meet the expectations of Ankara. It confirmed all the elements of the Luxembourg Summit without any change or improvement in discourse.⁸⁵ In the meantime, the enlargement process had been started, and the Union was occupied with the procedures related to enlargement, that is, the EU instruments designed to prepare the aspiring candidate states had been put into place. Being deeply busy with those procedures, the EU failed to develop a European strategy for Turkey and left Turkey outside the picture again.

B) Pattern 2: Enduring Association with an Indefinite Accession

1) The Climate concerning Turkey's Accession just before the Helsinki Summit

The aftermath of Luxembourg Summit revealed that the exclusion and marginalization of Turkey from Europe accelerated the tension between the Union and Turkey, which was inevitable after the decisions taken during the Luxembourg Summit. Contrary to the common beliefs about Turkey in the post-Cold War era, Turkey did not lose its strategically important role in international arena, especially for the security of Europe. If the changing security concepts are born in mind, one can easily conclude that security and stability of Europe intersects with Turkey. As the conflicts in Kosovo and Bosnia demonstrated, Turkey has a pivotal position in Eurasian region. The contradictory relationship between Europe and Turkey jeopardizes stability and security in Europe, which is not demanded both by the EU

⁸⁵ Cardiff European Council, Presidency Conclusions, 15-16 June 1998, available at <http://www.ue.eu.int/Newsroom/LoadDoc.asp>

countries and Turkey. On one hand, Europe did not want to make Turkey feel “left aside” since it had interests in its relations with Turkey in political and security terms, on the other hand, Turkey aspired for a candidacy status, but after the Luxembourg Summit, it played a diplomacy game in ceasing the political dialogue and expected something in turn.

The crisis in Turkey-EU relations was disturbing to both Europe and the USA. Washington too expressed its unhappiness with the EU’s treatment of this strategically important NATO member. Thus, in the almost immediate aftermath of Luxembourg ways were sought to readdress the EU’s approach to Turkey’s candidacy. The prospects for an improvement in the situation increased with the shift in a number of EU states from Christian to social democratic governments, most notably in Germany.⁸⁶ The understanding of multi-cultural citizenship of social democrats in Europe constituted the key element of their difference from their Christian Democratic or conservative counterparts.⁸⁷ They were different because they did not regard the EU as a Christian club, did not draw definitive geographical boundaries when defining Europe, and did not support an ethnically homogenous Europe as the conservatives did.

Among those social democrats in European countries, German government deserves special attention. One of the most influential groups that made the government’s

⁸⁶ Park, W., “Turkey’s European Union Candidacy: From Luxembourg to Helsinki-to Ankara?”, available at <http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/pab01/>

⁸⁷ Öniş, Z., “Luxembourg, Helsinki and Beyond: Towards an Interpretation of Recent Turkey-EU Relations, available <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/helsinki.PDF>, p. 10

victory in the German elections of September 1998 was the large majority of Turks in Germany. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's government was determined to do whatever it could to rescue Turkish-EU relations, and was greatly assisted in this by a letter sent to Schroeder in May 1999 by Bülent Ecevit. Drafted by Turkish and German officials, the letter outlined Turkey's commitment to implement domestic reforms that would enable the country to meet the Copenhagen criteria. The letter also expressed Ankara's awareness of Turkey's singularity, and the consequent requirement for a pre-accession 'road map' that would take account of its special situation.⁸⁸

In the mid-90s, the deadlock in Turkey-EU relations started to smoothen to some extent. There were many political and economic reasons influencing the improvement of this problematic relationship. First of all, the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of PKK, increased the maneuver capability of the coalition government in Turkey. Both the relief resulting from this event and nature of the coalition government helped things to get easier.⁸⁹ Secondly, the ceremonies of NATO's establishment anniversary played a crucial role for the relations. Süleyman Demirel, the former President of Turkey, submitted an informal note (position paper) to the key figures of European enlargement, emphasizing what Turkey wanted to do, could do and could not do, prepared by the Foreign Affairs.⁹⁰

Apart from those political developments, Gölcük earthquake happened in August 1999 reversed the long-lasting negative relationship into a more positive one between

⁸⁸ Aktar, C., "Avrupa Yol Ayrımında Türkiye", İletişim Yayınları, 2002, pp. 176-177

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 24

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 25

Greece and Turkey. The so-called 'earthquake diplomacy' contributed substantially to an improvement in the atmosphere between Ankara and Athens. From then on, Greece actively supported Turkey's candidacy and eventual membership. This contradictory development probably stemmed from the growing recognition by Greece that its crucial security interests would not be properly served and a settlement in Cyprus problem could not be realized if Turkey was isolated and excluded from the EU.⁹¹

European-sided lobbyists in Turkey interpreted this climate as an optimistic one, but according to some, it was nothing more than deceiving Turkey as it was done during the last 40 years. After the ceaseless negotiations between the leading political figures in Europe and Turkey, the solution reached was as follows: The attitude, the decisions and the discourse towards Turkey would be established in a more careful framework, and Turkey would be announced as a "candidate member". Identifying Turkey as a "candidate member" would pose no harm to the EU.⁹² However, Turkey was already a "candidate" state, as some people claimed.

In sum, the shift in the EU's position was due to several factors, as Lesser and Larrabee put it: (1) a desire on the part of the EU to halt deterioration of Turkish-EU relations after Luxembourg, (2) a more accommodating position by the new SPD/Green coalition in Germany, (3) a change in Greek policy toward Turkey, (4) pressure from the United States.⁹³

⁹¹ Öniş, Z., "An Awkward Partnership: Turkey's Relations With the European Union In Comparative-Historical Perspective", available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/partnership.PDF>, p. 18

⁹² Manisalı, E., *Avrupa Çıkmazı, Otopsi Yayınları*, 2001, p. 159

Europe was also well aware of the fact that despite the demise of a threat from the East Turkey was still a pivotal country in order to serve the security interests of the continent as well as the economic interests. If Turkey was allowed to drift towards isolation and authoritarianism, it was not only Turkey that would find itself in a state of limbo but also the European interests would be jeopardized. Following the Luxembourg decision, offering a special strategy to Turkey, a number of European countries, remarkably Britain and Italy, have criticized the exclusion of Turkey from the candidate status.⁹⁴ Therefore, Europe tried to launch a more positive approach against Turkey in order to compensate for the marginalization and isolation of Turkey from the European project. Turkey's inclusion might lead to serious problems in the continent, however, its integration, either through membership or through a special strategy, was essential for the interests of Europe.

2) The Model of the Helsinki Summit concerning Turkey: From Eligibility to Candidacy

The Helsinki Summit held on 10-11 December 1999 generated a turning-point in Turkey-EU relations because it recognized Turkey as a "candidate" state as the other countries. According to the paragraph twelve of the Presidency Conclusions of the Helsinki Summit, *"The European Council welcomes recent positive developments in Turkey noted in the Commission's progress reports, as well as its intention to continue the reforms towards complying with the Copenhagen criteria. Turkey is a*

⁹³ Lesser, I.O. and Larrabee, S. F., Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty, RAND, 2003, p. 52

⁹⁴ Öniş, Z., "Luxembourg, Helsinki and Beyond: Towards an Interpretation of Recent Turkey-EU Relations, available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/helsinki.PDF>, p. 9

*candidate state destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States.*⁹⁵

Looking at the Presidency Conclusions of the Helsinki Summit as whole, the positive aspects seem to have dominance over the negative ones. The critical point, however, that deserves to be discussed, is not the candidacy status granted to Turkey, but the other controversial paragraphs of the Presidency Conclusions concerning the political problems of the candidate countries. The paragraph four reads as follows:

*“...the European Council stresses the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and urges candidate States to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues. Failing this they should within a reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The European Council will review the situation relating to any outstanding disputes, in particular concerning the repercussions on the accession process and in order to promote their settlement through the International Court of Justice, at the latest by the end of 2004.”*⁹⁶

It was no doubt that the European Council created this paragraph particularly for Turkey since the other candidate states had no border disputes that they had to take to the International Court of Justice.

Another significant paragraph concerning the relations between Turkey and Greece was paragraph nine:

⁹⁵ Helsinki European Council, Presidency Conclusions, 10-11 December 1999, available at <http://www.ue.eu.int/Newsroom/LoadDoc.asp>

⁹⁶ Ibid.

“The European Council underlines that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. If no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council’s decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition. In this the Council will take account of all relevant factors.”⁹⁷

The paragraph above indirectly forced Turkey to base the Cyprus settlement on a calendar. What annoyed Ankara government was the predicted approach of the Greek side. Turkey feared that Athens would slow down the pace of the settlement so as to bring it to the International Court of Justice. The very possibility of Cyprus to become a member if the both sides failed a solution was the second reservation of Turkey. The third and the most crucial result of the Helsinki Summit was the fact that reaching a settlement in Cyprus problem was a criterion for Turkey to become a member of the EU. Ankara did not like this idea.⁹⁸

Despite the disappointment caused by Cyprus settlement issue, the media and the political figures in Turkey applauded the decisions taken in Helsinki. All the newspapers highlighted that Turkey was European from then on. The victorious air in Turkey can be discerned by looking at the headlines of the key newspapers in Turkey following the Helsinki decision. Hürriyet welcomed the decision with this headline: “Europe: Welcome Turkey”⁹⁹, Milliyet wrote, “Meeting of the Century:

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Güven, E., Helsinki’den Kopenhag’a Kıbrıs, Om Yayınları, 2003, pp. 14-15

⁹⁹ Helsinki Özel, Hürriyet, 12 December 1999

From a Vicious Circle to a Wedding”¹⁰⁰, Sabah said, “We are European from now on”¹⁰¹, Radikal wrote, “From Europe to Turkey: Welcome”¹⁰²

The historic decision taken in Helsinki Summit was applauded but not questioned. No one asked that if Turkey was European, as it persistently claimed for ages, why did it need a confirmation of it? In other words, does being a candidate country confirm that Turkey is a European country? Instead of Turkey, the former President of France and the current chairman of the European Convention clarified all the questions above. He stated: “Europe lies to Turkey. The real tendency of the ones affirming the candidacy status of Turkey is actually based on the idea that Turkey can never become a full member.”¹⁰³ Whether Europe was serious about the Turkish membership is open to discussion for Turkish and Western observers. As a scholar put it, it is “unclear whether the EU Council decision regarding Turkish candidacy in Helsinki was European decision-making at its best, or at its worst.”¹⁰⁴ This statement reveals the Europe is obviously uncomfortable with the idea of Turkey in Europe.

Turkey had one step forward towards membership, but was that enough, or to put it in other words, was that really a turning point in Turkey-EU relations? As a matter of fact, the granting of candidacy status was not an end or a victory on Turkey-EU relations but it was just the beginning.

¹⁰⁰ Milliyet, 11 December 1999

¹⁰¹ Sabah, 11 December 1999

¹⁰² Radikal, 11 December 1999

¹⁰³ Koç, Y., “Türkiye-AB İlişkileri”, Türk-İş Eğitim Yayınları, No: 66, p. 35

¹⁰⁴ Chubin, S. and Green J. D., “Turkish Society and Foreign Policy in Troubled Times”, Report of a Geneva Center for Security Policy/RAND Workshop, 2001, p. 7

3) The Political and Legal Framework of Pre-accession Strategy for Turkey

In Luxembourg Summit, the Heads of State and Government decided to issue three new documents for the aspiring candidate countries on the road to the EU membership. The first one was the Accession Partnership Document which would determine a pre-accession strategy for the candidate states. The second document that would be prepared was the National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis which would serve as a time-table for the reforms to be realized. The last document was the Progress Reports issued by the European Commission reviewing the progress of each candidate state towards accession.

Being a candidate to the EU, Turkey found itself in a rapid process that came right after the Helsinki Summit. It is undoubtedly the case that the decision taken at the Helsinki Summit has accelerated the momentum of political and economic reforms in the subsequent era. The process of change was actively initiated by the European Commission through the publication of its Accession Partnership (AP), which was made public in March 2000.¹⁰⁵ The AP highlighted the short and the medium-term priorities where radical steps had to be undertaken in order to satisfy the Copenhagen Criteria in both the political and economic arenas.

In accordance with the Helsinki Presidency Conclusions and the Commission's Regular Report the AP identified a rather comprehensive set of changes in the political and economic arena. As short-term objectives, finding a comprehensive

¹⁰⁵ for the full text of Accession Partnership With Turkey see www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/apwithturkey.pdf

settlement to the Cyprus problem was delineated as a fundamental priority. The other targets set ranged from freedom of expression and freedom of association in the fullest sense of the term, elimination of torture practices to changing legal practices as a way of combating human rights violations. Reforms envisaged included improvements in the functioning and efficiency of the judiciary (including state security courts) as well as the removal of legal provisions forbidding the education of Turkish citizens in their mother tongue or the use of their native language in TV and radio broadcasting. The AP also underlined the necessity of maintaining the de facto moratorium on capital punishment. As medium-term priorities, the AP wanted Turkey to settle the border disputes in accordance with the UN Charter and as referred to point four in Helsinki Presidency Conclusions. The essentiality of the extension of social and cultural rights was also underlined. What really bothered Turkey was the EU's insistent approach towards the abolishment of dead penalty. After Öcalan's capture, Turkey used dead penalty as a weapon against the separatist organization, PKK; and could not easily abandon it because it feared from the potential reactions it would yield.

In the economic sphere, the requirements were very much in line with the expectations of the IMF program involving disinflation and structural reforms initiated in December 1999. EU attention focused explicitly on control of public expenditure, financial sector reforms to establish transparency and surveillance, the reform of agricultural subsidies as well as further progress with privatization.

The reforms aimed essentially at a dual transformation of the Turkish state. In the political sphere, the reforms proposed, involving a more liberal and pluralistic

political order, presented a major challenge to the principles associated with “hard-core Republicanism” underlying the highly centralized Turkish state. In the economic sphere, the objective was to transform the “soft state” characterized by populism, corruption and endemic fiscal instability, to an effective regulatory state. This objective appeared to be crucial in terms of laying the foundations of sustained economic growth in a crisis-free environment.¹⁰⁶

The reactions to the AP varied. The most outstanding reaction was neither to the Cyprus issue nor to the Aegean border disputes. There were plenty of debates on the right of education and broadcasting in mother tongue. Whereas political figures declared one by one that broadcasting in mother tongue was a natural right deriving from the pillars of democracy and should not be hindered, National Security Council was strongly opposed to the targets regarding the mother tongue issue. After convening on 29 November 2000, it reported that the priorities set out in the Accession Partnership Document were parallel with the aims of the PKK and the objectives concerning cultural rights for the Kurdish population was an example of a comprehensive, international and separatist attitude.¹⁰⁷

In response to the AP, the Turkish authorities prepared “The Turkish National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis,” a document which was submitted to the EU Commission in the following year, in March 2001.¹⁰⁸ The National Program (NP) represented an attempt on the part of the political authorities in Turkey to strike

¹⁰⁶ Öniş, Z., “Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-EU Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era”, available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/post.pdf>, p. 6

¹⁰⁷ “PKK’nın İstemleriyle Örtüşüyor”, *Cumhuriyet*, 30 November 2000

¹⁰⁸ For the full text of the National Program see www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/nationalprogrtr.html

a balance between the need to meet the Copenhagen criteria and the unwillingness to implement reforms on the most sensitive issues in the short-run. The vague expressions concerning the death penalty, the National Security Council and Cyprus were insufficient to be in line with the objectives set out in the Accession Partnership Document.

The reactions of the European Parliament and the Commission to the NP, outlined in their respective reports, were reasonably favorable. Both institutions made it abundantly clear, however, that the actions proposed in the NP fell rather short of the expectations outlined in the Accession Partnership document. From the EU perspective, the NP represented significant progress. Yet, the scale of transformation envisaged in the report failed to reach the threshold level set by the Community to open the critical accession negotiations for full membership. One should bear in mind that the EU is concerned not only with adoption of laws but also with their implementation. Hence, the adoption of the NP and the associated changes in the legal process does not necessarily mean that the EU is totally satisfied with the implementation process to open negotiations.

C) Probable Outcomes of Non-Membership for Turkey

Starting from the last days of the Ottoman Empire, Turks have sought to find ways to become integrated with the West, thinking that it was indispensable to look at Europe as a model in order to catch up with the ever-changing developments, lifestyles and ways of thinking. According to a scholar, Europe became “a mirror through which

the Ottoman elite perceived its own weaknesses, differences and traits.”¹⁰⁹ Regaining its superiority and nobility meant establishing closer bonds with Europe for the Ottomans, forgetting all their dominance over the continent throughout the previous era. Looking at the West was inevitable so as to become as modern and powerful as the rapidly developing and industrializing West.

With the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the Republican Revolution, the newly-born Turkish Republic adopted a strategy of “Europeanization” and “Westernization”, feeling that it had already belonged to Europe, contrary to the common beliefs pronounced in most of the European countries. The historical development of Turkey, therefore, has been a never-ending interaction with the West, or to be more exact, with Europe.¹¹⁰ Having become a member of most of the international organizations concerning Europe, Turkey has proved it is a part of the shared system of the continent, which Europe can hardly ignore. It is a paradoxical fact that despite claiming that it is one of the European countries, practices of the West and of Westernization have usually been ideals and goals to attain, sometimes adversaries to overcome and avoid for Turkey.

Suffering from the duality of being both European and Asian, Turkey has always been disturbed when the European characteristic of it is questioned. Deducing from historical, geographical and cultural definitions of being European, one can say that Turkey has contributed to the contemporary European culture for years.

¹⁰⁹ Müftüler-Baç, M., “Through the Looking Glass: Turkey and Europe”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.I, No.1, Spring 2000, p.28

¹¹⁰ Cem, İ., *Turkey in the New Century*, Rustem Publishing, 2001, p. 25

From the very beginning, Turkey has perceived integration with Europe as a major and indispensable part of its foreign policy. Nevertheless, for over a period of three decades, Turkey is rejected on all grounds with the oldest pending application to the EU. The obstacles set out by Europe have not been justified in the eyes of Turkish politicians and elite. Whenever Turkey's aspirations are negated by the EU, Turkey sees it as a discrimination against the other countries trying to become members.

Before drawing on the outcomes of non-membership of Turkey to the EU, it would be leading to speculate on why accession is a vital external dynamic for Turkey. The ossified internal dynamics being inherited from the old legacy of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey hinder the way in which change could break through. The one and the only external dynamic that can alter all the structures, mentalities and the implementations existing through the ages is the EU. Only the so-called supranational characteristic of the EU can pave the way for Turkey to become a developed country both in an economic and political sense by substituting for the old mentality. The essential dynamic to make this change permanent and sustainable is the philosophy of the EU which embodies various principles, criteria, standards and implementations. In today's global world, it is almost not possible to survive without having an engagement with an international organization like the EU. If we compare the other alternatives of Turkey to the EU, it seems that integration with the EU among the other regional integrations is the closest option to Turkey.¹¹¹ Turkey has never ignored this chance and seemingly does not have the luxury to ignore it.

¹¹¹ Aktar, C., *Avrupa Okumaları*, Kanat Kitap, 2003, p. 36

Permanent non-membership will probably lead to significant consequences both in Turkey and in Europe. Although Turkey is considered to be an important partner both as an economic and strategic one, the differences between Turkey and the member states of the EU, whether of economy, culture, politics, foreign policy, democracy or religion, seem to be great to minimize in the eyes of European leaders. Therefore, Turkey is not likely to become a member in the foreseeable future. What is the alternative of non-membership of Turkey for the EU? The relationship between Turkey and the EU may take the form of a bilateral agreement, as in the Customs Union, or a multilateral framework like the European Conference, or the Common Home.¹¹² The Customs Union is increasingly essential for Turkish economy if the need for access to the European market is regarded. Thus, the smooth functioning of the Customs Union will be a sufficient guarantee for making the country's development viable. Nevertheless, Turkish officials will probably be reluctant to accept the rules permanently without being involved in decision-making mechanism. For a country that is not a member of the Union but has a Customs Union with the EU, it is compulsory to harmonize its legislation with the common trade policy. When a non-member country does not play an active role in decision-making mechanism, it loses the chance to determine its own trade policies freely. Therefore, the EU has signed Customs Union or free trade agreements with the countries that have full-membership perspective. By analyzing all those facts, one can infer that the Customs Union is a temporary economic integration model with the countries that are likely to become member in the future.¹¹³

¹¹² Brewin, C., "At the Table or on the Menu?"-The European Union and Turkey's Accession Process", Tesev Foundation, 2002, p. 20

¹¹³ Özen, Ç., Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğu Gümrük Birliği ve Tam Üyelik Süreci Üzerine Etkileri, 2002, pp. 138-139

It is a well-known fact that the Customs Union is considered to be a phase leading to full-membership. Also the problematic and unacceptable nature of a Customs Union not being supported by full-membership is outspokenly emphasized. What lies behind all the incremental criticisms against the Customs Union is the realization of Turkish scholars that the Customs Union is not a path towards the EU culminating in membership.¹¹⁴ Permanent non-membership will possibly make it impossible to run the Customs Union under the framework of current legal procedures. Turkey, then, will lose the biggest market that it does trade and will need to seek for other alternatives, which is probably not desired by the Turkish businessmen and politicians.

Non-membership will also lead to further resentment in Turkey; will deflate Turkey's enthusiasm in implementing all the reforms; will decelerate the democratization process; will damage the relationships between Turkey and Europe; and will leave Turkey outside the European family scene.

A delayed Turkish membership to the EU might result in the isolation and marginalization of Turkey from the whole European system. An EU member Turkey will be an asset for the Union and make a much stronger contribution to the security, stability and welfare of the Euro-Atlantic region and Eurasia.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Eralp, A., "Soğuk Savaş'tan Günümüze Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkileri", in, Türkiye ve Avrupa, (ed. Eralp, A.), 1997, pp. 109-110

¹¹⁵ Ünaydın, S., "Current Turkish Foreign Policy", Foreign Policy, A Quarterly of the Foreign Policy Institute, Vol. 29, Nos:3-4, p. 30

The post-second world war era is a clear reflection of Turkish contribution to the European security and stability. As a member of NATO with the second largest army there, as a member of the OSCE and as an associate member of the Western European Union, Turkey has always supported initiatives strengthening the security and defense of Europe. Although it was a quite heavy responsibility to shoulder, she fulfilled her duty to that end with dedication and willingness.



CHAPTER 3

TURKEY-EU RELATIONS WITH MEMBERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

A) Pattern 3: The Reinforcing Dynamics towards Full-Membership

A candidate country's accession to the EU theoretically includes two different categories. The first is a Council decision with previous involvement of the Commission and the European Parliament on the admission of a new Member State. The second part consists of negotiations with the applicant resulting in the signature and ratification procedure by the Member States and the applicant. In practice, however, these two stages are interrelated and can not be separated. As a first step, the aspiring State must address its application to the Council, which will forward the application to the Commission. The commission issues its opinion on the State which had applied for membership. In fact, the accession negotiations are based on this opinion. The Council and the Commission work together in the course of those negotiations. The final opinion of the Commission is given after the negotiations have been completed and the European Parliament has given its assent with a majority of its members. Finally, the Act of Accession is signed and ratified by the Member States and the Applicant State.

As it can be inferred from the above-mentioned procedure, accession to the EU is a long and burdensome process despite not being discouraging for the candidate countries except Turkey. Turkey addressed its application in 1987 and had signed an Association Agreement with the EEC years ago. From then on, the country has

devoted itself to become a Member of the Union although undergoing plenty of crisis periods and depriving of enough reform processes and sometimes motivation. Paradoxically, whenever Turkey tried to come closer to the Union, it was pushed towards other directions with loads of reasons. With the oldest pending application, Turkey could only get the “candidacy” status at the Helsinki Summit in 1999.

The decision of the European Council at the Helsinki Summit of December 1999 to recognize Turkey as a candidate country officially appeared to be a fundamental turning point in Turkey-EU relations. Turkey had already become a member of the Customs Union by the beginning of 1996, but membership of the Customs Union or gaining a special country status, without membership perspective, represented weaker forms of economic and political integration.¹¹⁶ The Customs Union agreement seemed to constitute a form of “competition without full integration” or “loss of sovereignty with limited participation”.¹¹⁷ In this respect, the significant and definitive nature of the Helsinki decision should be emphasized. From the Turkish point of view, the decision was seen not only as the recognition of Turkish officially candidacy status but also the recognition of its being European. In the aftermath of the Helsinki Summit, the decision, therefore, provided a favorable environment of confidence and optimism in Turkey. On the part of the European leaders, the Helsinki decision avoided the growing assumption that Turkey was excluded from the enlargement process due to the cultural and religious elements. Cleverly enough, they threw the ball into the Turkey’s court in the sense that they did their bit and there is no discriminatory attitude towards a Moslem and culturally-different country.

¹¹⁶ Öniş, Z., “Luxembourg, Helsinki and Beyond: Towards an Interpretation of Recent Turkey-EU Relations”, available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/helsinki.PDF>, p. 13

¹¹⁷ Rumford, C., “Turkey and European Enlargement: Cross-Border Projects and a Pre-Accession Strategy for Non-Members”, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No.19, Fall 1998, pp. 71-75

Following the Helsinki decision, Turkey was expected to accelerate the reform process in the domestic sphere both in the realms of democratization and economy in order to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria and start accession negotiations.¹¹⁸ More specifically, Turkey's full-membership rested and still rests on its ability to satisfy the EU requirements in three specific areas: consolidation of economic reforms, democratization and the rights of the Kurdish minority and improvement in relations with Greece which means the peaceful settlement of border disputes and the solution of the Cyprus problem.

1) The Post-Helsinki Era: Barriers to Full-Membership

As it was discussed above, granting of Turkey a candidacy status does not necessarily lead to the opening of accession negotiations. As a first step, Turkey has to undertake the required reforms so as to catch up with the standards of the European countries. After the approval of the Accession Partnership Document, establishing a roadmap for Turkish accession to the EU, at Nice Summit in 2000, Turkey presented the National Program of Action in March 2001. National Program of Action declared how the Ankara government intended to meet the economic and political objectives set out by the EU. Since then, Turkey has realized a number of reforms which are appreciated in many European countries. However, Turkey still has a long way to go to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria, especially in political field. The most important obstacles to Turkey's EU membership are political, but there are significant economic barriers to full membership as well. Turkey has recently reformed its legislation and policies in areas such as financial services,

¹¹⁸ Yetkin, M., *Avrupa Birliği Bekleme Odasında Türkiye*, İmge Kitabevi, 2002, p. 41

telecommunications, electricity generation and distribution, and agriculture in order to meet the demands of the Copenhagen criteria. Although meeting the economic criteria is not a major problem for Turkish membership, the economic dimension of accession is worth mentioning here. The analysis of the economic situation in Turkey is beyond the scope of this study since political aspect of Turkish accession is the main emphasis, however, in order to have a general understanding of the current dynamics in Turkish economy, it will be helpful to touch upon some basic economic data about Turkey.

a) Economic Barriers to Turkey's Membership

The reforms taken up in the early 1980s essentially changed the structure of Turkish economy. What dominated the country's economic policy was the import substitution model, which started to change with the premiership of Turgut Özal. Making the economy more open and the private sector more expansive, this economic policy of Turkey shifted towards an export-substitution model, and the change in policy rearranged the structure of Turkey's trade with the European countries, which occupies more than half of its overall trade now.¹¹⁹ In the 1970s, Turkey was an exporter of agricultural produce and raw materials, but today, the bulk of Turkey's exports are manufactured goods.¹²⁰ Nonetheless, Turkish economy of today, which is currently subject to a stand-by agreement with the IMF, is still marked by a number of structural weaknesses.

¹¹⁹ Allen, T., "Turkey and the EU", Statistics in Focus 5-2000, Eurostat, available at www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/pdf/turkey-eu.pdf

¹²⁰ Lesser, I.O. and Larrabee, S. F., Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty, RAND, 2003, p. 54

Table 1 shows some basic data for the Turkish economy and makes a comparison with the other candidate countries and the EU members.



Table 1. Comparison between EU-15, CEEC-10 and Turkey, 2000

	Population (million)	GNI, PPP, (Current billion euro)	Per capita GNI PPP, (Current billion euro)	Agriculture		Export shares to	
				Value added, percent of GDP	Employment, percent of Total Employment	Turkey (%)	EU (%)
Bulgaria	8.2	45	5,530	15.8	11.2	10.3	51.7
Czech Republic	10.3	140	13,610	3.4	5.3	0.6	68.8
Estonia	1.4	13	9,050	5.7	7.0	0.2	68.5
Hungary	10.0	121	12,060	3.9	7.2	0.7	75.2
Latvia	2.4	17	6,960	3.9	14.4	0.0	64.7
Lithuania	3.7	26	6,960	2.5	18.4	1.8	47.9
Poland	38.7	349	9,030	2.9	18.7	0.4	70.1
Romania	22.4	143	6,380	11.4	45.2	6.1	64.0
Slovak Republic	5.4	59	11,000	2.7	7.5	0.4	59.1
Slovenia	2.0	35	17,390	4.3	9.6	0.8	63.9
Total CEEC-10	104.5	948	9,068	5.1	21.5	2.0	67.6
Austria	8.1	213	26,310	1.2	6.1	0.7	61.4
Belgium	10.3	282	27,500	1.1	1.9	1.0	74.9
Denmark	5.3	145	27,120	2.0	3.7	0.4	67.3
Finland	5.2	128	24,610	0.9	6.2	1.3	55.3
France	58.9	1,440	24,470	2.3	4.2	1.1	61.4
Germany	82.2	2,054	25,010	0.9	2.6	1.4	56.5
Greece	10.6	179	16,940	6.8	17.0	5.1	43.6
Ireland	3.8	97	25,470	2.6	7.9	0.5	60.0
Italy	57.7	1,348	23,370	2.4	5.2	1.8	54.9
Luxembourg	0.4	20	45,420	0.6	2.4	0.5	84.0
Netherlands	15.9	417	26,170	2.2	3.3	0.8	78.8
Portugal	10.0	169	16,880	2.4	12.5	0.4	79.5
Spain	39.4	757	19,180	3.7	6.9	1.7	69.1
Sweden	8.9	211	23,770	0.7	2.9	1.2	55.0
United Kingdom	59.7	1,407	23,550	0.7	1.5	1.0	56.9
EU-15	376.3	8,865	23,557	1.7	4.3	1.2	62.1
Turkey	65.3	459	7,030	14.2	32.7	-	52.3

Source: The first three columns are from World Development Indicators Online, World Bank. Agricultural value added and agricultural employment data are from European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture. Trade data are from IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics CD-ROM.

First of all, with a population of nearly 70 million, the most challenging economic factor about Turkey is its huge size. In terms of population, when Turkey is integrated in the EU, it will be second largest member of an enlarged EU. As it is obvious from Table 1 above, following Germany, Turkey is now the second largest country with regards to its population. Moreover, demographics indicate that Turkey is likely to surpass Germany in about 2020 provided that its population growth continues at the current rate.¹²¹ The demographic indicators on Turkey are one of the major concerns to the European officials. Due to its enormous population, the per capita income level is quite lower than those of Western Europe. When it is compared to other candidate countries, Turkey is among the poorest ones, but it is not as poor as Romania and Bulgaria according to the figures shown in Table 1. Per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is around \$ 3,000, which is well below the poorest countries in Europe. While Greece and Portugal, as the poorest member states for example, have per capita GDP volume indices of 66 and 69 per cent of the EU average respectively, Turkey's per capita GDP index is about 23 per cent of the EU average.¹²² There are also big income disparities between the eastern and western part of the country, which makes life much more difficult for the ones living in the east. They can not keep up with the standards of living and levels of prosperity in the western part and have a much lower standard of living. In recent years, however, Turkish government has been trying to encourage private investment in the east, especially after the capture of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan and the winding down of the PKK insurgency.

¹²¹ Flam, H., "Turkey and the EU: Politics and Economics of Accession", Institute for International Economic Studies, Stockholm University, 2003, p. 9

¹²² Stapel, S., and Leetmaa P., "GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards for EU, Acceding and Candidate Countries and EFTA", Statistics in Focus 2000-2003, Eurostat, available at www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/

Another weakness of Turkish economy, which can be inferred from Table 1, is the dependence of the labor force on agriculture. Nearly 35 per cent of Turkey's population is engaged in agricultural work, which is drastically larger than the current EU members. Only the prospective members, Romania and Bulgaria, have a similar reliance on agriculture. Turkey should make the necessary reforms in order to shift its labor force towards the more modern forms of economic activity.

In general, Turkey is not an important trading partner of the EU countries and the CEEC-10, with the exception of Greece, Bulgaria and Romania. On the other hand, the EU is Turkey's most important trading partner, although Turkey's exports are not as concentrated to the EU as those of the CEEC-10.

The average of Turkey's annual inflation rate, despite getting better in recent years, has been much higher than the average of the EU. This peculiarity has not only traumatized Turkish financial sector but also inhibited foreign investment in Turkey and prevented the country's growth.

The statistics in Table 1 reveals the fact that Turkish accession to the EU would have some adverse effects on the economies of EU member states, mainly stemming from its population, per capita income and its dependence on agriculture. In sum, Turkey should accelerate the economic reform process in order to become ready for the EU membership in terms of economic criteria. The economic barriers to the EU membership are not as challenging as the political ones; however, meeting those

criteria is also significant since Turkey, with this population, inflation rate and dependence on agriculture, will be a burden for the EU.

b) Political Barriers to Turkish Membership

The Copenhagen European Council in June 1993 was obviously a cornerstone in the evolution of EU's approach to enlargement. The collapse of communism had created a dilemma for the EC. It sought ways in order to integrate the Central and Eastern European countries which had just emerged from nearly half a century long communist rule. Only the consolidation of democracy and human rights could guarantee the security and stability of Europe. Thus, the "New Europe" began to place more emphasis on human rights and quality of democratization as part of its emerging identity.¹²³ The so-called Copenhagen criteria required that a candidate achieve a stable democracy, maintain the rule of law, respect human rights and protect the rights of minorities.

The political criteria made Turkish membership even more complicated by adding more realms of adjustment in which Turkey has significant inadequacies. Among the main political barriers lie Turkey's deficiencies in fields of democracy, human and minority rights; the EU's concerns about Turkey's religious and cultural distinction and the role of the military in domestic and external affairs; the bilateral disputes of Aegean Sea and Cyprus between Greece and Turkey. That is why Turkey is excluded from the European project despite having better conditions than the Central and Eastern European countries. The Helsinki Summit ushered a new era for Turkey

¹²³ On the "New Europe" see: Karl Cordell (ed.), *Ethnicity and Democratisation in the New Europe*, Routledge, 1999

since Turkey has started to accelerate the economic and political reform process by enacting new laws and regulations and by making the necessary changes in the Constitution.

i. Democracy and Human Rights

Democracy, which is hard to define in a few words, basically requires that all government authority emanates from the citizens and that they can participate in government. As a matter of fact, the understanding of democracy varies from country to another, but the principal logic behind democracy is the same in all democratic countries.

The Turkish Constitution fulfills the requirements of democracy.¹²⁴ It vests legislative power in the unicameral Turkish Grand National Assembly,¹²⁵ which is elected by universal suffrage. General elections are held in every five years¹²⁶ on the basis of proportional representation. Turkey has had a multiparty political system since the time of Atatürk. Parliament elects the President, as holder of the executive power, for seven years. The President is empowered to appoint a Prime Minister and senior members of the judiciary,¹²⁷ which is divided into judicial, administrative and military courts and a Constitutional Court. Besides, there is National Security

¹²⁴ Article 2 of the Turkish Constitution shows Turkey's commitment to democracy: "The Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social State governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concepts of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, and based on the fundamental tenets set forth in the Preamble." Turkish Constitution of 18 October 1982, as amended on 17 October 2001, Act No: 4709, available at www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa/constitution.htm

¹²⁵ Article 7, Turkish Constitution

¹²⁶ Article 77, Turkish Constitution

¹²⁷ Article 104, Turkish Constitution

Council as an advisory body.¹²⁸ Despite embodying all the characteristics of democracy in its political system, Turkey sometimes lacks the ability to implement those. This mainly stems from the ossified structures of the past and from the inability to get away from memories of the past and to keep up with the requirements of today.

A major cause of concern of the EU about Turkey is that the country has many shortcomings in its human rights record. According to the Turkish Constitution, the Turkish State is based on human rights.¹²⁹ However, Turkey needs to address more effectively to the poor implementation of the laws and regulations in this respect. One of the most apparent problems often implied by the EU officials is the use of torture in Turkey. This constitutes a serious inadequacy for the EU. At the Luxembourg European Council in 1997, Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker touched upon this problem by saying that ‘the Union can not have torturers and executioners in its ranks.’¹³⁰ This was a more outspoken version of the Commission’s conclusion in July 1997 that ‘Turkey’s record on upholding the rights of the individual and freedom of expression falls well short of standards in the EU.’¹³¹

¹²⁸ The advisory nature of the National Security Council will be discussed below.

¹²⁹ Article 2, Turkish Constitution

¹³⁰ Nicoll, W., and Salmon, T.C., *Understanding the European Union*, 2001, p. 512

¹³¹ *Agenda 2000: For a Stronger and Wider Union*, European Commission, *Bulletin of the European Union*, Supplement 5/97, p. 56

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) reports almost annually on torture in Turkish police custody.¹³² Even compared to other candidate countries like Romania¹³³ and Bulgaria¹³⁴, which had a legacy of 40 years of dictatorial rule, the situation in Turkey is deplorable. There are horrifying and cruel practices in Turkish prisons, according to the reports. What is more, Turkish media is full of news about “disappearing” leaders, journalists, intellectuals and those who are opponents of any political item in Turkey. In order to overcome this deficiency in Turkey’s human rights record, Turkey should intensify its efforts on the implementation of the laws and regulations since use of torture is largely due to the poor implementation of those, it is not a state policy.

The rule of law, which is necessitated by the Copenhagen political criteria, comprises the principle of separation of powers. Separation of powers is guaranteed by the Turkish Constitution although the role of the military still remains a cause of concern. This controversial role is codified through the military’s authority over the National Security Council, which was created after the 1980 coup and has so far exercised a mighty influence over Turkey’s domestic and external policies. Chaired by the President, the National Security Council is composed of the Chief of General Staff, the Prime Minister, the Ministers of National Defense and Foreign Affairs and the Commanders of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Gendarmerie Forces. With as predominant role of the non-civilian members, the National Security Council is responsible for formulating the state policy, securing the state and enforcing its

¹³² Reports on Turkey are available at www.cpt.coe.int/en/states/tur.htm

¹³³ Reports on Romania are available at www.cpt.coe.int/en/states/rom.htm

¹³⁴ Reports on Bulgaria are available at www.cpt.coe.int/en/states/bgr.htm

applications, as well as presenting the Council of Ministers with its views on how relevant coordination can be carried out. Despite having legally an advisory function¹³⁵, the official declarations of the National Security Council are often regarded as law.¹³⁶

Over the past decade, Turkish politics has been confronted with two conflicting developments in this respect: in the first place, the Turkish military acting as custodian of the Kemalist legacy has placed greater emphasis on its role as the guardian of the basic principles of the Turkish state and on the mission of protecting the country against internal threats. By doing so, the military sacrificed its mission of playing a vanguard role in Westernization. On the other hand, the EU insistently keeps saying that Turkey must reduce the role of the military over internal and external matters. Therefore, the dominant role of the military is negatively affecting the integration of Turkey into the EU.

ii. Minority Rights and the Protection of Minorities

Turkey's approach to minority rights, especially for the Kurdish population is one of the main problems in terms of the political criteria of the Union. The Lausanne Treaty signed between the Allies and Turkey did not recognize a Kurdish minority.

¹³⁵ Article 118 of the Turkish Constitution reads: "The National Security Council shall submit to the Council of Ministers its views on taking decisions and ensuring necessary coordination with regard to the formulation, establishment and implementation of the national security policy of the State. The Council of Ministers shall give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council concerning the measures that it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity and the indivisibility of the country and the peace and security of society."

¹³⁶ Kardas, S., "Human Rights and Democracy Promotion: The Case of Turkey-EU Relations", *Alternatives, Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 2002, p. 144

The only minorities that are recognized in Lausanne Treaty are the Jews, Armenians and Greeks.¹³⁷ However, the Treaty has placed great restrictions on the training of clergy, religious education and communal property rights.¹³⁸ This is a policy deriving from the Ottoman system. In the Ottoman Empire, the Greeks, Jews and Armenians constituted the non-Muslim communities whereas the Kurds were regarded as the members of the Muslim majority. With the demise of the Ottoman Empire and during the foundation of Turkish Republic, as a result, all the Muslim communities were granted a kind of Turkishness¹³⁹ while the non-Muslim communities were deemed as minorities. Besides, the generous concept of becoming a Turk meant that every person could become a Turkish citizen provided that s/he lived in Turkey and accepted the basic principles of the Turkish Republic. According to Cornell, this kind of understanding did not provide a solution to those who were not prepared to abandon their previous ethnic identity.¹⁴⁰ That is why it is highly possible that those people who are unwilling to leave their ethnic identity, just like what happened to the Kurdish population, may suffer from suppression and assimilation.

Another reason of why Turkey is sensitive towards the Kurdish issue is the aspirations of Kurds along the creation of an independent Kurdish State. The armed violence by the PKK in the southeastern part of Turkey over the past decades has played a fundamental role in shaping Turkish attitudes towards the Kurdish

¹³⁷ Lesser, I.O. and Larrabee, S. F., *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, RAND, 2003, p. 58

¹³⁸ Flam, H., "Turkey and the EU: Politics and Economics of Accession", *Institute for International Economic Studies*, Stockholm University, 2003, p. 8

¹³⁹ Ergil, D., "Identity Crisis and Political Instability in Turkey", *The Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 1, Fall 2000, p.51

¹⁴⁰ Cornell, S., "The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics", *Orbis*, Vol. 45, No. 1, Winter 2000, p. 34

community. Turkey has always considered the Kurdish minority as a serious terrorist and separatist threat against the integrity and the indivisibility of the state. It is not difficult to understand why Turkey has been reluctant to focus on the reforms regarding the protection of minorities.

iii. Aegean Sea and Cyprus Disputes as Barriers to Turkish Membership

The confrontation between Greece and Turkey over the Aegean Sea and Cyprus has a long story that directly affects the perception of one to the other and the relationship between the two countries. The historical legacy needs to be treated with special emphasis and it is beyond the scope of this study. What should be dwelt upon here are the definition of the disputes between Greece and Turkey and the implications of this confrontation for the membership of Turkey to the EU.

Being a semi-closed sea with its unique geographical features, the Aegean Sea is strategically, economically and politically important for both Greece and Turkey. These characteristics have always required a delicate balance for the interests of both sides. Aegean Sea disputes basically involves the limits on territorial sea, sovereign rights over the continental shelf and airspace, management of air-traffic control zone and the militarization of Greek islands. The non-existence of an agreement identifying the boundaries of the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece is obviously the main source of the stalemate. In order to maintain peace and stability in this region, both sides should contribute to the strengthening of cooperation.

Cyprus, the third biggest island in the Mediterranean, is the homeland of two different communities, the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots today. Currently,

there are two separate sovereign states on the island although the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is recognized only by Turkey in the world.

Cyprus has become over several decades a national issue for Turkey since it sees Cyprus as the cornerstone of Turkish security and defense. There are different views on this issue. According to one view, Turkey would be stronger if the Cyprus dispute ceased to be a thorn poisoning relations with Greece, complicating all its international relations, and burdening the Turkish budget with the costs of troop deployment and corrupting subsidies in Northern Cyprus. At the other end of the spectrum are the more public expressions of a stance that denies the legitimacy of the Greek Cypriot government, and regards the costs of supporting the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as cheap in protecting Turkey's existing borders and in protecting the 200,000 Turks and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus.¹⁴¹ The growing strategic importance of Cyprus for Turkey can not be denied, and the firm approach by Turkey on Cyprus is understandable. However, the peaceful settlement of Cyprus issue is a prerequisite for Turkish accession despite not being a condition before.

At Helsinki Summit, as it was discussed in the second chapter, the European Council officially accepted Turkey as a candidate country, opening a membership perspective over the long-run. At the same time, the EU made clear that settlement of the border disputes was a precondition for Turkish membership. Although it was mentioned implicitly, the Helsinki Presidency Conclusions stated that Turkish accession process would be influenced adversely by the developments in Aegean Sea and Cyprus. Turkish politicians, though not accepting it, had to admit that a resolution on Cyprus

¹⁴¹ Brewin, C., "Changing Concepts of Interest and the Annan Plan For Cyprus", *European Yearbook of Minority Issues*, 2003, pp. 7-8

was also a prerequisite for membership after reading between the lines of the decision taken in Helsinki. Turkey would never become a member without a solution in Cyprus. By then, Cyprus was a problem not only for Turkey and Greece but also for the EU.¹⁴²

Despite the efforts made by the UN with the Annan Plan, the growing optimism on a settlement proved to be unfruitful after the referenda held in both Greek and Turkish sides in Cyprus. The Greek side is the member of the EU now, and nobody knows what future will bring in terms of the interdependence between Turkish accession and the Cyprus problem.

c) Unspoken Barriers to Turkey's Accession to the EU

Turkish application for EU membership also embodies cultural and religious problems. The criterion of being European is not clear-cut as it was discussed above. The Commission gave a vague definition of Europeanness in 1992, saying that *"it combines geographical, historical and cultural elements"*, immediately limiting this when it stressed that it *"is subject to review...and is neither possible nor opportune to establish now the new frontiers of a future Union"*¹⁴³ Although Romano Prodi proposed a debate on the frontiers of Europe¹⁴⁴, no definition has been reached so far. As for Turkish case, Turkey's address in 1987, in addition, was not rejected

¹⁴² Güven, E., Helsinki'den Kopenhag'a Kıbrıs, Om Yayinevi, 2003, p. 15

¹⁴³ European Commission's Report, Europe and the Challenge of Enlargement, Supplement 3/92, 1992, Bulletin of the EC, p. 7

¹⁴⁴ Prodi, R., "A Wider Europe-A Proximity Policy as a Key to Stability", Speech at the 6th ECSA-World Conference, Brussels, 5-6 December 2002, SPEECH/02/619

on the grounds that Turkey was not European, but for other economic and political reasons.

The geographical element of being European seems to be clearer. Europe is defined as the western peninsula of the Eurasian continent. On the basis of this definition, there is sufficient Turkish territory on the European continent. Thrace, the western part of Turkey, is undoubtedly on European soil. Perhaps Turkey's European identity is one of the most important obstacles lying in front of Turkey. Turkish culture and values are regarded as strange to those of the European. The European identity of Turkey is questioned on the grounds that less than five per cent of Turkish population and territory are located in Europe.

Recently, an interview with the present chairman of the European Convention on the Future of Europe and the former President of France, Giscard d'Estaing, triggered a discussion on Turkey's Europeanness. As a leading European Christian Democrat, d'Estaing, who is well-known for his anti-Turkish opinions, has openly criticized European leaders who took the decision of Turkish candidacy at the Helsinki Summit in 1999. In the interview, he that he objected to Turkish membership because Turkey had "a different culture, a different approach, a different way of life" and because "its capital is not in Europe, 95 % of its population is outside Europe, it is not a European country." Admitting Turkey would mean "the end of the European Union", since it would set a precedent for admitting Middle Eastern and North African countries, starting with Morocco. He also accused those who supported Turkey's bid as being anti-EU, implicitly pointing at Washington.¹⁴⁵ D'Estaing's interview

¹⁴⁵ EU Observer available at www.euobserver.com/index.phtml?aid=8315

quickly stirred a heated debate on Turkey. From November 8 until the Copenhagen summit, it was possible to see an article on Turkey in one or several of the major European papers on a daily basis. Although D'Estaing's remarks were dismissed by the Commission and the Council, he received strong backing from Christian Democrats. The EU officials accused d'Estaing of damaging EU's credibility; nevertheless, the debate surfaced the deep-rooted anti-Turkish feelings among European people, especially in right-wing groups. As a matter of fact, many columnists and political scientists were grateful to d'Estaing since he was the first political figure who dared to discuss the European character of Turkey outspokenly.

In response to such sentiments one may add that Europe as a set of values or as a region of shared history has no clear demarcation. As for shared history, the Ottoman Empire certainly was directly involved in the making of war and peace in Europe for centuries.

Another dimension acting as a barrier over the path to Turkey's EU membership is obviously the country's cultural configuration. Although the possibility of Turkey's accession depends on its capability to meet the Copenhagen criteria, a plenty of Europeans have been discussing whether Turkey's traditions and values are compatible with those of Europe. All the European countries in the EU are Christians. Implicitly, being a Muslim state poses an unspoken barrier to Turkish membership; that is why the EU is often accused of being a Christian club.

Much of the Western debate about Turkey's domestic and external policy has focused on Islamism. Islam had been removed from the state institutions in line with

the modernization and democratization process. Over the past decades, however, the social and political transformation that took place in the 1980s and the 1990s initially brought Islam to the foreground. Since the mainstream political parties fell short of addressing Turkey's social and economic problems, there has been a considerable increase in the number of conservative electorate, strengthening the role of Islam in Turkish political life. Along with the rapid urbanization process, the impoverished people migrating from the eastern part of the country to the western part politically supported the religious parties. This has also increased the role of political Islam.¹⁴⁶ That is how Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) and Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) gained increasing political support in Turkey. What is a cause of major concern to many European leaders now is the decisive role of Islam in Turkish politics and in its Europeanization process. Despite the pro-European stance of Justice and Development Party, many Europeans, even Turks, fear that it might seek to overturn Atatürk's almost eighty-year old secularization and modernization reforms.

2) Accelerating Reform Process in the Post-Helsinki Era

In Helsinki, the EU provided a perspective to Turkey and thus created a momentum towards membership. For both parties, Helsinki marks a new beginning and a process of cooperation and mutual understanding. After the approval of the Accession Partnership by the Council and the adoption of the Framework Regulation, the Turkish Government announced its own National Program for the Adoption of the EU acquis on March 19th, 2001. Progress towards accession

¹⁴⁶ Yavuz, M. H., "Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere", *The Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 1, Fall 2000, p. 22

continues along the path set by the National Program. Attaining the membership goal obviously requires the fulfillment of the Copenhagen political criteria plus a settlement in Aegean Sea and Cyprus disputes. Turkey's membership will largely depend on the success of effective and constant efforts towards this end.

Immediately following the official approval of the National Program, the authorities have initiated a process of implementation, which involved the translation of the proposals embodied in the document into concrete action. Indeed a record number of thirty-four Constitutional Amendments were accomplished in October 2001.¹⁴⁷ The package of constitutional amendments covers a wide range of issues, such as improving human rights, strengthening the rule of law and restructuring of democratic institutions.¹⁴⁸ In February 2002, after strong debates, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed a mini-reform package containing reforms in Articles 159 and 312 of the Turkish Penal Code and paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Anti-Terrorism Law that relaxed constraints on freedom of expression.¹⁴⁹ However, these reforms, having been passed after intense controversies, did not meet the expectations of the EU in terms of the Copenhagen political criteria.¹⁵⁰

The reform packages in October and February 2002 were followed by "Harmonization Laws" designed to translate the Constitutional Amendments

¹⁴⁷ The whole schedule and work to be done in this respect is outlined in a worksheet called as Follow-Up Instrument. The document is available at www.abgs.gov.tr

¹⁴⁸ Boulton, L., "Turkey Approves Reforms to Ease Curbs on Human Rights", *Financial Times*, September 24, 2001

¹⁴⁹ See "Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Toward Accession", Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, SEC(2002) 1412, October 10, 2002, p. 45

¹⁵⁰ Gültaşlı, S., "EU: 312 and 159 Amendments not Sufficient", *Turkish Daily News*, February 8, 2002

concerned into concrete action as part of the process of bringing Turkish law in line with the European Acquis. Hence, the period from the beginning of 2000 onwards could be described as a period of profound and momentous change in Turkish history.

EU Harmonization Laws adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on August 3, 2002 represented a major reform process since the legislation removed significant obstacles to EU membership with that package. It was also a meaningful package because the coalition government faced great opposition from the ultranationalist Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi-MHP). Indeed, the MHP was a key actor in the coalition government and played a major role in blocking some of the political reforms needed to meet the EU's democratic norms in the post-Helsinki era.¹⁵¹ The MHP was a big challenge for the coalition government wanting to accelerate the necessary reform process. In the end, however, the other members of the coalition government managed to persuade the MHP and passed the major reform package in the Parliament.

The August 2002 reform deserves special attention since this legislative package of harmonization is regarded as a turning point of historic importance embodying the Copenhagen political criteria in Turkey's accession process to the EU. Although the euphoria after the legislative package was short lived due to the frustration in the Copenhagen Summit, the Harmonization Laws removed years-old state restrictions in key areas enabling Turkey to become a more democratic and pluralistic state in line with the requirements of the Post-Cold War period.

¹⁵¹ For further information on the role of the MHP in the Post-Helsinki Era see Yavuz, H., "The Politics of Fear: The Rise of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in Turkey", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.56, No. 2, Spring 2002

The most striking reform in this context was the abolishment of death penalty, including for those convicted of terrorist activity. The amendment removes the death penalty in the Turkish legal system except in times of war and imminent threat of war, in line with the Protocol No. 6¹⁵² to the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The death penalty in time of peace has been converted into life imprisonment. The abolishment of death penalty was exactly what the EU expected in the Accession Partnership Document. As a matter of fact, death penalty has not been practiced in Turkey since 1984 but for the Nationalists it had to be implemented for the leader of PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, who was captured in 1999. Lifting of the death penalty was the most sensitive issue for Turkey. Many scholars argued that Turkey did not have the will to remove it, thus, it was a very positive development for the accession of Turkey.

The second outstanding reform made in August 2002 was legalizing broadcasting and private tutoring in different languages and dialects. With the amendment of Article 4/I of the Law, legal restrictions on broadcasting in different languages and dialects are lifted and the freedom to broadcast is ensured. With the amendment of 4/f and 4/v, the much-criticized broadcasting principle of “the private lives of individuals are not to become subjects of broadcasts with the exception of cases where this is necessary for the public good” and the expression of “pessimism and desperation and encouragement of chaos and violent tendencies” are removed from the Article to expand privacy of private life and freedom of expression.¹⁵³ With the

¹⁵² www.conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/114.htm

¹⁵³ Official Gazette, 08 August 2002, available at www.basbakanlik.gov.tr

liberalization of laws restricting the freedom of expression and association, those amendments constituted remarkable developments in the sense that the extension of cultural rights of minority groups had presented particular difficulties in the Turkish context.

Apart from the removal of death penalty and granting minorities the right to broadcast and teach their own languages, the reforms include ending punishments for criticism of the armed forces and other pillars of the Turkish establishment and outlawing organ and people smuggling. The package also lifts certain restrictions on people's right to associate and form civic organizations, and imposes stricter penalties for human trafficking. It allows non-Muslim minority communities such as Greeks, Armenians and Jews greater rights over religious property such as churches. The reforms also tighten regulations governing the police, who are frequently accused of human rights abuse and also introduced tough penalties for people and organ smugglers.¹⁵⁴ Interestingly enough, the Turkish Parliament adopted these key decisions with an overwhelming majority despite opposition from the nationalists in the coalition and in the public.

The EU welcomed all these developments in Turkey. Commissioner Günter Verheugen, responsible for EU enlargement, said: "I welcome the courageous decision of the Turkish Parliament. This decision would not have been possible without a clear European perspective that the EU has developed for Turkey since the European Council of Helsinki in 1999. The Turkish decision also shows that the EU is right in being firm as regards human rights and the protection of minorities. Our

¹⁵⁴ An Analysis of the EU Harmonization Laws adopted by the TGNA on August 3, 2002 is available at www.euturkey.org.tr/abportal/uploads/files/An%20Analysis

position starts paying off. Not to give in on these issues makes our partners better understand why we so strongly defend our values and that they are precious for us. As regards the abolition of death penalty, no doubt, Turkey is now on our side.”¹⁵⁵

In its Regular Report of 2002, the EU Commission also appreciated these positive developments. The Commission concluded that: *“Overall, Turkey has made noticeable progress towards meeting the Copenhagen political criteria since the Commission issued its report in 1998, and in particular in the course of last year. The reforms adopted in August 2002 are particularly far-reaching. Taken together, these reforms provide much of the ground work for strengthening democracy and the protection of human rights in Turkey. They open the way for further changes which should enable Turkish citizens progressively to enjoy rights and freedoms commensurate with those prevailing in the European Union. Nonetheless, Turkey does not fully meet the political criteria.”*¹⁵⁶ Turkey’s failure in meeting the political criteria, according to the Regular Report of 2002, basically emanated from significant limitations on the reforms and the prospective implementation process by Turkey.

Turkish reaction to the 2002 Regular Report was disappointment again. Turkish officials accused the EU of not being fair to Turkey. In addition to these, as Öniş put it, there were four basic areas where considerable progress needed to be achieved in order to satisfy EU expectations. These included the Cyprus question, extension of

¹⁵⁵ Commissioner Günter Verheugen’s speech after the adoption of the new Turkish amendments about political criteria is published in Turkish Daily News and is available at www.turkishdailynews.com/old_editions/08_03_02/dom.htm#d1

¹⁵⁶ “Regular Report on Turkey’s Progress Toward Accession”, Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, SEC(2002), 1412, October 10, 2002, pp. 46-47

cultural rights of “minority groups” in practice, the role of the military and the performance of economy.¹⁵⁷

As for the Cyprus problem, there is nothing to be done after the referenda held in both sides. The Greek side rejected the Annan Plan, thus, they refused to reach a settlement. Cyprus issue should not be a major obstacle on the road to the EU any longer since Turkey did its best to find a common ground. In the sphere of minority rights, broadcasting and education in mother tongue seems to be presenting particular difficulties for Turkey. This issue is likely to cause friction in terms of its application.

The role of the military is an issue that the EU is particularly sensitive about and major emphasis is placed on this issue in its attempts to monitor Turkey’s progress towards a more open and democratic polity. The EU clearly wants Turkey to reduce the military’s role in Turkish politics. The National Security Council (NSC), a military dominated institution that has been a major organ of decision-making in the course of the past two decades, faces severe criticisms from the EU. One concrete response to EU criticisms in this sphere in the context of the National Program has been to increase the number of civilians in the Council. The number of civilians in the NSC has been increased from 5 to 9 compared with 5 military members. However, the decrease in military members is unlikely to represent an acceptable alternative to EU demands. The underlying objective is to reduce the military’s power but the EU seems to ignore the military legacy of Turkish Republic. The

¹⁵⁷ Öniş, Z., “Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-EU Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era”, available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/post.pdf>, p. 7

weight of the military on domestic and external issues in Turkey can not be reduced by institutionally limiting the presence of the military.

Finally, the economic situation in Turkey poses a serious challenge to Turkey's aspirations to become a full member to the EU. Despite the efforts made by the recent governments, Turkish economy still lies on a fragile infrastructure with endemic instability and recurrent crises.

In sum, EU's decision at Helsinki in 1999 presented a new momentum and incentive for the reforms to be done. Turkey has taken significant steps in the most sensitive issues such as death penalty, minority rights and freedom of expression and association. The recent reform packages passed by the Turkish Parliament have affirmed that Turkey is headed towards an irreversible path of EU membership. While Turkey seems to be moving towards the EU by fulfilling its duties in terms of the Copenhagen criteria, there are still unavoidable challenges stemming from the major developments in the EU's composition and from other implicit barriers such as geography and religion. These barriers inherently discourage Turkey to go on its way to the EU membership, however, the country firmly holds on its stance towards becoming a member to the EU.

3) Victory of the Justice and Development Party in 2003 Elections and its Implications for the Europeanization Process in Turkey

Towards the end of 2002, important developments continued to take place both in internal and external affairs. The elections that took place on 3 November 2002 were

being observed cautiously both in Turkey and in the world. In the run up to the Copenhagen Summit, the outcome of the elections was of great importance. On the evening of 3 November 2002, as the final vote count came in, an electoral earthquake shook Turkish politics. The three parties that had formed the coalition government after the 1999 elections, as well as two opposition parties, failed to pass the 10 per cent national threshold and found themselves left outside the parliament. This was something expected to some extent. The financial crisis of November 2000 and the much more severe crisis of February 2001 created an economic and political turmoil. Turkish people wanted to punish the coalition parties of whom they accused not being able to address the economic and social problems. The winner of the 1999 elections, the Democratic Left Party (DSP) lost almost its entire constituency. Other parties found themselves thrown out of the parliament by losing more than half of their electoral support. Apart from punishing the coalition government, Turkish people were fed up with the instabilities and insecurities of having coalition parties in power; and they believed that a strong single-party majority rule would possibly overcome these problems of Turkish politics. At the time when Turkey was going through its deepest economic crisis, with tragic consequences in terms poverty, insecurity and unemployment, the national elections have brought about hope and optimism in Turkey. This was based on the expectation that the ineffective and undemocratic state-centric governing structure has run its course and that a strong government with institutional and societal support could make Turkey a democratic and economically stable country.¹⁵⁸ It was true that the victory of Justice and Development Party put an end to unstable political environment in Turkey. However, there was also the question of the Islamist nature of the party. Everyone in Turkey and in the world started to wait impatiently for the attitude of the new government towards Europeanization process. Some scholars interpreted the

¹⁵⁸ Keyman, E. F., "A Political Earthquake in Turkey: An Analysis of the Prospects of JDP Government in Turkey, 2003, available at www.eurozine.com/article/2003-01-08-keyman-en.html, pp.1-2

triumph of the AKP as a last chance for the peace process between Islam and democracy and emphasized that the EU should support this process. On the other hand, some right-wing scholars, often called as Eurocentric, insisted that the Helsinki decision was a great fait accompli because the EU had an identity based on Christian civilization and it could not be shaped on the same axis with Turkey as a member.¹⁵⁹

The new government came to power in a very sensitive and problematic period. First of all, the Islamic legacy of the AKP brought about the deep-rooted phobia of Re-Islamism in Europe again. Europeans who were aware of the fact that a modern, secular and democratic Turkey was important not only for the stability in Europe but also all over the world feared that the AKP government might threaten the modern and western vision of Turkey.¹⁶⁰ The AKP government had to build credibility in Europe with its commitment to the Europeanization process and with its way to implement the reforms. Secondly, Turkey had undergone two severe economic crises in 2000 and 2001 leaving many people unemployed and pushing the economy into a restless and unstable situation. Thirdly, the United Nations presented a plan for the settlement of the Cyprus dispute and the new government's approach towards solution was crucial for the decision of the EU in Copenhagen.

B) The Copenhagen Summit and Turkey: Another Disappointment or A New Period?

Historic is a frequently used word. Historic events could change the nature of the things; historic events could determine the future of the world; and historic events could shape the essence of international relations. Take the collapse of the Soviet Union or the

¹⁵⁹ Yurttagül, A., "Kopenhag ve Yeni Hükümet", Radikal, 10 December 2002

¹⁶⁰ Aktar, C., "AKP ve AB", Radikal, 11 November 2002

demise of the Ottoman Empire, for example. Both events drastically altered the way people perceive the world. They are historic just because of the fact that they reversed the balance between great powers. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the Copenhagen Summit of 2003 was historic not only for the future of Europe but also for of the world.

The concept of the New Europe had started to be used when the great power of the Cold War, the Soviet Union, crumbled. The Western part of Europe, which was considerably developed compared to the East and formed an economic union, found itself in a dilemma. The dilemma had to be overcome quickly since there was no time to lose for the newly-born countries who found themselves in a limbo. Whether to include them or not was the big question of that period.

At Copenhagen in 2003, the boundaries of the New Europe were determined. The Copenhagen Presidency Conclusions declared that negotiations with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia had been concluded and after the ratification process the enlargement would take place on 1 May 2004.¹⁶¹ Having its roots in economic integration, the EU drew the road map towards political cooperation with the fifth and the largest enlargement process.

The Copenhagen Summit was also historic for Turkey, a country that was aiming to obtain a definite date for the start of accession negotiations. Turkey had been waiting for a date so long; it had completed the most sensitive reforms such as the abolishment of death penalty; and the political environment was optimistic than ever due to the strong

¹⁶¹ www.ecdel.org.au/whatsnew/Copenhagen_Exec_Summary.htm

backing from the USA and the ambitious attitude of the AKP government towards European integration.

On the eve of the enlargement summit, the newly-elected government under the premiership of Abdullah Gül declared that they would pass the necessary reforms immediately and implement them to comply with the Copenhagen criteria, challenging the suspicious opinions of the European leaders. Abdullah Gül also tried to assure the Europeans that Turkey's priority was the relations with Europe not with the Islamic countries. In accordance with their promises, Tayyip Erdoğan began his tours in many European countries. There were two challenges for his political party and for Turkey on the eve of the Copenhagen Summit. First, he had to convince the European leaders that AKP was not an Islamic party. Second, he had to push hard for the start of accession negotiations at Copenhagen. Encouraged by the positive signals from Europeans, his visits resulted in optimism and a sort of relief in Turkey. However, persuading the two engines of the EU, that is, Germany and France was not that easy. The two countries were not willing to give a date to Turkey in Copenhagen.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac met on December 4 in a town near Berlin and spelled out their formula for Turkey: in December 2004, with the agreement and recommendation of the Commission, it could be considered whether Turkey has "completely respected" the Copenhagen criteria. If this is the case, then negotiations could begin "from July 2005".¹⁶²

Franco-German deal fell rather short of Turkey's expectations, and the government did not wait long to react to that "date for date". The double-standard attitude of the

¹⁶² www.euobserver.com/index.phtml?aid=8658

EU and the consequences of this deal started to be discussed among political circles again. At least one can say that Turkey did its best to obtain a date from the EU just before the Copenhagen Summit.

After the visits of almost all the European capitals by Tayyip Erdoğan and after the USA lobbying on behalf of Turkey, Ankara woefully could not get what it hoped for. Copenhagen Summit declared that the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey will start after December 2004 without delay on the condition that Turkey fulfills the so-called Copenhagen political criteria. This decision has yielded a strong external pressure on Turkey to achieve democratization and economic stability within a given period. This was not Ankara had hoped for. Nevertheless, the AKP government made its declarations cautiously showing great care not to deteriorate its relations with the EU. Some scholars considered the conclusions rather positively insisting on that provided that Turkey went on its reforms, membership was unavoidable in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, some scholars interpreted the decision of the EU as a double standard again.

The Copenhagen Summit was an historical event in two significant respects. First, after the Helsinki Summit of 1999, in which Turkey had been finally granted a candidate status, the Copenhagen Summit has created a sense of 'certainty' in EU-Turkey relations by giving a specific date for the beginning of the accession negotiations.¹⁶³ Even though the year 2004 was a conditional date, it was nevertheless an important move forward, insofar as it has provided Turkey with the prospect that full EU membership is a real possibility. Secondly, the Copenhagen Summit has created a historical moment in Turkey, in that the AKP, even though it has failed to obtain a definite date for the start of

¹⁶³ Öniş, Z. And Keyman F., "Turkey at the Polls: A New Path Emerges", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 98-101

accession negotiations, it understood that Turkey had to tighten its relations with the EU as long as it wanted to become an economically and politically stable country.

The decision of the European Council in Copenhagen played a decisive role in the AKP's future policies towards Europe. Right after the summit, the AKP government was well aware of the fact that provided that Turkey achieved democratization and economic stability it would become a member of the EU. However, making Turkey an economically stable and fully democratic country is not an easy process. It can only be achieved by the complete implementation of the reforms willingly. What Turkey needs to do is to apply the Copenhagen political criteria fully in such a way that democracy can be the defining feature of Turkish politics.¹⁶⁴ In order to obtain a date from the EU, Turkey has to convince Europe that it can catch up with the political criteria as well as the economic ones. The compliance with the Copenhagen criteria and the European perspective is not only essential for the possible membership to the EU but also for Turkey's futile internal dynamics.

1) Iraq War and Its Effects on Turkey-EU Relations

Turkey's relationship with the United States has been an integral part of its foreign and security policy since 1945. The containment of the Soviet threat was the key concern of the US foreign and security policy. That is why the US developed a strategic relationship with Turkey in order to benefit from the pivotal status of the country. With the end of the Cold War, the relationship between Turkey and the US seemed to lose its significance; however, it gained greater significance in the post-Cold War setting with the outbreak of the Gulf War, with Turkey's contributions to all NATO peacekeeping deployments in

¹⁶⁴ Müftüleri-Bağ, M., "Enlarging the European Union: Where Does Turkey Stand?", Tesev Publications, 2002, p. 28

Macedonia, Bosnia and Kosovo, with the terrorist attacks of September 11 and eventually with the US-led Iraq War. Given Turkey's proximity to the most strategic points such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, the Caucasus and Central Asia, which are at the nexus of American counter-terrorism and regional security policies, the US-Turkey relations primarily depend on security issues today.

Diplomatic and strategic dialogue between Turkey and the US has played a critical role in Turkey-EU relations. The US explicitly promoted Turkey's close relationship with Europe since creating a stable and strong ally in such a significant region of the world was to the advantage of the US.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, it is fair to claim that the US, as a global power, supported Turkey's anchoring to the West by integration right up to the Iraq War. The US consistently advocated Turkish integration in Europe; and Turkey relied on US support at critical periods. Just before the Copenhagen Summit, the US tried to exert considerable influence in the EU so as to take a definite date for the start of accession negotiations although it was backfired.

Given the long-lasting strategic partnership with Turkey, the US assumed that Turkey would side with it in the US-led counter-terrorism war in Iraq. Turkey's economy was dependent upon US financial aid. In addition, the country needed great support in diverse areas such as EU membership and Cyprus dispute. US policy-makers thought that it was inevitable for Turkey to provide support. Despite all those assumptions and expectations, Turkish Parliament did not ratify the decision concerning the deployment of American troops on Turkish territory.

¹⁶⁵ Öniş, Z. and Yılmaz Ş., "Turkey-EU-US Triangle In Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?", available at <http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/ONIS-YILMAZ-TURKEY-EU-US%20TRIANGLE.pdf>, p. 9

Ankara government insisted on the authorization of the use of force in pursuant to a UN Security Council Resolution because it had remarkably significant reservations involving a war in Iraq. An independent Kurdish state in a post-war break-up of Iraq and the economic burdens of this conflict were among those reservations. The fact that Turkey had supported the US in the Gulf War but suffered from enormous financial losses forced Turkey not to make the same thing again. Moreover, the newly-elected Turkish government was skeptical about the post-war Iraq regime since a Kurdish separatism was likely to occur. On March 2003, when the Turkish Parliament failed to pass the bill concerning the American troops, it caused a shock for the US and jeopardized its strategic relationship with Turkey. Turkey put the financial assistance that it would take from the US at stake when it was under a severe economic crisis, and it lost US lobbying for EU membership.

Paradoxically, these international developments had positive effects on Turkey-EU relations. First of all, by rejecting such a critical bill, Turkish Parliament showed great commitment to democracy and represented the will of Turkish people. Even though there was heavy US pressure for support in Iraq War, the failure of the acceptance of the bill created a sense of working democratic institutions in Turkey. Second, the decision of the Parliament brought Turkey closer to Germany and France, the two engines of the EU, since they argued that Turkey would be the “Trojan horse” of the US if it entered the EU. They were also opposed to the war in Iraq, and Turkey was on their side in this respect. Turkey proved that it could act independently from the US despite needing financial help from the US and it was not a blind strategic partner as most Europeans assume. Finally, the ones who were objected to EU membership and saw the US-Turkey alliance as an alternative to Europe were challenged by the deterioration of relations with the EU.

Contrary to the common interpretations of the Parliament's decision, Turkey's rejecting the bill allowing the deployment of American troops on Turkish territory brought about positive consequences on Turkey-EU relations. As a matter of fact, the decision of Turkish government was a real test both for Turkey trying to prove its democratic nature and for the new AKP government. Having behaved in accordance with the public will, the new government swept away the suspicions of various circles in Turkey. The fact that Turkey got closer to the EU is paradoxical and interesting enough in the sense that countries supporting Turkey's membership such as Britain and Spain were the allies of the US in Iraq War whereas countries not favoring Turkey in the EU such as Germany and France were strongly opposed to the war. Therefore, the decision of the Turkish Parliament created optimism in political circles stressing the necessity of being closer to the core Europe, that is, Germany and France. A well-known commentator on Turkey-EU relations, Cengiz Aktar, argued that Turkey has won prestige in the international arena by not sending soldiers to Iraq. He concluded that from then on Turkey should save itself from the obsession with the US and direct its course to the EU.¹⁶⁶ However, one should note that isolating Turkey from its partnership with the US will possibly generate negative effects on Turkey in the long-term.

2) Looking Ahead: Prospects for Turkey-EU Relations

Turkey has made huge steps since it started to walk on the irreversible road of EU membership. Although the decision of the Copenhagen Summit constituted

¹⁶⁶ "Rota Avrupa'ya Dönme", Radikal, August 7, 2003

disappointment after all the optimistic atmosphere just before the Summit, it also encouraged the new government to press ahead the required reforms at full speed in the course of 2003.

The Turkish Parliament ratified the Seventh Adjustment Package to the Copenhagen criteria in August 2003. The Seventh Package is a hallmark in Turkey's reform process because Turkey started to discuss the civil-military relations as well as the civil-military balance in the National Security Council for the first time. The new package restrains the role of the military in politics by limiting the executive powers and areas of responsibility of the National Security Council, increasing the number of the civilian members of the NSC, and bringing military expenditures under the inspection of the Court of Accounts.¹⁶⁷ The reform package, at least in theory, diminished the role of the military in Turkish politics. What is the real challenge is for sure the commitment of Turkey to implement the reforms by converting them into practice.

The reforms made were welcomed by the European countries. The 2003 Regular Report on Turkish Accession stated that: *“Over the past year the Turkish government has shown great determination in accelerating the pace of reforms, which have brought far-reaching changes to the political and legal system. It has also taken important steps to ensure their effective implementation, in order to allow Turkish citizens to enjoy fundamental freedoms and human rights in line with European standards. Four major packages of political reform have been adopted, introducing changes to different areas of legislation. Some of the reforms carry great political*

¹⁶⁷ “7. Paket Devrimi”, Hürriyet, July 3, 2003

significance as they impinge upon sensitive issues in the Turkish context, such as freedom of expression, freedom of demonstration, cultural rights and civilian control of the military."¹⁶⁸

The 2003 Regular Report also implied that despite those positive developments, Cyprus issue still posed an obstacle towards Turkey's accession. However, many developments regarding Cyprus took place after the Commission issued its report on Turkey. As indicated above, Cyprus should not be an impeding factor on Turkish accession since Turkey and Cyprus did their best to reach a comprehensive settlement. Due to the fact that it was the Greek side who said "No" in the referendum, Turkey and Northern Cyprus proved that they favored a solution. What will happen next concerning Cyprus question is a mystery. The membership of the Greek side may complicate Turkey's relations with the EU since Cyprus, as a new member of the EU; now have the right to use its veto power in significant EU matters.

As for the Aegean Sea disputes, the 2003 indicated that the relations between Turkey and Greece continued to improve.¹⁶⁹ According to Helsinki Presidency Conclusions, Turkey and Greece have to take their border disputes to the International Court of Justice, if they can not sort them out bilaterally, until 2004. The parties seem to not have reached a settlement yet, therefore, Aegean disputes will possibly be put to Turkey as a new condition. In such a case, the Greece's stance towards Turkey will be of great importance.

¹⁶⁸ Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Toward Accession", Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, p. 43, available at www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2003/pdf/rr_tk_final.pdf

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 134

The recent reform packages have affirmed that Turkey is committed to its aspiration of EU membership. Yet, while Turkey seems to be moving towards the EU by complying with the Copenhagen criteria, the ever-changing nature and the new composition of the EU will also play a substantial role on the threshold to the EU. The new comers, most of which are ex-communist countries, may not want to have populous and fairly poor country such as Turkey since they may seek ways to benefit from the EU financial aid as much as possible. It is also fair to say that the EU citizens have a certain amount of apathy with the EU enlargements.¹⁷⁰ Most of the European citizens are skeptical about the effects of enlargement on social aspects. It is likely that the enlarged EU might reach a compromise over a downtrend of the EU's widening policy in the near future. Besides, the victory of the right wing parties in the elections in core European countries such as Germany, Austria and France may also generate a more reserved attitude towards Turkish membership in the EU. However, AKP government has shown great commitment to the objective of Turkish accession to the EU since it came to power. Opposed to the common beliefs, it proved that it has come to pursue Turkey's entry into the EU.

Turkey, now, has to focus on the implementation process of the reforms not to miss the chance of obtaining a date 'without delay'. The EU, on its part, should not underestimate the significant role of Turkey in shaping the future of the New Europe. If the European project is not an inward-oriented but a multicultural one, the EU needs the role that Turkey plays to become a global actor in the world. The

¹⁷⁰ www.europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/flash/fl140_en.pdf

challenges that the both sides face are not easy to overcome, however, they are critical for the future of Europe.



Conclusion

Turkey has always been a key component of Europe with its history, culture and politics. As a matter of fact, Turks has been involved in the making of Europe since the very early times. The radical reforms undertaken by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk so as to modernize the ossified structures of the Ottoman Empire represented a turning point in Turkey's role in the international arena. It is undeniable that Turkey placed westernization and modernization in the centre of its choices in politics and economics deliberately. Turkey's eagerness to be integrated with the West has always been a major part of its foreign policy.

When Turkey began to identify its objectives in international stage as a newly-founded Republic, it linked its future to those of the European democracies and affirmed that it was the part of the shared norms and values of the West. Having become a member of the Council of Europe, OECD and NATO, Turkey began to play a remarkably active role in Western organizations.

After the World War II, Turkey's economic and political decisions started to be shaped according to the requirements of the post-war system. The bipolar structure of the new world order forced many countries including Turkey to make careful political and economic choices. European countries whose economies and political lives had been destroyed by the two World Wars sought a way to avoid another war that would jeopardize their role in the world. With the European Coal and Steel Community, they were integrated to some extent on the basis of economic reasons. In fact, the main goal underlying this integration was political rather than economic.

Integration in Europe then went on with political considerations as well as the economic ones. Then accession to the organization, namely the EU now, became an aspiration and sometimes obsession for many European countries.

There were two kinds of dynamics pushing Turkey into the European integration. The Soviet threat, on one hand, necessitated the need to become a member of all Western institutions and organizations due to Turkey's insecure position geographically. The Greek factor, on the other hand, played an important role in Turkey's approach to the EEC since it accelerated Turkey's decision process in addressing to the Community. Greece and Turkey had problems in terms of sea disputes and Cyprus as they have today, and the fact that Greece had founded an association with the organization provided a stimulus for Turkey towards integration. Turkey did not want to exclude itself from an organization of which Greece was a member.

Having been closely involved in cooperation with the Western Europe, Turkey pursued to complete its association by applying to join the fledgling European Economic Community in 1959. The negotiations resulted in the signature of the Ankara Agreement in September 1963. The Ankara Agreement established a Customs Union between the two parties. In November 1970 the Additional Protocol was signed between the EEC and Turkey. The Protocol regulated the particularities of how the Customs Union would be implemented in the future. After over thirty years, Turkey's relations of association with the EU reached a turning point with the completion of the Customs Union on 1 January 1996. Currently, the parties are performing in the same single market.

Although Article 28 implied that the ultimate aim of the Agreement was the full membership of Turkey, the period from 1963 to 1999 did not provide a membership perspective for Turkey. The period is called as association without accession in this study since it was not until Helsinki Summit that Turkey was granted a candidacy status. While the Luxembourg Summit in 1997 envisaged a two-tier accession process with the eleven East European and Baltic countries plus Cyprus, Turkey was not accepted as a candidate country. What was offered to Turkey was a kind of special status that would enhance its membership in the future. The approach towards Turkey until 1999 is identified as neither inclusion nor exclusion here.

During the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, the EU changed its mind and accepted Turkey as a candidate country underlining that the country would be evaluated on the same criteria as the other aspiring countries. In turn, the EU set out other criteria for Turkey such as resolving the Aegean Sea and Cyprus disputes with Greece by 2004 as well as the previously-identified Copenhagen criteria. The period from 1999 to 2002 is described as association with an indefinite accession here.

In Nice Summit of 2000, the EU approved an Accession Partnership Document for Turkey, which basically established a roadmap for Turkey's accession to the EU. The Turkish government was supposed to present a National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis, and this program was announced in March 2001. It identified the priorities of Turkey in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria. What Turkey promised to do, either in short-term or long-term, was to reduce the role of the military in politics, to improve the treatment of minorities and to reach a settlement in Aegean Sea and Cyprus disputes.

Since the approval of the pre-accession strategy, Turkey has been perseveringly taking steps in order to overcome the obstacles to its membership. There are economic barriers as well as the political ones. The low per capita income, high inflation and the size of the population are among the economic obstacles that certainly preoccupy the EU officials.

In terms of the political barriers, Turkey's accession to the EU becomes much more complicated. Democratization, human and minority rights have always been as the major realms that require regulation in Turkey. There is a wide range of shortcomings that Turkey should overcome in those areas. Another field that needs rectification is the treatment towards the Kurdish minority. The problem mainly stems from the fact that Turkey has never recognized the Kurds as minorities in its borders. Turkey's EU membership also depends on its efforts in reducing the role of the military in political life. The controversial role of the military is codified through the military's authority over the National Security Council. The NSC was created after the 1980 coup and has exerted great influence over Turkey's domestic and foreign policies. Given the significant role of the military in the foundation of the Republic and the role of it as the guardian of the Kemalist tradition, it is quite difficult to reduce its role in Turkey's policies.

One should also stress out the unspoken barriers-that is how they are called in this study- to EU membership. These unspoken barriers involve the cultural, geographical and religious issues. Despite not voicing it, many Europeans think that Turkey does not belong to Europe and does not share the history and values of the West.

The reform process was accelerated after Turkey obtained a membership perspective. In August 2002, the Parliament passed a reform package regulating the handicaps in various areas. The most striking among those reforms was the abolishment of death penalty, which caused controversies within the coalition government. There were other areas such as broadcasting in mother tongue and the extension of minority and cultural rights.

The changing domestic context in November 2002 elections resulted in doubts in the EU since the victory of a conservative political party was regarded as a challenge to Turkey's membership perspective. However, the commitment of the AKP government to Turkey's membership objective was appreciated in many European capitals when Tayyip Erdoğan started his tour of European countries. One should also bear in mind that the new government's determined attitude towards a resolution in Cyprus helped the AKP government to remove the suspects in EU officials about the party. The Cyprus dispute, however, has not been solved on account of the outcomes of the referenda held in both Turkish and Greek side. Whereas the Turkish side voted in favor of a solution, the Greek side did not want to accede to the Union together with the northern part. This was an expected outcome. What can be inferred from the results is that the Greek side's saying No is an advantage for Turkey on the road to membership. It will not be acceptable if the EU identifies the Cyprus dispute as an obstacle again.

Turkey's relations with the EU can not be isolated from Turkey's relations with the US. The Iraq War and Turkey's rejection of deploying American troops in Turkish territory apparently deteriorated Turkey's strategic partnership with the US. Not

surprisingly, on the other hand, Turkey's being against the US in Iraq did help the country to develop closer relations with the two engines of the EU, namely Germany and France.

Turkey, now, is optimistic more than ever. The reasons leading to such optimism are quite understandable. What Turkey needs is to convince the EU about its commitment and willingness in implementing the reforms. One should not neglect that Europe can not ignore the significance of Turkey in the new global order. Provided that Turkey turns into a politically and economically stable country, it will get a date from the EU in short-term. Otherwise, Europe will not avoid being a Christian club and will not be a global actor against the US.



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