

Business Administration and Business Economics

**The Evolution of Turkish-EU Relations
and an Evaluation of its Future**

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Abstract: Turkey's relations with EU (EEC, EC) is analyzed, not from a perspective of chronological listing of events, but from the perspective of determining the changes over time in opinions of major groups and political parties about the full membership of Turkey into the EU. In Turkey, until 1980s, center-right groups and political parties were generally in favor of developing the Turkish-EEC relations, while center-left, as well as radical left and radical right were against it. In the 1990s and 2000s, center-left groups and political parties changed their perspective and also worked effectively for the development of Turkish-EU relations. During the earlier decades of associate membership, generally the EEC (except Greece) was more open to Turkey's full membership into the EEC. However, the full membership was seen to be dependent on time due to concerns about the relative economic backwardness of Turkey. But since 1990s and 2000s, as the EU both enlarged and also deepened, opposition in the EU to Turkey's full membership increased, mainly due to criticisms about the lack of human rights and democracy in Turkey besides economic problems. Over time, the center-right groups and political parties in the EU became skeptical about Turkey's full membership because they believe that Turkey, a Muslim country, has a different, non-European mentality (religion and culture) and hence, would not fit into the EU. The EU's center-left, as well as Greens and Liberals, however, think that as long as Turkey would meet the political and economic criteria of the EU she would be accepted as a full EU member, irrespective of her mentality. In Turkey, on the other hand, many intellectuals believe that the EU was and still is not fair and objective towards Turkey in the Cyprus issue, as well as in the PKK terror, and also in the 1915 Armenian problem. Thus, the willingness in Turkey to join the EU as a full member has decreased, as well, and as a result, Turkey slackened her efforts at reform and instead strengthened her economic and political ties with Muslim countries. Therefore, even though almost half a century has passed since the 1963 Ankara Agreement, which established Turkey's associate membership open to full membership into the EEC, Turkey's full membership into the EU looks more difficult than ever and pushed further into the far future, if not lost completely.

Keywords: EEC; EU; full membership; associate membership; customs union

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1. Introduction

In the half century that passed since 1959, when Turkey applied to the EEC, the opinions and views of many political parties, important social and political groups both within the EEC countries and in Turkey have changed radically. The EU today as comprised of 27 member countries, and especially some of the major driving forces within the EU consider Turkey's membership as still a very long process, well past the year 2014 as was originally anticipated. In fact, there is a sizable probability that Turkey may never become a full member, as N. Sarkozy, present president of France, is fond of declaring at every opportunity.

There are many references, which analyze Turkey's relations with the EU in a chronological and systematic fashion (e.g. Karluk 2007) or Turkey's relations with the West in general, that is, both with the EU and the USA (e.g. Kramer 2000). However, the aim of this study is not so much a chronological survey and analysis of events concerning Turkish-EU relations, but rather a survey of the views of major political parties, social and political groups both in the EU and in Turkey about Turkey's full membership and the changes in their views over time. This analysis also leads to a conclusion about the future of Turkey's EU membership.

2. The Beginning of Relations: 1959-1980

2.1 Views in Turkey Concerning EEC Membership

Turkey, following Greece, applied to the EEC in 1959 when Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti: DP), a center-right party, was in power and Adnan Menderes was PM. But due to the military intervention in 1960 the negotiations were stalled (Hiç 1972, Hiç 2008, Karluk 2007). After returning to democracy two years later, the negotiations were restarted and Ankara Treaty was signed in 1963 to become effective in 1964, giving Turkey associate membership status and opening the possibility of full membership. This was parallel to the associate membership status given to Greece – except that later developments proved that Greece was the “privileged” associate member and Turkey the “unprivileged”.

It is most informative to note the government in power in Turkey in September 1963, when Ankara Treaty was signed. İsmet İnönü, chairman of Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi: CHP) was the PM of a coalition government, which included New Turkey Party (Yeni Türkiye Partisi: YTP), Republican Peasants Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi: CKMP) and

some independent MPs who had resigned from Justice Party (Adalet Partisi: AP) led by Süleyman Demirel. The coalition partners YTP and CKMP, as well as AP, the party in opposition which eventually proved as the true successor of DP, were all center-right and in favor of Turkey's relations with the EEC. CHP in 1963 had not yet endorsed center-left philosophy. In 1966, however, İnönü, in view of the seemingly widespread leftist philosophy among university students, young people, intellectuals and bureaucrats, and also influenced by leftist Bülent Ecevit, then young general secretary of CHP, declared that CHP would own the principle of left-of-center. He was also careful to defy Marxist socialism. In 1972 İnönü was outvoted by Ecevit for chairmanship of CHP (YKY 1998: Vol. II). Thus, center-left CHP, in actual practice, became radical left and assumed a definitely negativistic attitude towards Turkish-EEC relations. This was witnessed even earlier in 1969 when Demirel and AP was in power, İnönü was then chairman of CHP, the main opposition party: On that year the 5-year preparatory period with the EEC, which was actually lengthened to 9 years due to military intervention, had ended and Demirel did not want to use the option to prolong it for another six years but rather enter the transition period such that obligations were assigned to both Turkey and the EEC. The decision to enter the transition period was taken on Dec. 9, 1968 by the Associate Membership Council and the Annexed Protocol, which was drawn and accepted on Nov. 23, 1970, was to become effective de jure on Jan. 1, 1973; but its economic rules began to be implemented by beginning of 1971. According to the Protocol, for Turkey the obligation was basically to gradually lower the customs taxes on EEC industrial imports and to comply with the Common Customs Tariffs for third party countries within two lists, one within 12 years the rest within 22 years. The EEC would immediately drop down to zero customs taxes on manufacturing imports from Turkey. Furthermore aid from the European Investment Bank was also assigned (Karluk 2007). Those in Turkey skeptical about Turkish-EEC relations, however, pointed out that Turkey's manufacturing exports to the EEC did not amount to much. Thus, contrary to Demirel's decision, CHP and İnönü insisted on using the option of prolonging the preparatory period which assigned no obligations to Turkey. CHP and İnönü had already endorsed left-of-center in 1966, earlier than 1969 (Hiç 1972, Hiç 2008, Karluk 2007).

After oil price rises by OPEC in 1973, Turkey's balance of payments started showing strains. Therefore, in 1976 when First National Front Government led by Demirel was in power, he felt obliged to stop complying with customs obligations

for two years. But when CHP was in power in 1978 and Ecevit was the PM, he froze Turkey's obligations for five years (Karluk 2007, Hiç 2008). His real intention at the time, however, was likely to freeze Turkey's relations with the EEC for good. All this took place when, in 1975, following the ousting of the military junta and reentering democracy, Greece had applied for full membership and was accepted by the EEC in 1978 with the weight of political factors rather than economic. Greece became a full member in 1981 (Karluk 2007, Ülger 2005, Hiç 2008).

Ecevit at the time had developed an interesting slogan concerning the EEC (Common Market, which has a double meaning in Turkish as "partner's market"): We are the "market", and they (the EEC) are the "partners", implying "exploiters". Evidently, this much negativistic attitude towards the EEC by center-left CHP led by Ecevit did not quite conform with İnönü's decision in 1963 to sign the Ankara Treaty; neither was it "center-left" but rather, "radical left".

In general, the center-right political parties were always in favor of developing Turkish-EEC (EU) relations. They were also in favor of Turkish-USA relations, in favor of NATO, encouragement of private enterprise and flow of Direct Private Investments (DPIs). The center-left CHP, on the other hand, was not only negativistic towards the EEC but until 1980s also against the USA, against encouragement of the private sector and DPI flow, and they were intensively étatiste. Thus, although CHP and Ecevit claimed they were center-left like many bureaucrats and intellectuals, in fact, at the time, they adhered more to the ideology of radical left.

The views of radical religious right National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi: MSP) led by Necmettin Erbakan were similar: MSP was staunchly anti EEC, anti USA, anti big business in İstanbul but pro religious, smaller entrepreneurs and manufacturers in Anatolia, and also definitely anti DPI flows. When Hayrettin Erkmen, the Foreign Minister of the AP minority government, backed by MSP, MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi: Nationalist Action Party) and DP (Demokrat Parti: Democratic Party) from outside, started preparing to apply for membership to the EEC, MSP immediately threatened to side with CHP, throw the proposition off and hence throw the minority government of AP out. Upon this threat in early September 1980 Demirel sacked his minister of foreign affairs and dropped the idea of applying for EEC membership (YKY 1998, Hiç 2008).

Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi: MHP) led by Alparslan Türkeş was radically nationalistic right. They too were against the EEC, the USA and DPIs; but during both the First and the Second National Front governments as well as the minority AP government led by Demirel, they sided with Demirel's views as a balance against MSP.

All throughout, big business in İstanbul, represented by TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists and Businessman's Association) and also TOBB (Union of Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Stock Exchanges) in Ankara, representing mostly the Anatolian entrepreneurs were all in favor of developing Turkish-EEC relations; so were the organization of small businesses and tradesmen and also the Union of Chambers of Agriculture. All of the above preferred center-right economic policies and approaches instead of the negativistic attitude towards the EEC, USA, DPIs; they were also against CHP's preferred economic regime of intensive étatism.

TÜRKİŞ, the confederation of labor unions representing the majority of workers was also in favor of center-right views. DISK, a confederation of leftist unions who had been actively involved in many actions of radical leftist youth and other leftist organizations, was in general also pro EEC. The majority of university youth, a significant number of high level bureaucrats and intellectuals were, in contrast, radical left and anti EEC.

It is interesting that although the majority of the Turkish population and power centers were center-right and in favor of developing Turkish-EEC relations, Ecevit, was, however, popular as a sincere and honest person while many bureaucrats, people in power and most of the intellectuals were leftist and leftism looked promising for future. Therefore, Ecevit could come to power twice during this period and thwart Turkish-EEC relations, particularly in 1978.

The period of left versus right came to an end on September 12, 1980, when there was a military intervention on account of increased terrorist activities and the unwillingness of both CHP and AP to cooperate in order to solve the issue by democratic means.

2.2. Views in the EEC on Turkey's Membership

To answer the question how the EEC countries viewed Turkey's membership prospects in the period 1959-1980, the political conditions of Europe as well as the economic and political conditions of Turkey at the time should be briefly

recapitulated. When the Rome Treaty was signed by 6 nations (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) in 1957 establishing the EEC, though embodying political and economic ambitions, was, in actual achievement, not much beyond a customs union. It faced competition and rivalry from EFTA (European Free Trade Area) although customs union was definitely a much more intensive economic integration compared to free trade area. But no one could be sure of its great success at the time EEC was established. At the time, the number of democratic countries in Europe was limited. Spain and Portugal were both under military dictatorship. Balkan and East European countries were all under the dominance of USSR and it seemed there would be no end to this domination. So Turkey as a democratic country did carry a positive political weight for EEC.

However, when viewed from the perspective of the EEC countries, Turkey also presented some serious problems: The main problem was economic, in the sense that she was very poor compared to the EEC countries. Its per capita GNP was far below that of EEC. Turkey also implemented basically a closed-economy, import-substitute industrialization model with excessive interventionism and protectionism (Hiç 1979, Okyar and Aktan 1976). Furthermore, Turkey had a very large population. This raised fears of a rush by Turkish workers seeking work in the EEC when free movement of workers is granted. Foremost Germany, but all EEC countries which had already received immigrant Turkish workers, were not quite happy with them because Turkish workers (the first generation) resisted to adapt to German or EEC lifestyle and generally failed to learn the language of the host country. Therefore, even though the EU on the whole looked positively on Turkey's application for associate membership following Greece, it took precautions in the Ankara Treaty signed in 1963 and the Annexed Protocol signed in 1973 to allow time to Turkey to progress economically. This involved first starting with a 5-year preparatory period; the option of prolonging it for 6 years before passing on to the transition period of reciprocal obligations and targeting customs union in 12-22 years. The EEC waived later the date that allowed free movement for Turkish workers, which had initially been set at 1986.

United Kingdom, a founding member of EFTA had applied to the EEC for membership but was negatively received by Charles de Gaulle of France. Finally, however, United Kingdom became a member in 1972. Similarly, Ireland and Denmark also former EFTA members, joined the EEC in 1972. Norway had also been accepted by the EEC but since public referendum held in Norway was negative, Norway ceased to pursue membership. But the process showed that by

1980 EEC had already become strong, 3 members were added to EEC in 1972 and with Greece becoming full member by 1981 the number of members had gone up to 10 (Karluk 2007, Ülger 2005).

2.3. The Cyprus Problem

In the early 1970s, Cypriot Greek guerrillas under Sampson had started slaughtering Turkish Cypriots, while Greece demanded annexation of the island to Greece contrary to London and Zürich agreements. Similar killings of Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriot guerrillas and Makarios' unwillingness to comply with the Zürich agreement had been encountered in 1963 also. It had given rise to rioting of Greek shops in İstanbul in 1964. Upon the steps taken by İnönü, then PM, U.S. president L. Johnson had warned Turkey not to engage in a military action in Cyprus (YKY 1998: Vol. II).

In 1974, during a short-lived coalition of CHP with National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi: MSP) led by PM Ecevit, Chairman by that time of CHP, first sought a political solution or else a joint military action by the three guarantor countries, Turkey, Greece and U.K. Since his attempts were of no avail, he felt compelled to implement a military intervention by Turkey alone, thereby securing the lives of Turkish Cypriots in Northern Cyprus. In retaliation to Turkey's military action, however, the USA imposed a military embargo on Turkey (YKY 1998: Vol. II). Later Greece overthrew the military junta, applied for full membership in 1975 and was accepted as a full member in 1976 to become effective in 1981. Greece was accepted as member because of political reasons in spite of her relative backwardness (Karluk 2007, Ülger 2005, Hiç 2008). Thus, Turkish-EEC relations received a serious setback due to the Cyprus issue and the "unjustified" acceptance of Greece to the EEC.

3. Revival of Relations: 1983-1999

It is interesting to note that during 1980s and 1990s all the major political parties in Turkey, both center-right and center-left, were in favor of developing Turkey's relations with the EEC (later EC, EU). And they all took effective steps to promote this relationship. There also were political parties, both radical religious right and radical nationalist right, not quite at ease with this development, but their effectiveness was limited.

3.1. Reviving Relations with the EU after 1980 Military Intervention

The military administration got a new Constitution accepted by referendum in 1982 and subsequently allowed general parliamentary elections in 1983 but under tight controls and veto power concerning MP candidates. Turgut Özal and Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi: ANAP) won those elections. The first task Özal found before him was removing the unilateral ban on complying with customs obligations Turkey had to undertake per conditions of the Annexed Protocol that had been imposed by CHP and Ecevit in 1978. The second was restarting political relations with the EEC.

Özal tried to change economic regime away from interventionism and protectionism and to move towards the market economy. This involved import liberalization, dramatic reductions in customs taxes on imports which were at prohibitive levels and had given rise to black-markets and contraband imports, removing or reducing high export subsidies, shifting to market determination of the exchange rate instead of daily adjustments by the Central Bank. The change in economic regime towards market economy was compatible for Özal's government to restart with a unilateral decision to comply with Turkey's customs obligations (Karluk 2007, Hiç 2008). Özal also introduced a privatization program for State Economic Enterprises (SEEs). He encouraged DPIs more thoroughly, allowing them to enter all fields, including agriculture, finance etc., and also allowing them to hold the controlling share in the firm they bought or established. He disallowed SEEs to go into super-structural fields, but only to infra-structural, while private capital was also allowed into infra-structural as well as super-structural (Hiç 2008). Özal's policies were, in fact, further development of the 24 January 1980 economic stabilization program backed by IMF, undertaken by Demirel's minority government period. It had been successfully managed by Özal during that period. The program was continued after the September 12, 1980 Military Intervention by Bülent Ulusu government in which Özal served as minister responsible for the economy.

But as against these positive steps Özal let inflation to rise out of proportions to be able to finance and to complete the needed social and productive infra-structure. All of the above sounds sensible enough except for major social or political drawbacks that became widespread during Özal era: The first was increased corruption, including nepotism. The second was the rise in religiosity, strengthening of the tarikats (religious sects) and strengthening of "Islamic Green" industrial and financial capital. These mistakes were not corrected but compounded

by political parties that came to power after Özal. This includes corruption during DYP and ANAP governments and corruption and religiosity during the RP-DYP coalition and the AKP government. Still, Özal's attempts in the economy formed the first fundamental step of making Turkey's economic regime and its structure compatible with the EEC.

The second task Özal had to undertake, that is, to remove the ban on political relations, proved more difficult. The EEC at the time, in particular, Liberals, Social Democrats but also Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European Parliament all considered that democratic and human rights conditions in Turkey were insufficient to remove the ban and they looked for moves in the direction of improving democracy and human rights. But it was not quite within Özal's power to improve democracy due to the opposition of the military and president Kenan Evren. Özal thought of removing the 5-year ban on former political party leaders which included Demirel (former AP and present DYP: True Path Party: Doğru Yol Partisi), Ecevit (former CHP and later DSP: Democratic Left Party: Demokratik Sol Parti), Türkeş (MHP: Nationalist Action Party: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi), Erbakan (MSP and later RP: Prosperity Party: Refah Partisi). Instead of doing so simply by passing a law to that effect in the parliament, he argued that the bans had been imposed by public referendum (as addendum to the 1982 Constitution) hence he should call for a referendum on September 6, 1987 to remove them. But during the campaign for the referendum he campaigned intensively against a "yes" vote. The result, however, was that the referendum was accepted by a thin majority and the bans were thus removed (YKY 1998: Vol. II, Hiç 2008).

It should be stressed here that Özal came from the religiously oriented MSP which was staunchly anti EEC, but he had a center-right philosophy in economic regime and in international relations. For instance, though he was a "radical reformer" concerning economic regime, his reforms were all center-right. Thus he was in favor of moving to market economy, outward orientation of the economy, encouragement of private enterprise and of DPIs and privatization. Similarly in international relations he was in favor of developing Turkish-EEC relations and took significant steps in that direction. He was also pro NATO and pro USA.

Similar to ANAP, DYP was also center-right and hence in favor of developing Turkish-EEC relations and upheld an economic program similar in principle to that of ANAP. DYP began to be chaired by Demirel after the ban was removed in 1987.

3.2. Turkey's Application for Full Membership

Since Özal had practically nothing important in his power to improve democracy, he thought of a novel idea to open up political relations. On April 14, 1987 he applied to the EEC for full membership directly based on the Rome Treaty which recognizes such an application as the natural right of any European country under the democratic system. Contrary to fears in Turkey, the EEC decided to discuss this application. The EEC replied in 1989 that since they had entered a new era of establishing a Single Market they did not consider taking any new members (read to mean Turkey) before this step was concluded. The Single European Act that established the Single Market was devised in 1985, enacted in 1986, and became effective in 1987, the delay due to a lawsuit brought by Ireland (Karluk 2007). But by 1986 EEC had already accepted both Spain and Portugal, which had both just shed their dictatorship. The EEC's decision to accept them as full members was again more politically motivated than economic, especially for the case of poorer Portugal. The political aim was to keep both countries from falling back to dictatorship again. Both Spain and Portugal fared exceptionally well in terms of economic progress after they became EEC members.

The EEC rejected Turkey's bid for full membership based on the Rome Treaty. The Commission advised on December 18, 1989 that political relations with Turkey could be restarted based, in principle, on the Ankara Treaty and associate membership. Even this advice was not put into effect because a report on Turkey (Matutes Report) pointed out that it could not be applied until the aims of the Single Act (Single Market) is reached by 1993. It was merely noted that Turkey was "qualified" to become a member (Karluk 2007). Özal himself was well aware of the difficulties involved in becoming a full member, which he expressed in terms used by an old Turkish minstrel: "We are on a long thin path..."

3.3. Center-Left Parties Involved in Developing Turkish-EEC Relations

What was pleasantly surprising was that unlike in 1960s and 1970s when the so-called center-left CHP was influenced by radical left and hence was anti EEC, anti USA, anti private investments and DPI flows and preferred an intensively étatiste economic regime, the major center-left parties during 1980s and 1990s, both SHP and DSP, although both had CHP roots, were genuinely center-left and not radical left. Hence they were in favor of developing Turkish-EEC relations and were also in favor of NATO, USA, private sector, DPI flows and market economy. Both SHP

and DSP played important roles in developing Turkish-EEC relations during 1980s and 1990s.

Social Democrat People's Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti: SHP) was formed in 1985 by the merging of two center-left parties Social Democrat Party (Sosyal Demokrat Parti: SODEP) and People's Party (Halkçı Parti: HP). Erdal İnönü, former chairman of SODEP was elected chairman of SHP. In principle, SODEP stressed democratization, individual freedoms and equality. It aimed at correcting distortions created by the market economy, note not reverting from market economy and maintained only that some strategical sectors should remain under government production. It was however, in favor of NATO, and later effectively acted in favor of Turkish-EEC relations.

Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti: DSP), another major center-left party that played an important role in the 1980s and 1990s was established late in 1985 following SODEP. It was under de facto Ecevit's leadership but since he had the politic ban, Raĥan Ecevit, Bülent Ecevit's wife had become the chairwomen. Ecevit was brought to chairmanship in 1987 after the political ban was removed by public referendum. It is interesting that Bülent Ecevit in the 1980s and 1990s had entirely shed the radical left influences of 1960s and 1970s of being anti NATO, USA, EEC, private enterprise and DPIs and had become a genuine center-left similar to SODEP. And DSP too played an important role in 1990s in improving and developing Turkish-EEC relations – a very far cry from his 1978 decision and slogan.

3.4. Customs Union with the EU

A coalition was formed in 1991 between DYP led by Demirel which came out first in the elections, and SHP led by Erdal İnönü which came out third. This coalition was in stark contrast with the adversary attitude between AP led by Demirel and CHP led by Ecevit during the 1970s. After Özal died in April 1993, Demirel was elected president in May 1993, leaving the leadership of DYP and PM position to Tansu Çiller. DYP-SHP coalition government continued but İnönü resigned and Murat Karayalçın was elected chairman of SHP and minister of foreign affairs of the coalition government (YKY 1998: Vol. III). DYP-SHP coalition achieved a major milestone in Turkish-EU relations. In March 1995 meeting of the Membership Council, decision 1/95 was taken that Turkey would enter and

complete the customs union, despite opposition to the decision in the EU coming from Greek MEPs.

Thus, the transition period ended and Turkey entered the last phase of integration with the EU (YKY 1998: Vol. III). Even though according to the Ankara Treaty entry into the customs union is automatic following the transition period, the 1/95 decision did not include a definitive date for full membership of Turkey. Instead, it was underlined that Turkey and Turkish Cypriots should solve the Cyprus problem. However, if the EU genuinely wanted to see Turkey as a full member it could have chosen to give a date for full membership. From this perspective the 1/95 decision to enter customs union may not be evaluated as a big political success for Turkey. It was, however, definitely a remarkable progress. No doubt Özal's strivings to comply with customs obligations had laid the ground for the 1995 decision of customs union to begin by 1996. Another important factor was the support lent by SHP as coalition partner, a center-left party helping out for progress in Turkish-EU relations, not likely to have taken place in the 1970s.

In the 1995 elections RP led by Erbakan came out as first, ANAP second and DYP third, both with some loss, followed by DSP while CHP of Deniz Baykal just barely surpassed the 10% limit. After a brief try at an ANAP-DYP coalition which failed, Çiller of DYP forged a coalition with Erbakan of RP in June 1996, to avoid a parliamentary investigation about her illegal economic gains during her office as minister responsible for economics, and later as PM. Erbakan became the PM and DYP was a passive follower (YKY 1998: Vol. III). Çiller's coalition with blatantly anti EU RP and Erbakan displeased the EU and Çiller lost much prestige among EU circles as well as within Turkey. After customs union was attained an interesting development took place. Turkey's balance of payments started to show increasing trade deficit, most of the increase in the deficit being witnessed in Turkey's trade with the EU. This prompted many, mostly anti EU bureaucrats and economists to argue that customs union was the major cause of Turkey's balance of payments problems. The real reason, however, was not customs union, but wrong economic policies pursued thus far by the previous Turkish governments (for an analysis: Turkey Europe Foundation, 2001).

This also underlines an important defect on the part of center-right parties, DYP under Çiller and ANAP under Yılmaz. The voters started regarding them as very corrupt, which signaled the demise of center-right in the following years. The center-left political parties had all become genuinely left-of-center rather than de facto radical left and hence worked positively to improve Turkish-EU relations.

Moreover, both İnönü of SHP and Ecevit of DSP were popular with the voters. This last qualification may not be made, however, for Baykal who was definitely an effective political player but seemed to lack mass appeal among voters, the way, for instance, Ecevit enjoyed.

3.5. The Shift in Views in the EEC (EU) on Turkey's Membership

At the beginning of 1980s, members of European Parliament from different groups were all unanimous in evaluating that democracy and human rights in Turkey were insufficient and needed improvements. The major problems raised were torture in jails, minority rights, extensive role of the military, limitations on democracy and human rights, and persistence on capital punishment. The latter point was made before Abdullah Öcalan was captured but later became an issue concerned with him. The criticisms coming from Christian Democrats and Conservatives at the time were more tolerant while Social Democrats, Socialists and Liberals were more strict with respect to the need for Turkey to improve on the above questions. Generally Communists, excepting Italian communists, were even more strictly against Turkey's entry. Greeks were all dead-set against Turkey, vetoing any improvement in Turkish-EEC relations including financial aid. But the interesting point was that the question of Turkey's membership was not taken in early 1980s as Turkey having a different religion, hence a different culture not compatible with the European. Obviously with Greece, the major question was Cyprus, an issue owned by all the rest of EEC. But other major issues with Greeks also loomed behind, such as the Aegean airspace, continental shelf and the arming by Greece of Aegean islands.

The major overall worries about Turkey in early 1980s were the very low per capita GNP of Turkey, a large population and possibility of mass immigration of Turkish workers to EEC. Germany, in particular, expressed dissatisfaction because Turkish workers had showed little interest to get involved with the German way of living (for a more objective analysis of Turkish immigrants in the EEC, see: Şen 2007).

Over the years, towards late 1980s to 1990s, however, there occurred fundamental changes in the views of different MEP groups and EU countries. The views particularly of Christian Democrats turned negative on grounds Turkey was a Muslim country, hence had a different culture compared to the European. In contrast, Social Democrats and Greens disregarded the difference of religion and

maintained that so long as Turkey could attain Copenhagen political criteria, then she should be eligible for full membership like any other European nation.

It is notable that much of the progress in Turkish-EU relations were achieved during late 1980s and 1990s mostly because of the firm stand of Social Democrats and Greens on the EU side and center-left parties in Turkey working sincerely in achieving progress in human rights and democracy in compliance with Copenhagen political criteria that finally Turkey had to be accepted as a candidate member in 1999. Some events and changes in the government in Turkey may also have aggravated the negative views of Christian Democrats. To wit, in June 1996 Çiller of DYP entered a coalition with RP making Erbakan PM and leaving all the reins to him. RP and Erbakan were blatantly anti EU and in favor of developing ties with Middle Eastern and North African Muslim countries. He tried to establish political links with these countries but was turned off by them, proving these countries are less reliable as allies of Turkey compared to the European.

It was during the years of RP coalition governments that negativistic attitude towards Turkey grew stronger. In the Agenda 2000 prepared in the Luxembourg summit on June 16, 1997, countries including Estonia, Letonia, Litvania, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Malta and Cyprus (Cypriot Greek Administration) were all declared candidate members. Turkey, though carrying customs union with EU, was mentioned only as a country capable or eligible to become a member. Shortly before the Luxembourg summit the Christian Democrats had met in Bonn and had stressed that Turkey as a Muslim country had a different culture and should not be counted as European.

Mesut Yılmaz, PM of ANAP-DPT-DSP coalition government reacted bitterly. It was advised in the Luxembourg summit that Turkey participate in the European Conference to be held on March 3, 1998; he refused to take part in it. For Cyprus, Turkey underlined the two-zone confederation solution per London and Zürich agreements. In the following Cardiff meeting, France and United Kingdom maintained a softer attitude towards Turkey as against Germany and Greece which continued to maintain their rigid negative attitude. Hence, there did not occur any fundamental change in the Cardiff summit; Ankara treaty which maintains full membership as the final aim was underlined.

4. Turkey as a Candidate for full Membership: 1999-2009

4.1. Obtaining the Status of Candidate for Full Membership

DSP led by Ecevit had come out as the first party in the April 1999 general elections, followed by MHP and FP (Virtue Party: Fazilet Partisi) established as a follow-up of RP after the latter was closed down. ANAP and DYP could just enter the parliament, while CHP under Baykal's leadership could not because of the 10% limit. The coalition government was led by DSP with Ecevit as PM; its partners were radical nationalist MHP led by Türkeş and center-right ANAP led by Yılmaz. Despite wide philosophical differences between the parties the coalition worked in relative harmony.

The coalition immediately found its hands full with a serious earthquake in August 1999 to which Greece sent a helping team. Turkey reciprocated the gesture to Greece when Greece had a similar earthquake. This incident triggered bonding of people and governments of Turkey and Greece. Moreover, Turkey held a successful European Security and Cooperation meeting in İstanbul in November 1999. Furthermore, serious economic and external debt payments necessitated a stand-by agreement with IMF drawn late 1999; the eruption of an economic crisis in February 2001 which required a complete overhaul of the stabilization program based upon new suggestions of the IMF. The stabilization program was implemented rigorously, thus strengthening the Turkish banking sector as well as the economy in general (Yeni Türkiye Araştırma Merkezi, 2001). In the meanwhile Abdullah Öcalan had been caught abroad in February 1999, brought to court and prisoned. Despite all these difficulties and work involved, the coalition, prompted by DSP and Ecevit and backed by ANAP and Yılmaz, found time to accomplish or otherwise promise political reforms to become a candidate member to EU.

In the spring of 1999 the military member of the State Security Courts were removed, thus the jury comprised only of civilian judges. In October 2001 the coalition changed about 34 articles in the Constitution to comply with the Copenhagen political criteria and human rights. Changes were also effected in the Penal Code and the Law on Fighting Terrorism. Education, broadcasting and publication in Kurdish were permitted. In August 2002 the coalition abolished capital punishment, saving Öcalan whose verdict had been capital punishment. However, MHP objected this move and preferred capital punishment to apply to Öcalan and then abolish it. All this sincere endeavor to improve Turkish-EU

relations by DSP and Ecevit 1999-2002, was a far cry compared to Ecevit's absolute negativism towards the EEC in 1978 and before.

Content with the reforms and, in particular, with the attitudes and promises made in comparison to the attitudes of the previous RP-DYP coalition government of 1996-97, Turkey was declared a candidate member in the EU Helsinki summit in December 1999 despite an atmosphere of growing skepticism in general about Turkey's membership. Thus, the process of writing progress reports on the part of EU, reciprocated by Turkey's National Programs was started aiming, in effect, to start political reforms in Turkey to comply with Copenhagen political criteria (Karluk 2007, Hiç 2008).

4.2. Starting Full Membership Negotiations

By 2002, Ecevit developed a serious illness and decline leave the PM job, not even temporarily. This and the differences of opinion and frictions between MHP and pro EU ANAP led the coalition to a breaking point and a call for early elections. Devlet Bahçeli of MHP particularly insisted on early elections despite objections made by Ecevit that it was not an appropriate time for holding early elections. The economy had not fully recovered from the 2001 crisis which was followed by IMF stand-by prescriptions; more time was needed for the Turkish economy to recover the lost ground.

The result of the November 2002 election was that all the coalition parties, DSP of Ecevit, MHP of Bahçeli and ANAP of Yılmaz got less than 10% of the votes and failed to enter the parliament (for an in-depth analysis of 2002 election results, see Hiç, 2008). The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi: AKP) led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, former mayor of İstanbul, obtained power single-handedly. AKP members had been in Erbakan's RP (Prosperity Party: Refah Partisi) but they had resigned from RP to pursue a different course, in favor of EU, USA, NATO, private enterprise and DPIs, in short, center-right economic and international politics. CHP of Baykal, center-left with much less vote-getting abilities compared to Ecevit when he was healthy, entered the parliament as the sole opposition.

In economic policy, AKP pursued what was sensible and continued rigorously with the IMF recommended reforms. In Turkish-EU relations AKP made what seemed a pleasant surprise, continuing with political reforms to comply with Copenhagen

political criteria. For instance, in July 2003, individual freedoms of thought and expression were further expanded. The composition of National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu: MGK) was changed, giving a greater majority to the civilian members, that is, ministers involved and the President and the PM as opposed to military members. In May 2004, further changes were made in the Constitution including prohibition of capital punishment. The military member of YÖK (Higher Educational Council supervising and coordinating the universities and institutions of higher learning) was removed. Again, in 2004 State Security Courts that looked over cases of terrorism were dissolved and their functions were transferred to the regular courts of the Ministry of Justice. AKP also engineered a courageous stand concerning Cyprus and encouraged a “yes” vote for the Annan unification plan in the April 2004 referendum. At the time, Rauf Denktaş had left and Mehmet Ali Talat had become the president of the Turkish Cypriot side, who was more open to compromises. Still, the Cypriot Greek side voted “no” and still went ahead to become a full member of EU.

In view of all these efforts made by AKP that were very fundamental, Turkey was taken up in the December 17, 2004 Brussels summit and a date was given as October 3, 2005 to start full membership negotiations. The decision was taken following heated discussions, breaks in the discussions, and USA's support in Turkey's favor. It was, however, stressed that Turkey could not be considered to become a full member before 2014. France (led by president J. Chirac at the time) further noted that they would take up Turkey's membership to public referendum before accepting her as a member. When asked about this point, J. Chirac replied that according to the new constitution prepared for the EU, all future members would be subject to such a referendum (Karluk 2007). CHP and Baykal were skeptical, denouncing decision as not bringing equal treatment to Turkey compared to all other previous candidate member states. Starting negotiations for full membership necessitated a great positive effort to comply with both economic and political criteria (Dikkaya 2006).

4.3. Slowing Progress

Immediately after the Helsinki summit was completed, the political reforms per negotiations with the EU started to slow down. The AKP government failed to make changes in the article 301 of the Penal Code. In addition, Turkey refused to open her ports and airfields to Cyprus (Cypriot Greek Administration), though the

latter had become a regular EU member. Therefore, some of the chapters, in fact, the more crucial chapters, were suspended by November 2006. These suspended chapters included free movement of goods, transportation, customs union, agriculture, etc. (Karluk 2007). To ease tensions in December 2008 two chapters were re-opened (one concerned with free movement of capital) that raised the total of chapters negotiated to 10 out of a total of 33. Since the term of President Ahmet Necdet Sezer was to end by November 2007, AKP decided to propose as presidential candidate Abdullah Gül (one of the three notables of AKP, along with Erdoğan and Bülent Arınç) whose wife wears a turban. Consequently, joint-chiefs-of-staff issued an e-mail that opposed election of a president who would encourage religiosity. General Yaşar Büyükanıt, Chief of Staff, also declared in a press conference that they wanted a president committed to laicism not only in words but in essence as well.

This led to early elections in July 2007 and AKP and Erdoğan were re-elected with a landslide victory. After these elections, AKP government chose to become more assertive on religious matters. For instance, instead of continuing with political reforms including changing article 301 of the Penal Code as advised by the EU, AKP tried hard to get students wearing a turban to the universities but so tangled the problem that the issue finally went to the Constitutional Court. AKP also took the issue of changing the Constitution. The implicit perspective in their effort, however, was not so much compliance with Copenhagen criteria but more to please their religious backers and to loosen the principle of laicism in the Constitution.

As the AKP government slackened reforms, it strived successfully to strengthen Turkey's political and economic ties with Middle Eastern and North African Muslim countries, including Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Lebanon and even Sudan, while taking an openly antagonistic attitude towards Israel on account of the Gaza affair. Therefore many journals in Europe and the USA published articles that asked the question whether Turkey was moving away from the EU and the West towards the East. Some stated that this was because of the negative attitude the EU had displayed towards Turkey, while some asked whether this was Neo-Ottomanism, this time with the accent on strengthening bilateral economic as well as political ties. Both Gül, president of Turkey, and Erdogan, PM, stated that it was merely an economic rapprochement and that these ties could not provide a viable alternative to EU membership.

Interestingly, even though AKP government continued with the slackened attitude towards the EU and the required reforms, it had to turn again to closer cooperation

with the EU when the Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Justice filed a case in the Constitutional Court for shutting down AKP on account of its antilaicist activities. AKP calling the EU for help to denounce the case filed against them and advise that political parties – that do not apply brute force – should not be shut down. And, in return, it started the long neglected task of changing article 301 of the Penal Code. The EU representatives defending AKP and stressing that AKP should not be shut down, in turn, made several grave mistakes of their own. First of all, they showed disrespect to the Turkish judiciary. Moreover, they forgot to realize that the Turkish Constitution stipulated shutting down of political parties that are either ethnic or antilaicist. They furthermore forgot that they had not opposed previous occurrences such as religiously oriented RP, Kurdish origin DEP, DEHAP but raised their voices only when AKP was the subject. Finally, they showed little interest in the Turkish history and Atatürk's establishment of the laicist Republic, the fight Atatürk had to make with the revolting groups who defended the religious state, hence the historical and also presently relevant base for the article in the Constitution about shutting down political parties that are anti laicist.

4.4. Developments on the EU Side

The 2009 general elections in Germany brought to power a coalition of CDU-CSU with Free Democrat Party which maintains a more ambivalent attitude towards Turkey compared to the previous coalition partner SPD. Thus, Merkel and particularly Sarkozy continued with a negative attitude towards Turkey's membership. The progress report on Turkey issued by the EU in mid-October 2009 seems to be written with a softer attitude towards Turkey. The report criticized press freedom in Turkey on account of an undue tax penalty on a media group which was in opposition. It praised, however, the efforts of AKP government for its efforts to solve the Kurdish question, and hence wipe out PKK terror. The Turkish-Armenian protocol also got praises. Similarly, the Ergenekon case was encouraged on the belief that it would prevent any intrusion or intervention of the Turkish military into politics, thus strengthening democracy. The report also argued that to enhance freedom of thought and speech, the law that prevents insulting Ataturk, the founder of the new Turkish Republic, by making it a crime, should be waived.

The report shows that the EU seems unable to grasp an objective picture in each case it praises. This includes the mishandling of the Kurdish question, difficulties

of carrying through the Turkish-Armenian protocol, the irregularities and disguised undemocratic and unlawful practices and aims in the Ergenekon case, and dangers involved about releasing criticisms to be aired against Ataturk. Thus, in fact, the report on the whole misinformed and misdirected and worked to the unnecessary advantage of AKP rather than of Turkey. In December 2009 the EU leaders went one step further and decided to review the question of Turkey's opening her ports and airports to (Greek) Cyprus, not immediately but one year later; another instance of softer attitude towards Turkey.

5. Factors that Work against Turkey's Full Membership

5.1. Factors in the EU that Work against Turkey's Full Membership

Despite the fact that Turkey's full membership negotiations continue, albeit with a diminished number of chapters, there are very many adverse factors both in the EU and in Turkey that work against Turkey's full membership, making it a remote rather than a long term possibility.

On the surface, the most important reason for the negative attitude of EU towards Turkey is the Cyprus issue. In fact, the number of chapters negotiated was drastically reduced in November 2006 not only because Turkey slowed down her reform efforts but mainly because she refused to open her ports and airports to Cypriot Greeks, the latter as a regular EU member. In response, Turkey argued that Cypriot Greeks do not represent the whole of the island, and because the EU did not keep its promise of opening relations with Northern Cyprus. Even the aid scheduled for Northern Cyprus was vetoed by the Greek Cypriots (Kramer, SWP, May 2005 and September 2005).

Thus, there is no doubt that Cyprus question emanated a negative attitude in the EU against Turkey and impedes Turkey's full membership. But there are many other important factors working negatively in the EU against Turkey's full membership.

Since September 11, 2001, Islamic terror and radical, anti West interpretation of Islam, questions raised by Muslim immigrants in Europe all contributed to an antipathy and fear felt towards Islam. During the same time period, with AKP, Turkey seems to have become a "mildly" or "moderately" Islamic country. Although many US and Western experts and politicians see "mild" Islam of AKP as a bulwark against radical Islam, luring the latter also to the mild Islamic zone, there are also many experts who think the opposite, that the mild Islam will breed

more rigid and fanatical Islam over time, which would definitely be anti laicist and anti West, hence incompatible with EU membership. Such a fear is, in fact, much more widespread among laicist Turkish intellectuals who know much more about the issue at hand and Turkey's conditions.

Again just at about the same time, Christianity has started to carry a greater weight within Europe. To wit, Christian Democrats are mostly of the opinion that Turkey as a Muslim country has a different culture not compatible with "*Europeanness*". It is doubtful whether the efforts of the new pope in bringing the two religions together and the papal visit to Turkey in November 2006 would be of much help in bringing about a genuine agreement and reconciliation which could act as a hedge against radical – and untrue – interpretations of Islam. On November 2008, the Pope declared, however, a dialogue between different religions is impossible; one could only talk about dialogue between cultures.

Turkey has a very large population. Turkey's population is nearly equal to the total population of the last 10 mainly Balkan and East European countries that were accepted as full members. Such a large country, would require large sums of regional development funds and would have a big say in the EU organs. Also, most of the EU countries, particularly Germany is fearful of a flow of Turks seeking work in the EU, and they had unpleasant experiences with Turkish immigrant workers already in the EU. Turkey also has its hands full with PKK terror there is always a possibility it may become a religious state or else a military intervention could take place; it is also situated in an adverse geography near Iraq and the Middle East which boils with problems.

Generally, center-right parties in the EU are against Turkey's EU membership. New French president N. Sarkozy declares at every occasion that Turkey should never be made a member. As for Merkel of Germany, though as a Christian Democrat she is against Turkey's full membership, she has declared she would be bound with the previous EU decisions and treaties made with Turkey and would pursue the negotiation process that is supposed to eventually make Turkey a full member. In contrast, Greens and Social Democrats generally are less interested in cultural differences supposed to arise from different religions and they stress that so long as Turkey complies with Copenhagen criteria of democracy and human rights, she should deserve to be a full member.

Many important EU personalities warn that the EU should take a positive attitude towards Turkey's full membership. The list includes G. Verheugen (formerly

responsible for the enlargement of the EU), Marti Ahtisaari (Nobel prize winning president of Finland and chairman of the independent committee on Turkey), Carl Bildt (Swedish minister of foreign affairs who headed the EU), Olli Rehn (in charge of EU enlargement), Y. Papandreu (recently elected PM of Greece) and Gordon Brown (PM of United Kingdom). However, the fact remains that following the acceptance of the Lisbon Treaty, Herman von Rumpuy, former Belgian PM, was selected as the first president of EU. This selection maneuvered by Sarkozy and Merkel would likely ensure the influence of the latter two on EU's future decisions. Country-wise, generally Greece, Germany, France, Austria and to some extent Denmark are against Turkey's full membership. Greece and the Cyprus question had been most effective in stalling progress in Turkish-EU relations right from the beginning. Under a center-left government, Greece has changed her attitude on grounds it would be beneficial to get Turkey in, but later under center-right Karamanlis, Greece reverted back to her negative stand, again on the excuse of Cyprus.

USA has for a long time supported Turkey's EU membership from outside and had been effective in bringing about concrete progress. But some politicians and intellectuals in France dislike Turkey's political ties with the USA as working against France if she becomes an EU member.

5.2. Factors in Turkey that Work against Turkey's Full Membership

There also are factors in Turkey that impede progress towards full membership and make it a remote possibility. Many Turkish observers believe that the most important factor is AKP itself. This may run counter to conventional (European) wisdom because for a long time AKP showed, on the whole, a positive attitude towards EU membership and much work was done leading to getting a date from the EU to start full membership negotiations. AKP was most intensively active particularly in the initial years they came to power and up to 2004, the year they got the negotiations date and then slackened starting in 2006. Some called it "reform fatigue" and thought it would be temporary. Had the case for closure of AKP not been opened in the Constitutional Court, AKP would possibly have been content with the slackened pace. To wit, after the Constitutional Court decided not to close AKP but condemn it to monetary penalty because its activities threatened laicism, AKP slackened its pace of reforms again. Thus many observers think that AKP adhered to the EU membership aim in the initial years mainly to give proof

that they are different from their own roots, the RP and are center-right. In addition, they may have thought many of the reforms to become an EU member would work to decrease the presence and influence of the military in all matters of government, which a basically religious party would definitely prefer. They would want to be immune from military interventions concerning upholding of laicism. This means that they may have thought that EU membership and freedoms could also mean freedoms for religious activities and for those wearing the turban. However, the role of the military was reduced over time and that there was not much help about the turban from the EU, they naturally slowed down their progress concerning political reforms.

As a second alternative, let us suppose that AKP is sincere in its cause to make Turkey a full member of EU. Many US and EU experts believe that AKP is only “mildly” Islamic which is compatible with democracy and EU membership. They may not be aware that AKP is, in fact, more than “mildly” Islamic. Furthermore, there has been a notable increase in religiosity since AKP came to power and generally this kind of milieu would encourage the more rigid, the more fanatical (and wrong) interpretations of Islam and the latter could eventually grasp power away from the “milder”. In such a case, again any long run relations with the West, including EU membership will definitely be finished. Unfortunately, other major political parties in the parliament, CHP and MHP do not contribute much for progress in Turkish-EU relations. Taking CHP under Baykal’s lead, it was mostly negativistic and critical when AKP was taking concrete steps and had not made any concrete move them to improve EU relations. They are also mostly negativistic and hence vague with regard to their economic regime, economic program and international relations. This was in contrast to both former SHP led by İnönü and DSP led by Ecevit during the 1990s. The two center-left parties had genuinely accomplished much work for progress in Turkish-EU relations.

MHP, on the other hand, as a radical nationalist party is not in favor of EU membership while the center-right parties, DYP and ANAP both pro EU are down the drain and it is doubtful how they would be able to accomplish a comeback and thus be effective. Therefore, although in principle over 50% of the population approves of EU membership political parties lack the necessary strength to carry out the necessary reforms to bring about EU membership.

5.3. Perceived Double Standards of EU

Further problems and suspicions have also arisen with respect to the attitude of the EU, double standards it uses on some of the major issues facing Turkey concerned with full membership. Historically, the EU always preferred a Christian European country over Turkey for full membership. Greece, Spain and particularly Portugal were all made a member on political rather than economic grounds. After USSR collapsed in 1999, the EU, gave priority to make the former East-block states full members, again based on political rather than economic considerations, keeping Turkey waiting. If Greece removes her objection on Macedonia, Macedonia will have priority over Turkey. If Russia loosens her grip on Ukraine, then Ukraine will be made full member before Turkey for political reasons. Unlike other countries, for Turkey the political problems are always causes for rejecting or delaying, not expediting her full membership.

The primary issue in which the majority of Turkish intellectuals feel EU did not behave evenly is the Cyprus issue. The leaning on the Greek side is such that one thinks the EU bureaucrats or politicians think that Turkey simply invaded the island without any reason at all, and so all the burden falls on Turkey and Turkish Cypriots to solve the Cyprus question by accepting whatever Greek government and Greek Cypriots want. So much so that some experts on the Cyprus question and Turkish-EU relations (e.g. Manisalı 2001) concluded that EU would never accept Turkey as full member and is interested in Turkey mainly in getting what Greece and Cypriot Greeks want concerning Cyprus.

It is true that formerly Turkish Cypriots been too rigid. But taking the referendum on the Annan plan held in April 2004, just before Greek Cypriot Administration was made a full member; Turkey and Turkish Cypriots showed a remarkable flexibility. Turkish Cypriots said “yes” and Greek Cypriots said “no” in the referendum for the Annan plan, but the latter were soon rewarded by full membership. Thus they became a full member while avoiding the Annan plan aimed at unification as a broader aim.

Many EU experts (e.g. Kramer, SWP, Comments no.1 May 2005 and no.18 September 2005) similarly note that the most obvious reason Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan was that they, unlike their Turkish neighbors, were under no particular pressure to find a solution for Cyprus. Back in December 1999 the Helsinki European Council had dropped its precondition that the conflict had to resolve before accession. Greek Cypriots having rejected the Annan Plan, EU

turned to Turkey and Turkish Cypriots and told them the Cyprus issue should be solved in order for Turkey to become a member. This is in effect telling Turkish Cypriots to accept everything that Greek Cypriots dictate, disregarding London and Zürich agreements. EU had the power to solve the Cyprus issue simply by behaving even-handedly, and not dropping the condition that Cyprus will not be made a member until the question is solved. Still another issue in which EU did not show enough understanding was the PKK question. They were never careful enough to stop illegal activities, collecting black money by PKK men within Europe. Neither did they extradite the convicted terrorists to Turkey.

Granted a multi-sided approach involving military, economic and political is needed to solve the Kurdish problem, the EU authorities, thinking Turkish authorities over-rely on the military, over-advise the political solution, mostly with little knowledge about the problem and little wisdom about the effects of their advice. In general, many of the EU authorities know too little about Turkish political history for any wise interpretation of any of the problems faced by Turkey. The new Turkish Republic and the European countries had entirely different historical conditions. But, reforms of Copenhagen and Maastricht political and human rights criteria can best be achieved with full knowledge about Turkish history. In this respect the road-map and the red lines are as important for the eventual accomplishment of a satisfactory solution. For instance, semi-autonomy for South-Eastern Turkey could lead to disunity, hence a red-line for the Turkish government. But such a demand from separatist Kurds, was not a requirement for fulfilling the criterion of minority rights. Note here that officially Turkish government does not consider Kurds as “minority”, minority is being interpreted as included in Lausanne Treaty, namely Greeks, Israelis and Armenians.

Still one more problem in the background but definitely affecting the attitude of EU authorities towards Turkey (or Turks) is the so called “Armenian Genocide” in 1915 during the Ottoman Empire. EP has accepted that genocide has occurred (as if expert European historians have studied all the documents in both sides objectively and drawn up an objective conclusion) but noted that it would not affect Turkey’s future accession. The genocide verdict not only lacks definitive proof but it also overlooks what has happened “before” the forced deportation of Armenians (for the analysis in Turkey with documents available in the archives on the 1915 deportation of Armenians, see: Gürün 1991, Uras 1998, Elekdağ 2001, Halacoğlu 2001). It is just like the Cyprus issue, as if Turkey invaded Cyprus with no reason at all. And similarly for the 1915 “tragedy” as if Ottoman state deported Armenians

in Eastern Anatolia in 1915 with no reason or fault on the part of Armenian, at all. The West also fails to remember that they had encouraged Armenians to rise for freedom, so Armenians had started killing Turks first while Turkey had to fight with Russia in north-east. They had destroyed mosques, killed people and wiped out entire villages.

France has also accepted the 1915 Ottoman “tragedy” as “genocide”. But when the question of Algeria came up they refused to accept it as genocide and stated history should best be left to historians, not to politicians. Vatican has also officially accepted 1915 tragedy as “Armenian Genocide” – with the aim as they state, to prevent further genocides. The EU countries went even one step further and try to encourage other groups to argue that Turkey had committed genocide on them also. This includes Kurds and the Dersim (Tunceli) rebellions during the Ottoman Empire as well as the earlier years of the new Republic.

6. Conclusion

In summary, many critical factors emerged over the years both in Turkey and the EU that affect Turkish-EU relations and prospective full membership adversely. Meanwhile, the articles that continue to be negotiated are all trivial; many important articles that have a greater bearing on integration and full membership are dropped from the negotiations list. The 2008 global financial crisis and global recession came at a time of seriously weakened Turkish-EU relations. The global financial crisis and recession would likely take at least two years and in the meanwhile no warming in Turkish-EU relations should be expected.

Therefore, there is, in all, not much ground to be optimistic about the future of Turkish-EU relations. On the EU side, there are such obstacles as Sarkozy and Merkel and other member countries' negativistic attitude about Turkey's membership, and a growing fear of Islam, hence of Turkey. On the Turkish side, there are difficulties of reaching a solution in Cyprus, real questions with regard to carrying through the Kurdish solution, difficulties in real advances in Turkish-Armenian relations, and the perception of EU using double standards against Turkey over and over again.

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