



***A dissertation for submission for the degree of MA European
Studies:***

**The Impacts of Turkish Domestic and Foreign Policy on
Turkey-EU Relations since 2002**

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Europe has always been one of the decisive regions in world history. After its gradual unification process following the 2nd World War, and especially after the advent of the Eurozone, the EU came into the fore of world politics as a revived power centre. With its united economic, political and cultural power, it significantly started to affect the world. Despite its controversial stance as a superpower, it certainly is able to affect the world and believed to be able to lead it into a multilateral, peaceful, democratic phase. Hence, due to its this compelling economic, political and cultural power, it became a desired hub to be in for many countries in and around Europe as a geographical region, and thanks to that the issue of accession to the EU thrived in less than 50 years time.

However, following the succesful completion of the unification process of the Western European states under the EU, the main issue of accession turned into another question: Where were the frontiers of Europe? Was this constraining question an economic, political, geographic or a cultural one? In due course, the demise of the Cold War evolved the question into another one: the issue of should the EU embrace the Eastern European countries and ex communist states as well came to the fore of the EU as a political dilemma for union`s future ambitions. In this regard, Turkey`s longstanding political thrust to be received as a member state in the EU strengthened and re-emerged as well. Hence this ambition has started to significantly affect both its domestic and foreign policies. However, during AKP`s a decade long governance, once diverging policies of Turkey regarding the EU membership converged on behalf of a full accession belief to the EU. This thesis will also be arguing this affect of the EU in Turkish domestic and foreign policies to understand the future behaviours of both EU and Turkey. As it is believed that the lack of understanding of

its historical evolution would lead to the common misunderstandings, I, first, would like to briefly introduce the beginnings of the relations between the EU and Turkey.

Turkey applied for associate membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) on 31 July 1959, just after the establishment of the Community. Then, The Association Agreement between Turkey and the EEC was signed in 1963 and entered into force in December 1964. After its application for formal membership into the European Community (EC) in 1987, Turkey became an applicant state. Then, on 1 January 1996 Turkey entered into customs union with the European Union (EU).

The Helsinki European Council of December 1999 granted the status of candidate country to Turkey. According to Hughes (2011, p.59), although Turkey has been in the reform process since 1995, the implementation of reform accelerated after Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party or AKP) came into power in December 2002. During the period from 2001 to 2004, two major constitutional reforms and eight legislative packages were adopted and the penal code revised extensively.

As stated in the 2005 Progress Report of the European Commission, in December 2004, the European Council noted that 'Turkey sufficiently fulfils the Copenhagen Criteria to open accession negotiations. The European Council invites Commission to present to the Council a proposal for a framework for negotiations with Turkey with a view to opening negotiations on 3 October 2005.'

Although the reward for Turkey came in December 2004 with the European Council's decision to open accession negotiations and EU-Turkey relations entered a new phase, since that time a little progress has been made. Besides, Turkey is not yet a member of the European Union. On the other hand, most of the former Eastern European communist states

became a member of the Union within seventeen years after the end of the Cold War. It can be argued that there are mainly two reasons for this situation: The domestic and foreign policy of Turkey, as well as the divergence between dynamics of European Integration and domestic developments in Turkey. Thus, the following research question will guide my investigation: To what extent the domestic and foreign policy of Turkey during the AKP era has affected the EU-Turkey relations? I will argue that, despite the improvements in the democratisation process of Turkey regarding the EU accession during the AKP era, the process has been slowed down and lost its compelling excitement.

Chapter 2 will introduce the review of the existing literature about Turkey-EU relations, the Europeanisation process in Turkey and particularly the term 'Europeanisation' and its various meanings in order to understand the relationship between the EU and Turkey better.

Chapter 3 will focus on the changes in the Turkish politics since 2002, when AKP came into power as well as the various reforms that adopted during the AKP era. The effects of these reforms to Turkey-EU relations will also be analysed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 will focus on the limitations to Europeanisation process in Turkey and particularly the reasons for these limitations. In this chapter, the cultural differences between the EU and Turkey and the effects of these differences on the large-scale opposition in Europe to Turkey's EU accession will be analysed detailedly besides the changing domestic and foreign policy of Turkey in recent years. The main reasons for the slowdown in the European integration process of Turkey will also be mentioned in this chapter.

The concluding chapter will analyse the divergence between the dynamics of European integration and domestic developments in Turkey. Moreover, the impacts of Turkish foreign

and domestic policy to the EU-Turkey relations in recent years will also be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Review of the Existing Literature

In order to understand the democratisation and Europeanisation process in Turkey and its limitations, firstly we need to describe the word 'Europeanisation'. According to Buller and Gamble (2002, p.17), 'Europeanisation is a situation where distinct modes of European governance have transformed aspects of domestic politics. A mode of governance is defined here as the processes, methods or style of governing which bring about conditions for ordered rule and collective action.'

On the other hand, Olsen (2003, p.334) argues that Europeanisation is a contested word and there is no common definition for it. It is used in different ways to define a variety of phenomena and process of change. One of its possible uses defines Europeanisation as changes in external territorial boundaries (such as in the case of enlargement). It presupposes that Europe is a geographical concept, and that external boundary can be delimited and defined. European transformations cannot be limited to EU and its member states. It should be understood that cross border relations in Europe have been managed through a variety of transnational institutions and regimes, beyond the EU (Olsen 2003, p.336).

Supposing that this kind of Europeanisation involves a process of rule following, change can be seen as quasi-mechanical. That is to say, if an applicant country meets the membership criteria, it is probably accepted. If not, the door is closed. Nonetheless, in some other situations the underlying process can be one of 'argument and persuasion'. This means that

situation can be less automatic. Where this process applies, actors are more likely to appeal to a shared collective identity. As beliefs alter, so does the likelihood of enlargement taking place. However, it is not clear that why 'rule following' process applies in some cases and 'argument and persuasion' in others. Entry criteria for the EU may be liberal democratic, referring that the Union will accept the candidate countries that abide some universal criteria in their domestic and international affairs. Criteria can also be institution specific and related to some certain principles on which an institution is established, as is clear in the 1993 Copenhagen Declaration (Olsen 2003, p.336).

The Europeanisation process in Turkey also needs to be explained. It was with the emergence of the Turkish Republic in 1923 - after the break-up of the Ottoman Empire – that Ataturk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, wanted to make Turkey part of the Western World (Muftuler-Bac and Stivachtis 2008, p.2). With the establishment of the Turkish Republic the relations between Europe and Turkey began to change. The introduction of Latin alphabet, secular government, civic nationalism and eventually multi-party democracy was the success of Ataturk as well as his successors (Lovell 2011, p.175). In the year 1950, completely free and fair elections were held in Turkey. This step can be considered as the first real step towards democracy (McLaren and Cop 2011, p.485). In the Cold War era, Turkey was an integral participant in Europe's institutionalisation . It was a founder member of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) and has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1949. Turkey joined NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 1952 and became an associate member of the EEC in 1963. Furthermore, Turkey entered into a customs union with the EU in 1996 (Muftuler-Bac and Stivachtis 2008, p.2). Nevertheless, according to Onis (2003, p.9), one may easily assert that

the customs union failed to provide convenient conditions to introduce a big transformation in domestic politics and economy of Turkey.

As Oney and Halilsoy (2011, pp.8832-8833) state, following the end of the Cold War the potentiality of application of post-communist Central and Eastern European Countries to join the EU concerned the Union about candidates' capacity of complying with the EU rules. In 1993, the EU announced the rules called Copenhagen Criteria that candidates, had to meet before the opening of the accession negotiations. The first and second conditions refer to Copenhagen Political Criteria and Economic Criteria respectively. Third condition is the capability to transpose the common EU law. Turkey became a candidate state in 1999 and it would be subject to the same conditionality regime with the Central and Eastern European Countries.

As Bardakci (2008, p.33) argues, Turkey's attitude towards Europeanisation and democratisation has displayed a dilemma. On the one hand, it accepted EU norms on human rights completely. On the other hand, it refused outside interference in domestic politics, merely on nationalistic grounds. This nationalistic rejection stem widely from the conviction that there is an international conspiracy to divide up Turkey. Consequently, this situation has slowed Turkey's democratization to a great extent.

The relationship between the EU and Turkey started in 1960 when Turkey signed the Ankara agreement. However, according to Bardakci (2008, p.32), only after the 1999 Helsinki decision, by which Turkey was declared as a candidate state, the effects of European integration the politics of Turkey has been more deeply felt and a substantial process of Europeanisation has begun in Turkey.

According to Keyman and Duzgit (2007, pp.69-70), during the period from 1995 and 2000, it was possible to see a highly state-centric, security-oriented and crisis-ridden image of Turkey. The country was trying to solve a number of important problems, such as human rights violations, democratic deficit, economic instability, a legitimacy crisis and a lack of foreign policy vision. In this period, the revival of Islam and the Kurdish issue as well as the increasing clientalist appearance of Turkish politics made contribution to this image of Turkey. Nonetheless, with the beginning of the 2000s, Turkey has transformed into a country, undergoing radical changes in its political and economic life. These changes became visible especially in the areas of democratization and consolidation as well as the restructuring of state-economy relations. Furthermore, Turkish foreign policy became more active as a result of numerous significant attempts. Obviously, the November 2002 national election was one of the main factors that caused this transformation in Turkey.

The November 2002 election in Turkey was called as a 'political earthquake' to a large extent. The AKP managed to win 363 of the 541 elected seats in the parliament. The only other party that managed to enter the parliament was Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party or CHP), with 178 seats. Nationalists' Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Action Party or MHP) remained outside of the parliament (Bardakci 2008, p.75). Furthermore, three parties that had formed the coalition government after 1999 elections, and two opposition parties, could not pass the 10 per cent threshold, and thus could not enter the parliament. These results indicated Turkish people's anger towards the existing political regime that characterized by corruption, clientelism and economic populism. Besides, the 2002 elections also showed the possibility of overcoming these problems by creating strong, single-party majority government (Keyman and Onis 2004, p.175).

At the time the accession negotiations began in October 2005, the AKP was capitalizing on the negotiations, and also drawing attention to Turkey's goal to be 'the part of the Western World' since the Turkish Republic was established in 1923 (Cenker 2008, p.190).

On the other hand, after the AKP had come into power many people questioned the compatibility of a party had an Islamic background with the secular system. However, the AKP government has committed itself to democratisation process and carried out the most radical reforms. This is partly due to realization by the AKP that democratisation would also support the rights of the Muslim believers. Thus, the AKP was aware that democratisation of the political system, would be more advantageous to their group interests (Bardakci 2008, p.77).

Although the AKP had an Islamic background, it has been during the AKP era in which Turkey has adopted the most democratic reforms, which have brought Turkey closer to Europe. AKP focused on the EU membership issue seriously after coming to power in 2002, and took important steps to meet the Copenhagen political criteria (Bardakci 2008, p.158).

Oney and Halilsoy (2011, pp.8838-8839) argue that the ideology of the leaders of the AKP and their use of the EU discourse have been the two important reasons that brought them into force. First, they focused not only on the state and its principles but also on individual rights and socio-economic issues. Second, AKP supported religious freedom in line with 'European model of the relationship between state and religion' that many religious people in Turkey have demanded for a long time. Thus, religious freedoms like the religious education and headscarf issue were discussed in a democracy context for the first time. AKP leaders announced that they do not want to exclude themselves from the West, they only want respect for traditional values. They have defined their main goal as full membership of

the EU. Besides, they criticised the military influence over civilian governments. Many AKP members stated that the procedures in the EU countries are different and if Turkey wants to join the EU, it should become a country where freedoms are respected.

As stated in the 2004 Progress Report of the European Commission, the Copenhagen European Council meeting in 2002 noted that ' The Union encourages Turkey to pursue energetically its reform process. If the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay.'

During the period from 2002 to 2005, the EU membership process in Turkey had a serious effect particularly in three interrelated areas. The first area was the economy. In the golden age period, extending from 2002 to 2005, the Turkish economy experienced one of its most successful phases of growth. Inflation was reduced to single digit levels after decades. Furthermore, Turkey began to attract significant amounts of foreign direct investment (Onis 2008, p.38).

The second area in which the Europeanisation process have made a great impact is democratisation. Many reform packages were introduced during the golden age period, expanding human rights and freedoms. The abolition of death penalty as well as the steps taken in order to recognise the Kurdish identity were important issues of reform in this context. The reform process initiated some steps in the right direction and purposed to find a permanent solution to the existing Kurdish problem in Turkey by offering a set of cultural rights that covered the use of the Kurdish language in the areas of education and

broadcasting. Obviously, the reforms that passed through the Parliament in this period would have been unimaginable without the pressures from the EU. (Onis 2008, p.39).

The third realm is Turkey's foreign policy behaviour. While the EU process continued to be a centerpiece of Turkish foreign policy, there also emerged a new significant attempt to develop a multi-dimensional foreign policy. This new foreign policy was popularized by the slogan of 'zero problem' with all neighbours. In fact, there was an effort to develop positive relations with all neighbours during the period from 2002 to 2005. Also, in this period Turkey took important steps to improve relations with the Middle East in order to increase Turkey's influence in the Islamic World by attending the Islamic Conference Organization. Another foreign policy behaviour during this period included the will to find an internationally acceptable and permanent solution to the long-lasting Cyprus conflict (Onis 2008, pp.39-40).

Furthermore, as Eralp (2009, pp.159-160) states, in this period the relationship between governmental and non-governmental actors in Europe and Turkey improved. The most important thing was the increasing interaction among societal actors. The post-Helsinki era witnessed a huge progress in terms of both societal and transnational interaction, particularly among women's organizations, environmental groups, human rights associations, students and other segments of society. In the period between 2002 and 2004, a growing reform coalition emerged in Turkey, composed of not only the governing party but also the main opposition party and big, small and medium-sized businesses. There was increasing enthusiasm among civil society actors as well as a considerable increase in their involvement in the process. As a consequence, the public support for Turkey's EU membership reached its highest levels of more than 75 per cent, with increasing participation in the process.

Bardakci (2008, p.197) points out that although it was agreed at the Brussels Summit in December 2004 to start accession negotiations between EU and Turkey, the Turkey-EU relations have deteriorated since then. The Turkish people's attitude towards the EU have turned negative too, especially in recent years. AKP had surprised the world with the record number of constitutional changes it adopted between 2002 and 2004, however since the year 2004, it has turned out to be suffering from reform.

As Keyman and Onis (2004, p.176) argue, the Copenhagen summit also showed that creating a fully democratic as well as economically stable Turkey is not an easy process. This result cannot be achieved only by some constitutional amendments that Turkey initiated in 2002, such as the abolition of capital punishment, the protection of human rights and minority rights. Surely, these amendments have played an important role in securing a conditional date for accession negotiations. Nevertheless, they do not guarantee that democracy is the defining aspect of state-society relations in Turkey. The full application of the Copenhagen political criteria is needed in order to assure that substantial democracy becomes the defining feature of Turkish political life.

Chapter 3

Positive Changes in Turkey's Domestic and Foreign Policy Since 2002

The single-party government formed by the AKP in 2002, followed the recommendations of the EU with reform packages and constitutional amendments. To name a few of these reforms: laws about the rights of women were brought up to EU standards, civilian control over the military was strengthened, cultural rights of Kurdish people were widened, and reform of the very centralised and ineffective public administration system finally started (Goksel 2009, p.33).

AKP put an emphasis on civil society and praised Western-style democracy, and it wanted to improve its relations with Western World. It was promised that essential amendments in the Constitution would be made in order to raise fundamental rights, to the level in the Copenhagen Criteria. It was also assured that relations with European countries would continue to be Turkey's foreign policy priority. The AKP politicians were well aware of the fact that expansion of democratic freedoms would also protect them from restrictive provisions of the Turkish legislation. Hence, the EU provided more freedoms not only to the minorities, such as Kurdish citizens, but also for Islamists (Bardakci 2008, p.159).

According to Fokas (2004, p.147), 'February 28 Process' should be taken into account when we try to understand the AKP's objectives. 'February 28' is the process through which the military-dominated NSC (National Security Council) forced the ruling Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) out of power in the year 1997. Dagi (2004), cited in Kentmen (2008, p.490), states that many Islamists have become strong supporters of Western values and liberal rights like freedom of speech and freedom of religion after this military intervention in Turkish political life in 1997.

This process led to the pro-European claims among Islamists in Turkey, and also caused the perceptions that the AKP represents a continuation of that banned Islamist party's objectives (Fokas 2004, p.147). On the other hand, AKP have tried to distance itself from previous Islamist parties and this situation left international observers undecided about how to describe the party. It goes without saying, the party's leadership base largely comes from earlier banned political formations. Nevertheless, AKP leaders have announced that they do not belong to an Islamist movement, and they do not want to be called as an Islamic Party. Indeed, they have described themselves as 'conservative democrats' (Fokas 2004, p.158). The AKP defines itself as the Muslim equivalent of a Christian Democrat party in Europe. Its leaders state that if the party had an hidden agenda, they would be trying to impose Islamic law, which they do not. Furthermore, it is obvious that relying on Islamism would not attract votes in Turkey. Turkey already have an even more conservative party, which gained solely 5.2 per cent of the vote in 2009. Besides, polls show that less than 10 per cent of Turkish people support Islamic law (Independent Commission on Turkey 2009, pp.35-36).

AKP had surprised the world, especially the European countries, with the record number of reforms between 2002 and 2004. Numerous reforms were adopted, introducing changes to important political issues, such as cultural and minority rights, freedom of expression, civil and political rights and particularly civilian control over the military.

At the European Council in Cardiff in June 1998, the European Commission stated that it would submit a report on Turkey's progress towards accession. Thus, since October 1998, European Commission have been publishing annual Reports on Turkey's progress towards accession. In its 2003 Regular Report on Turkey, the Commission found 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.

Concerning civil-military relations, civilian control of the military has been strengthened. Important changes have been made in the duties, functioning and composition of the National Security Council (NSC). As a result of the constitutional amendments, the NSC became an advisory body with no executive powers. Besides, in August 2004, a civilian was appointed as Secretary General of the NSC for the first time. There were military representatives in some civilian bodies, such as the High Audio- Visual Board and High Education board. With the amendments, these representatives have been removed finally (European Commission, 2004 Progress Report). Thus, it can be argued that significant steps were taken to strengthen civilian control over the military.

Furthermore, Parliament adopted a new Penal Code and a new Civil Code. This new Penal Code had positive impacts on critical issues, such as human rights, women's rights, torture and discrimination.

Indeed, as Goksel (2009, p.33) states, a good example of how EU harmonisation process affected the policy making in Turkey is the content of the new Penal Code which was enacted in 2004. The EU was very decisive about the fact that Turkey needed to make amendments in the Penal Code. Consequently, the AKP launched a consensus with the opposition party, CHP, and listened to perspectives of feminists in order to understand them. Obviously, the EU played a significant role in the scope, timing and motivation for the reform of the Penal Code and that the process reflected a progressive approach to citizen-state relations.

Furthermore, the death penalty was abolished in all circumstances due to Protocol N°13 to the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights). As regards civil and political rights, significant efforts have been made to reduce torture and ill-treatment. A zero tolerance policy have been adopted by authorities. Regarding economic and social freedoms, important steps were taken to strengthen equality between men and women. Under the new Penal Code, perpetrators of 'honour killings' should be punished with life imprisonment. As regards cultural and minority rights, the Constitution was changed in order to remove the ban on the use of Kurdish language. Subsequently, Kurdish language courses have been opened. Furthermore, television as well as radio broadcasting in several languages, such as Kurdish, Bosnian and Arabic has started (European Commission, 2004 Progress Report on Turkey). With regard to freedom of expression, 2004 Progress Report of the European Commission stated that there had been 'a reduction in the number of prosecutions and convictions in cases related to freedom of expression.'

Greater Europeanisation can be observed on important security issues in Turkey. Many Turkish elites seek a permanent political solution to the Kurdish problem. The reforms which the AKP government has made contributed to this process. For instance, although it is exposed to time limitations, the state-run TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Association) channel broadcasts programs in the Kurdish language (Oguzlu 2008, p.16). With regard to Kurdish problem, the AKP announced that it saw the problem as not just a terrorist issue, but also as a multi-faceted matter. Thus, AKP made reference to the cultural diversity (Bardakci 2008, p.160).

In fact, the internal conflict regarding the Kurdish people started since the initial years of the Republic. Currently, Kurds make up 20 per cent of the population, around half of which live

in the big cities located in the west of Turkey. Besides, another make up the majority of the population in the under-developed south-east of Turkey. The Kurdish problem represents more than economic underdevelopment or separatist terror. Indeed, it is more about the complicated question: How can a multi-ethnic state be organised politically without affecting its unity? (Mărgărit 2010, p. 70).

As Altinisik and Tur (2005, p.65) point out, in its initial period the AKP passed numerous reform packages through Parliament in accordance with EU harmonisation process. Freedom of press was extended and all obstacles regarding the use of languages other than Turkish were lifted. Education and broadcasting in all languages used by the Turkish citizens in daily life were allowed. Following the change in language policy, many books and journals started to be published in several languages, including Kurdish. Thus, with these reforms, Kurdish identity was recognised in the country.

The AKP government took some steps to find a solution to the Kurdish problem. For this purpose, it has extended cultural and social rights of the citizens at the individual level to disarm the PKK and improve socio-economic conditions. AKP wants to put an end to the Kurdish problem by providing constitutional assurances for the fundamental human rights and freedoms of minorities. It also thinks that by doing so, the unitary structure of Turkey will be strengthened. Furthermore, it assumes that the trust of the citizens to state will also be strengthened (Efegil 2011, p.32).

According to Onar (2011, pp.463-464), the reforms undertaken in line with the EU integration process between 2001 and 2004, have opened the door to debates on once taboo topics, such as Kurdish and Armenian questions. On the other hand, the success of AKP has led to a booming economy. In the wake of IMF-instituted structural reforms, Turkey

has reached to 6 per cent growth and increased its investment to 20 billion dollars per year, from a scant billion in the 1990s.

Predictability was achieved and investors began to feel confidence about the future of Turkey. Although the role of the IMF programme for macroeconomic stability is central, it would not have had the same results without political stability (Goksel 2009, p.33).

On the enhanced political dialogue, the foreign policy of Turkey has improved considerably during the period from 2002 and 2004. In 2004, with a significant policy shift, Turkey supported the efforts of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to achieve a settlement of the Cyprus conflict. It also gave support to the Annan Plan on a permanent solution of the Cyprus problem (European Commission, 2004 Progress Report on Turkey).

Cyprus problem is a long-lasting problem that affects Turkey's relations with the EU for a long time. In 1960, Cyprus gained its independence from Britain, thus became an independent state. In 1963, battle emerged between Greek community and the Turk community. This situation caused a Greek attempt to seize power and then Turkey's military intervention. In 1983, the northern part of the island declared its independence as the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' which has been only recognised by Turkey since that time and the island remained divided since then (Mărgărit 2010, p. 69).

Since the November 2002 election, the AKP was decided to alter the status quo in the island. Firstly, Prime Minister Erdogan offered a solution similar to the Belgian Model. Then, he gave green-light to a solution in Cyprus on the basis of Annan Plan, which envisaged the unification of the island following a referendum both in Northern and Southern parts. He wanted the entry of a unified island into the EU. However, the Greek Cypriots (Southern Part) rejected the Annan Plan with a great majority, whereas nearly 65 per cent of the

Turkish Cypriots (Northern Part) accepted it. Thus, in April 2004, Southern Cyprus was allowed to join the EU alone. Although, Erdogan could not manage to secure the accession of a unified island to the EU, his efforts were welcomed by the Union (Bardakci 2008, p.161). In addition, Turkey's relations with Greece have developed positively and a series of bilateral agreements have been signed between 2002 and 2004 (European Commission, 2004 Progress Report on Turkey).

In Greece, Yorgos Papandreou, who served as a Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1999 and 2004, fostered relations with Turkey. With Papandreou, Greece started to give a strong support to Turkey's EU membership with a new perception that disputes between Greece and Turkey as well as the Cyprus conflict could be solved much easier and faster in the broader context of European integration, rather than in the bilateral context of Turkey and Greece (Eralp 2009, p.158).

Turkey has also improved its relations with the Middle East since the late 1990s. The coalition government's policies between 1999 and 2002, and the government of AKP (2003-to present) affected new openings in foreign policy of Turkey towards the Middle East. Obviously, Europeanisation has contributed to the alteration of this policy. Development in Turkey-EU relations increased Turkey's confidence and this situation affected Turkish foreign policy positively. The Helsinki European Council decision to recognise Turkey as a candidate for membership in December 1999 made EU-Turkey relations more definite. Turkey started to feel confident about its principal regional identity as part of Europe. Turkey's EU-related domestic reforms also affected its foreign policy. Positive developments led to the desecuritisation of Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey started to develop its relations with Middle Eastern neighbours. The AKP government adopted the policy of 'zero problem with

neighbours' (Altunisik 2009, pp.145-147). Besides, especially in recent years, the AKP government has been eager to make Turkey a soft power in the Arab world. Prime Minister Erdogan mentioned the compatibility between democracy and Islam as well as the necessity of political and economic reform in the Islamic world. Turkey was an example of all that. As a result of the positive developments in Turkey-EU relations, Turkey initiated a wide political and economic reform process. This blatant transformation of Turkey started to be carefully watched particularly by the reformers in the Arab world. Besides, some analysts in the Arab world asserted that this positive development of Turkey-EU relations would make Turkey more effective in the Middle East as well as would turn Turkey into a bridge between the East and the West (Altunisik 2009, pp.151-154). In fact, we can easily observe the influence of Ahmet Davutoglu in Turkish new Foreign Minister in 2009 by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Indeed, Davutoglu has been the chief advisor of Erdogan on foreign affairs since the year 2003. He has played a crucial role in numerous major foreign policy developments. Davutoglu altered the rhetoric as well as the practice of Turkish foreign policy by bringing to it a multidimensional orientation. One crucial part of Davutoglu's vision is to change negative images as well as prejudices, especially those related to the Middle East. This alteration has enabled Turkish foreign policy to entirely emancipate from the chains of the domestic consideration. According to Davutoglu, Turkey does not have the chance to avoid certain areas as it did before. On the other hand, Davutoglu opposes the idea that Turkey is guilty of experiencing a shift in its foreign policy from the Western to a Middle Eastern axis. He states that Turkey occupies a non-permanent seat in UN Security Council and it is also an active member of the G-20. Furthermore, Turkey continues to attach particular importance to the EU membership process. Thus, these commitments to involvement with the West, while developing relations with the East, are characteristics of Davutoglu's foreign policy approach

(Aras 2009, pp.127-133). Kanat (2010, pp.205-206) points out that it has become usual for some analysts to criticize the foreign policy making of Turkey during the AKP era for turning away from the West and leaning towards the Middle East. According to them, AKP has a secret agenda of 'Middle Easternization' of Turkish society as well as politics. Thus, they argue that this agenda constitutes a threat to the secular and democratic regime of Turkey as well as the dialogue between Turkey and the Western World. However, the alterations in Turkish foreign policy are not aimed to de-Westernize Turkey. Indeed, they are attempts to create a self-confident foreign agenda. Turkey is not turning away from the West, it is aiming to reshape its foreign policy, reflecting the requests of an increasingly democratic society.

Furthermore, in its 2004 Progress Report, the European Commission found that ' Turkey has achieved significant legislative process in many areas, through further reform packages, constitutional changes and the adoption of a new Penal Code, and in particular in those identified as priorities in last year's report. '

The July 2007 elections brought the AKP to power once again. CHP (the secular nationalists) and MHP (the conservative nationalists) failed to gain enough votes to form a government, either alone or through a coalition (Oguzlu 2008, p.5). AKP collected 46.5 per cent of the electorate votes that enabled it to continue its single-party government. The main factor for this success at the polls was the improvement in the economic conditions. Foreign investment helped the government to pay the national debt and led to economic growth, exports boomed and inflation was brought under control (Bardakci 2008, p.77).

Although the pace of reforms has slowed since 2004, surely some considerable steps have been taken to reach the EU standards in legislation also in this period. For instance, in

September 2010 a referendum was held in order to make radical amendments in Constitution.

According to Onar (2011, pp.463-466), in the campaign leading up to September 2010 referendum, billboards across Turkey directed citizens to accept European benchmarks in all aspects of life, from retirement benefits to civil-military relations. AKP received a mandate from 58 per cent of the electorate to make constitutional reform.

Constitutional reforms were made in several important areas. As European Commission stated in its 2010 Progress Report on Turkey:

The key provisions of the package change the composition of the Constitutional Court and of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, restrict the authority of military courts, allow appeals against expulsion decisions by the Supreme Military Council to be brought before civilian courts, establish a constitutional base for the Ombudsman service, introduce the right to collective bargaining for public servants and allow positive discrimination measures in favour of women, children and elderly.

It goes without saying, if they are implemented properly, the new constitutional amendments will make Turkey a more democratic country in line with European standards. EU officials have supported the recent constitutional amendments because they expand human rights and freedoms, provide greater guarantees for Turkish labor and strengthen civilian control of the military. Thus, one may argue that all of these reforms will help Turkey to reach its goal of EU accession. On the other hand, there are also some missing points. For instance, the main opposition party CHP criticized the AKP's decision of not including in the constitutional reform package the lowering of 10 per cent electoral threshold which still limits the representation of some parties in the Grand National Assembly. However, Turkish opposition parties did not come up with constructive criticism and alternative plans for constitutional reform (Alessandri 2010, pp. 23-27).

The changes in the constitution can be regarded as a significant step in the right direction. Nevertheless, a public consultation that involves all political parties as well as civil society is needed in order to strengthen support for constitutional amendments. The implementation of these amendments through legislation, in line with European Standards, is key (European Commission, 2004 Progress Report on Turkey).

Chapter 4

Limitations to the 'Europeanisation' Process in Turkey

Surely, some important steps have been taken in Turkey between 2002 and 2004 regarding the Europeanisation process. However, there are also some limitations to this process. Historical and cultural differences are very identical at this point. In addition to this, the domestic and foreign policy of Turkey in recent years should also be assessed very carefully while explaining the limitations to Europeanisation process in Turkey.

Although it was agreed at the Brussels Summit in December 2004 to start accession negotiations between EU and Turkey, the Turkey-EU relations have deteriorated since then. The Turkish people's attitude towards the EU have turned negative too, especially in recent years. According to a study by the German Marshall Fund, the proportion of Turkish people thinking 'EU membership would be a good thing for Turkey' decreased to 40 per cent in the year 2007, an all time low. This is partly due to the decline in EU-Turkey relations at the official level. In recent years, due to the Euroskepticism in Turkey and rising Turkey-skepticism in some EU countries, the AKP government has turned away from Europe, towards the Middle East. AKP had surprised the world with the record number of constitutional changes it adopted between 2002 and 2004, however since 2004, it has

turned out to be suffering from reform fatigue (Bardakci 2008, p.197). As Jacoby (2010, p.118) points out, 'Remarkable constitutional changes have occurred and then been partially undone, the power of the military has been curtailed and then somewhat expanded, minority rights have been enlarged and then placed under new restrictions and religious freedoms have been granted and then not fully realized.'

In its 2005 Progress Report on Turkey , the European Commission found that:

Political transition is ongoing in Turkey and the country continues to sufficiently fulfil the Copenhagen Political Criteria. Important legislative reforms have now entered into force and should lead to structural changes in the legal system, particularly in the judiciary. However the pace of change has slowed in 2005 and implementation of the reforms remains uneven. Significant further efforts are required as regards fundamental freedoms and human rights, particularly freedom of expression, women's rights, religious freedoms, trade union rights, cultural rights and the further strengthening of the fight against torture and ill-treatment.

In fact, it is not difficult to estimate which factors are responsible for the widening gap between Turkey and the European Union. On the part of the Turkish public, the costs of the EU integration process have come to outweigh its potential benefits. Besides, in Turkey, many people have understood that full EU membership is an increasingly distant possibility. The EU harmonisation process has revealed not only existential challenges, but also economic ones. There is a conviction that Turkey may not become a full EU member even if it were to meet the Copenhagen Criteria. Surely, there are considerable reasons for this pessimistic view among the Turkish people. It was already stated in 2004 Brussels Summit that Turkey- EU accession talks would be open-ended with no guarantee of full membership. Thus Turkey-EU relations could also result in alternative possibilities such as privileged membership (Bardakci 2008, p.198).

On the other hand, following the September 11th attacks, the increase in mutually negative perceptions between the Muslim world and the Western world, has negatively affected the Turkish people's attitude towards the EU. With these attacks, the view of Islam among European people started to alter for the worse. This situation diminished the level of European people's support for Turkey's EU membership. Consequently, the enthusiasm of Turkish people for EU membership eroded (Bardakci 2008, p.200).

According to Eralp (2009, pp.160-161), after 2004, a negative shift occurred in the EU-Turkey relationship. The EU began to deal with its own problems, so it became hard to focus on the accession process of Turkey; rather than accelerating, negotiations lost the momentum. Furthermore, the long-lasting Cyprus conflict and the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004 without a solution of the problem in the island affected the already difficult relationship negatively. The EU began to underline the Additional Protocol that extended Turkey's customs union with the EU to the new members, such as the Republic of Cyprus. The EU wanted Turkey to open its airports and seaports to the vessels of the Republic of Cyprus. However, the Turkish government persisted the simultaneous lifting of all restrictions in Cyprus. Consequently, in 2006, the EU summit decided to freeze negotiations with Turkey on eight chapters until Turkey met its commitments stated in Additional Protocol. This decision slowed down the negotiating process.

In 2003, the American invasion of Iraq destabilized Iraq and the Middle East and led to serious problems for Turkey, such as the Kurdish problem. Besides, the American invasion of Iraq increased anti-American thoughts in Turkey. In this situation, US support for Turkey's EU accession affected the process negatively (Eralp 2009, pp.161-162). In recent years, Turkey has lost its reform drive. An increasing divergence has emerged between the dynamics of

European integration and the recent developments in Turkey. The rise of nationalism as well as Euro-skepticism in Turkey affected almost all institutions in this period (Eralp 2009, pp.164-165).

AKP found itself in a complicated situation because Turkish Euro-skeptics, who under the aim of defending secularism against a supposed advance of Islamism, wanted to delay the implementation of political reforms that needed for EU membership. Furthermore, the lack of Turkish reforms since 2005 led to more European opposition to Turkey's membership. The feeling of being excluded further demoralized Turkish policy-makers, thus creating a vicious circle (Independent Commission on Turkey 2009, p.7). Furthermore, lack of belief in a positive result of the accession process demotivated Turkish leaders as the public put less pressure on them to implement essential reforms. This situation supported the arguments of Turkey-sceptics in the EU (Independent Commission on Turkey 2009, pp. 11-12).

Center (2008, p.190) argues that, the relations between the EU and Turkey were particularly changed for the worse when the negotiations were suspended on 8 chapters in December 2006. Since then, the accession negotiations have lost the initial momentum. In Turkey, the policy makers have begun to refer more often to Ankara criteria for democratization in case the EU closes the door to completing successfully the Copenhagen ones. Besides, public support in Turkey for the EU accession has hit the lowest levels.

According to Goksel (2009, p.34) especially after 2005, many people in Turkey started to think that Turkey's EU membership was too unlikely to be worth the investment of national pride. The Turkey-friendly leaders in Germany and France were replaced with Turkey-skeptics. Besides, the claim that millions of Armenian Christians were killed in Turkey 90 years ago was made repeatedly and the demands that Turkey should officially recognise the

Republic of Cyprus were mentioned frequently. Indeed the discouraging discourse mostly came from Austria, France and Christian Democrats in Europe. Reasons put forward for Turkey's un-Europeanness were mainly about the identity issues, such as culture and religion. In 2005, just 20 per cent of the French people supported Turkey's EU membership. Besides, in February 2005, the French constitution was changed in a way that a referendum would be held following the conclusion of negotiations for any future enlargement. At the EU Foreign Ministers meeting in November 2005, the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey was delayed by Austria, insisting that negotiations should not be for full membership but for something else. According to the 2006 Eurobarometer survey, only 5 per cent of the Austrian people supported Turkey joining the EU.

At the same time, these developments increased nationalism and led some Turkish people to believe that the EU was humiliating Turkey through issues, such as recognising the Armenian genocide in Turkey as well as recognising the Republic of Cyprus. This situation is dangerous because it causes self-censorship. Some disturbing assassinations that occurred in Turkey in recent years, such as the killing of a priest in Trabzon in 2006 as well as of an Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink in 2007 showed how dramatic the results of self-censorship could be (Goksel 2009, pp. 34-35).

Besides, a considerable majority of Turkish people thinks that the EU does not recognize the threat of separatist terror that Turkey faces. The European emphasis on expanding rights of ethnic minorities, such as Kurdish people in Turkey, at a time when ethnicity is being used as a mean to divide, has been understood as a way to divide up Turkey (Goksel 2009, p.35).

As a result of these developments, the government may have made a calculation that too much emphasis on EU integration process was not too wise. As a consequence, a more

neighbourhood-focused as well as self-sufficient policy rhetoric emerged. Some analysts claim that the shifting of foreign policy eastwards can be seen as a pragmatic change, resulting from external challenges, including post-Cold War and post September 11 strategic realities (Goksel 2009, pp. 36-37). For instance, Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoglu, mentioned some alternative foreign policy scenarios that introduce greater Turkish regional engagement outside Europe. These scenarios have created strong reactions in Turkey. Some concepts like 'zero problem' diplomacy as well as 'maximum cooperation' with neighboring countries are belong to Davutoglu's new foreign policy approach. One may argue that this approach indicates a strong shift from unquestioning EU quest of Turkey (Dostál et al. 2011, pp. 198-199). Davutoglu suggests that Turkey should not be a wingman state. Instead, it should have a central role in the post-Cold War era. As a final aim, Davutoglu states that Turkey should become a global actor in the future (Sozen 2010, p.110). As Rahigh-Aghsan (2011, p.45) states, leaders of the AKP see Turkey not as a bridge between the West and the East but rather as a central actor that intends to play an important role in assuring global as well as regional peace and stability.

In the 1990s, Turkey did not have a clear strategy in its foreign policy-making . Nevertheless, this situation changed when AKP came to power in November 2002. AKP decided to bring a clear vision, a set of principles and a new strategy for foreign policy. Academics have used various terminologies to describe this strategy. Some called this the re-Islamization of Turkey, other called this the rise of neo-Ottomanism and yet others described this the Middle Easternization of Turkey (Sozen 2010, p.104). Altunisik (2009, p.141) states that Turkey's relations with the Middle East have changed considerably since the late 1990s. Turkey has started to implement more confident foreign policy that emphasizes opportunities more than threats.

According to Carkoglu (2004, p.20), the winners of the 2002 elections seem committed to the Turkish modernisation project. However, this commitment was marked by unwillingness, due to some difficult requirements and their effects on foreign and domestic policy. For instance, resolution of the Cyprus problem, reduction of the military's role in Turkey's political life and implementation of minority rights in broadcasting and education all posed a challenge to the Turkish political life.

Ifantis (2009, pp.126-128) argues that two aspects of change in Turkey in recent years are especially significant: The polarization of secular and religious elements in society as well as the rise of Turkish nationalism. As far as nationalism is concerned, it has generally been embedded within Kemalism, and has supported Turkey's modernisation process. On the other hand, the postponement of the EU-accession talks in 2006 have led to the rise of nationalism in Turkey, but in a negative way. Although, the AKP was able to get a high level of support among the Turkish population regarding EU accession, public opinion started to change as Turkey entered the negotiations phase in 2005. The Turkey-skepticism in many European quarters, expressed in the suggestion of a privileged membership instead of full membership and open-ended talks demoralised many Turkish people and consequently led to the rise of nationalism. Some parties that saw EU membership as an important part of Turkey's democratization process previously, have joined the Euro-sceptic camp. Besides, the constitutional crises that emerged in 2007 indicated that although a lot has altered in Turkey in the first half of 2000s, the secular establishment has not followed. Obviously, some steps taken by the AKP government also gave rise to this situation: the attempts by some mayors to create alcohol-free zones, the Islamic headscarf issue and particularly the policies to create loopholes allowing students in the 'imam-hatip' schools to transfer to other academic high schools before graduation are the examples of the steps taken by

government that have not helped the AKP's image with secularists. In fact, the secularists worried that if the AKP brought under control the presidency and the Parliament, the system of checks and balances would disappear.

AKP's reluctance to lower the 10 per cent threshold that allows it to occupy a disproportionate number of seats in Parliament and keeps some small parties, such as Kurdish parties, out of Parliament has also been noted by the EU. Besides, AKP has proven unable to convince those who fear the gradual Islamicization of society (Onar 2011, p.467).

According to Silberhorn (2009, p.46), although Turkey have adopted many reforms in recent years, the reform efforts have been proceeding on shaky foundations due to the progress reports of the European Commission. The dispute between secular Kemalist and conservative Islamic circles is a serious problem. As Turkey moves towards EU membership, it will surely be forced to make some important decisions that could undermine its internal stability.

Indeed, in Turkey, both Euroskeptic and pro-EU Turkish circles agree that Turkey's future should lie in Europe. However, skeptics consider Turkey's effort to meet the Copenhagen political criteria as an act against the Kemalist security understanding. Furthermore, they claim that even if Turkey met the membership criteria, it may not even join the union, because membership would depend on the approval of every single EU member, among which Cyprus, France and Austria would probably say 'no'. These circles also worried that if Turkey was not accepted after radical liberalisation process, Turkey's internal peace would be affected in a negative way (Oguzlu 2008, p.11).

Besides, Turkey and the EU do not share a common history and culture to a sufficient degree. On the contrary, they understand the fundamental European values very differently.

This is indicated by the status of military as well as the religious communities, and the violence against women revealed by the widespread practice of forced marriages as well as honour crimes in Turkey. Obviously, it is true that EU citizens have more in common with the economic and political elite that live in Western Turkey than with the people living near Turkey borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran. Nevertheless, it is certain that Turkey's culture have been defined by a different understanding of democracy as well as fundamental and human rights than that of the EU countries. Thus, there is a high possibility that some EU member states will not accept Turkey's EU accession (Silberhorn 2009, p. 46-48).

Turkey is a Muslim country, in terms of its culture, history and religion. Its culture is different from the Christian culture of Europe. Muslims make up the majority of the population in Turkey. Islam, which stands at the basis of Muslim values, addresses all aspects of social life, from politics to law. Thus, Islam believes in a divine law that regulates all aspects of life. On the other hand, Turkey has been a secular country since Kemal Ataturk established the Turkish Republic in 1923, and secularism has been a constitutional principle since 1937. Secular reforms in Turkey included the abolition of Islamic institutions as well as separation of religion from the state. However, many Europeans do not recognize Turkey as a secular democratic state. Obviously, some reasons contribute to this situation. First, in Turkey the army is the guardian of secularism, rather than the political actors of the state. Thus, one may argue that Turkey is secular, however has its own kind of secularism, which is known as Kemalism. Second, secularism was imposed by the state, and social groups did not widely embrace it. This situation explain the revival of political Islam in Turkey in recent years. The third argument is that Turkey is a secular country, but a Muslim society at the same time. Although it was secularised at the official level, religion has always been a strong force. Besides, Turkey has an Islamic culture, which means that it has different values and

rules. Fourth, one may assert that Turkey is not able to meet the Copenhagen political criteria. The first political criterion points out that the candidate state, should 'guarantee human rights and the respect for and protection of minorities.' Many people believe that Turkey will not be able to meet this criterion, because its respect for freedoms and human rights, and particularly women's rights is insufficient. Moreover, women's rights are an important part of the democratisation process of a candidate state and considered as a major issue in the context of EU enlargement. Domestic violence, polygamy, early and forced marriages, honour killings, poor access of girls to education and other discriminatory practices are all evident in Turkey. Thus, Turkey continues to be a highly patriarchal society and it is unable to comply with Copenhagen political criteria. These limitations of human rights and freedoms are mostly related to Islamic values, and they are heavily criticised by the EU (Bogdani 2011, pp. 43-51). On the other hand, many people argue that even if Turkey meets the Copenhagen political criteria, resolves Armenian and Kurdish problems and recognises the Republic of Cyprus, the EU will create other obstacles, such as popular referenda, integration capacity or privileged membership. Nevertheless, Turkey is likely to fail the exam even at the stage of the Copenhagen political criteria, because of some important issues, such as the limitations to human rights and freedoms, minority rights and freedom of expression (limited by the article 301). These limitations are related to Islamic values, and thus the Turkish government faces a real challenge in addressing them (Bogdani 2011, pp.160-161).

As Bogdani (2011, p.147-148) states, Turkey is a big country with a big population. Its population is nearly 72 million. Although Europeans have no concern with size or numbers normally, numbers start becoming a concern when a big nation is different in terms of culture and religion. It goes without saying, Turkey accession to the EU would alter the

religious balance within the Union from 3 per cent to almost 20 per cent Muslim (as 99 per cent of Turkey's population are Muslims). Moreover, many Turks view Islam as a central part of their identity. Thus, it is the prospect of bringing a large number of Muslims into a secular club with Christian roots, which seems to provoke concern among Europeans. Turkey attracts the lowest support among Europeans compared to all other applicant states. However, as Onis (2008, p.36) states, public opinion is very important and will become progressively more crucial over time. Thus, Turkey needs to get not only elite support, but also the support of individual citizens of Europe at the same time in order to achieve its long-term goal of EU membership.

There are now more or less 20 million Muslims in the EU (which makes up nearly 5 per cent of the population) and Turkish people constitute significant percentage thereof. The failure of these Muslims and Turks to integrate into the European countries they live, is causing a growing hostility towards Muslims. This situation may also explain the high opposition to Turkish candidacy in some European countries, such as Germany, Austria and France. Thus, one may argue that integration of Muslims and Turks to hosting European countries has a considerable effect on European attitudes towards Turkey's EU accession (Bogdani 2011, p.162). According to Lovell (2011, p.176), especially two features of Islam touch modern European sensibilities: the inequality between men and women as well as the lack of separation between state and church.

In Europe, opposition to Turkey's candidacy is considerably higher than opposition to any other candidacy. Turkish migration can explain this high degree of hostility to Turkey as Turkey has been a source of large-scale migration to European countries since the 1950s. Germany, Austria, France and the Netherlands are the countries that received the high

numbers of immigrants from Turkey. In fact, such migration may provide sympathy for Turkey's membership as citizens of EU member states become more familiar with Turkish people. However, most analyses of the relationship between large numbers of immigrants and hostility to these groups shows us that the former is generally associated with hostility rather than positive thoughts. Taking this into account, large numbers of Turkish migrants in a EU member state will mean citizens in that member state have a lower probability of giving a support to Turkey's EU accession (McLaren 2007, pp.258-259). Thus, one may argue that high levels of migration from Turkey is the main explanation for hostility in Europe to this candidacy. Instead of creating empathy, such migration seems to be having counterproductive impacts. Eventually, the final decision on Turkey's EU membership is belong to EU member state leaders. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that they will accept Turkey due to the large-scale mass opposition exist in EU countries. Furthermore, citizens in many EU countries are demanding a referendum on the enlargement issue and if a referendum is held in a country like France and Greece, it seems unlikely that citizens will say yes to Turkey's EU accession (McLaren 2007, p.273).

In 2005, France made an amendment in its constitution, making it possible to conduct a referendum in the event of any new country's accession to the EU if the population of that country makes up more than 5 per cent of the whole EU population. This amendment was blatantly aimed at Turkey. Later, the French decided to abolish this amendment. However, in 2008, Austria mentioned the possibility of holding a referendum in the case of Turkey's accession to the EU (Dostál et al. 2011, p.199). Thus, Turkey is continuously reminded that, even if it meets all the Copenhagen criteria, the EU member states have the right to take a final political decision regarding Turkey's accession to the EU (Tacar, p.125). Furthermore, France has openly announced that it will not let five key areas of the negotiations to go

forward, especially because the French leadership does not want Turkish accession and thinks that Turkey should not be offered a kind of partnership, instead of integration (Independent Commission on Turkey 2009, p.10).

As Keyman and Duzgit (2007, p.84) point out, the recent talks about Turkey's accession to the EU have contained references to both religion and geography as well as to the inadequacy of Turkey to become a democratic nation due to its Kemalist political past that gives priority to the state and military over society. However, there is nothing that Turkey can do about these references because it cannot change its identity or its geographical location.

Turkey is different from other EU countries because of its predominantly Muslim population. Scholars assert that this difference inevitably caused tensions at citizen as well as decision-maker levels in both Turkey and the EU. After September 11 attacks, the attitudes of Western public towards Muslims changed in a negative way. Furthermore, the integration problems that Muslim immigrants face with in Europe have contributed to the discussions over whether a Muslim country like Turkey can ever be a part of the EU (Kentmen 2008, p.503).

Ahmad et al. (2011) argues that several issues, such as Turkey's underdevelopment of economy, occasionally unstable political system as well as its human rights record which were considered as incompatible with European standards, have been repeatedly mentioned by the EU. However, the real issue is the predominantly Muslim population of Turkey. European countries are afraid of the possibility that Muslim population will become the dominant population of the EU, especially with Turkey's accession. Moreover, if Turkey becomes an EU member, it will be the most powerful country in the European Parliament

thanks to its population. Thus, one may argue that religion is an important factor in EU's refusal on Turkish membership.

According to Cohen (2011,p.218), Turkey frankly wanted to join the EU and change European thinking shaped by arguments that Turkey is basically Middle Eastern Islamic nation, whose values are different from those of Christian Europe, and whose accession would require altering the idea of Europe. In fact, these arguments associated with Samuel Huntington's popular theory of 'clash of civilizations', which drew a line between the Europe of Western Christianity and Islamic civilizations.

As Scherpereel states (2010, p.824), Turkey is different than EU-27 states in many ways. For instance, Turkish people know fewer European languages, such as English language, than citizens of other EU countries. Although younger Turks know English language more than older Turks, they fall behind younger citizens of other EU member states. Furthermore, considerable numbers of Turkish citizens give support to illiberal thoughts. Turks are also more eager to promote close and strong links between religious and state authorities. As regards the linguistic realm, two-thirds of Turks are monolingual as they only speak one language. As regards the religion realm, the opinions of Turkish people are less liberal than opinions in other EU-27 states. Moreover, Turkish film culture is more national and thus less European than the film culture of other member states. Thus, one may argue that the prospects of Turks for mobility in the EU are limited.

Besides, the party that has been in power since 2002 in Turkey, the AKP, represents moderate political Islam. Its Islamic ideological background is a matter of concern for many Europeans, who question Turkey's commitment to secular democracy. The AKP has made progress in terms of EU accession, economic and political reforms and civilian control of the

military. Nevertheless, in the eyes of some people, it continues to be a suspect because of its origin as well as cultural choices of its leaders. Prime Minister Erdogan has called on woman to have at least three children. Furthermore, his cabinet includes only one woman. Under the AKP government, the share of woman in labour force has decreased, from 29 per cent in 2002 to 22 per cent in 2006. Thus, many Europeans started to think that Turkey is becoming more conservative under the rule of what they call 'the religious government' (Bogdani 2011, pp.149-154).

Furthermore, according to McLaren and Cop (2011, p.485), the regime in Turkey cannot be regarded as a fully functioning democratic regime, because 'fully functioning democracy' includes free and fair elections, respect for human rights and freedoms as well as freedom of speech and assembly. In fact, as Kirval (2007, pp.185-186) points out, creating a secular-democratic state from a society which is predominantly Muslim is not an easy thing and it has been one of Turkey's main challenges for decades. This situation is important because Turkey is one of the few countries which showed a considerable success in harmonizing an Eastern culture with the political culture of the West. The achievements that gradually made in Turkey have caused the establishment of an institutionally strong democracy. Nevertheless, the democratic consolidation did not improve so much as the involvement of the civil society in political life remained very limited. Currently, it is still difficult to observe an adequate civil society involvement in Turkish political life because the elite is still controlling most of the institutional structures. The number of active non-governmental organizations is still low and voting in the elections is still considered as the only way of participation to the political life. Hence, one may argue that, political differences still exist between Turkey and the EU and these differences can be regarded as significant obstacles for ongoing accession negotiations. Obviously, this picture of Turkey has started to alter

gradually in the early 2000s. Turkey's Europeanisation efforts has had a positive impact on the further democratisation of political regime. However, Turkey is still consolidating its democracy and it has still a long way to go.

In fact, apart from the interruption in 1960 and 1980, Turkey has met the most fundamental democratic requirement of holding free and fair elections since 1950. However, in the past 45 years, 25 political parties have been closed after general or local elections. Turkey has also experienced some difficulties in the area of respect for human rights as well as free speech. The war existed in the south-east of Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s and the feeling that the state was under considerable threat from PKK (the Kurdistan Workers' Party) caused restrictions on free speech, especially speech on the Kurdish issue. In 2005, the adoption of Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code led to significant restrictions on free speech as the Article states that it is illegal for a person to denigrate Turkishness (McLaren and Cop 2011, pp.485-486).

The final main problem of Turkish democracy is that since the year 1960, the military has been involved in political life significantly when compared to other established democracies in Europe. Overall, military's strong involvement in political life, restrictions on freedom of speech and the periodic party closures indicate that fully functioning stable democracy is not completely established in Turkey (McLaren and Cop 2011, pp.486-487).

Muftuler-Bac and Stivachtis (2008, p.3) argue that, in the case of Turkey decades of membership of several European institutions did not socialize the country enough to make it a prime candidate for EU membership. The changes in the international context following the Cold War led to the othering of Europe in the new order. The post- Cold War Europe was less willing about Turkey's inclusion, and this is surprising when we think about the internal

role Turkey played in the Cold War Europe. Fundamentally, there are two reasons for this. Firstly, certain elements of the Turkish cultural, political and social life have served as counterweights to pressures for socialization into democratic European norms. Secondly, since the adoption of the Copenhagen criteria for membership in 1993, EU insists on some entry standards that are different from those that were wanted by the institutions that Turkey joined before. Thus, it can be asserted that Turkey's membership in a Cold War Euro-Atlantic 'in-group' does not by itself qualify it as a member of the post- Cold War Copenhagen criteria-based EU 'in-group'.

As Dartan and Hatipoglu points out (2006, p.17), it should be recognised that the EU's structure and its decision-making mechanisms are not the same as other organisations such as, the UN, NATO or Council of Europe that Turkey joined long years ago. The EU will affect every aspect of the political system and the economy of the country, and Turkey should accept this situation. It is also important to indicate that, the EU would like to see the efforts of the candidate country in implementing common rules more than in the Member States themselves. Thus, especially during the negotiation period the EU is involved in some areas that might be considered completely domestic issues.

Theoretically, there is no cultural test for membership of the EU. On the other hand, there are some political economic and legal criteria that candidate states must meet. Although, the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey started in October 2005, Turkey has been unsuccessful in meeting many of the additional criteria in the 33 areas of the 'acquis communautaire' that can be defined as vast body of laws and judicial decisions of the EU. Besides, according to the EU progress reports, the developments in Turkey are complex. On the one hand, reports highlight rapidly developing democracy and human rights. On the

other hand, they note the lagging attitudes and practices by the political as well as military elites (Lovell 2011, p. 177).

Furthermore, since 2007, the ruling AKP had to fight against several challenges from a coalition of opponents, such as the military, parts of the judiciary and the main opposition party CHP. These attacks were carried out due to the belief that AKP was acting against the secular principles of the Turkish Republic. In April 2007, the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces warned that it might openly display its reaction, and then in March 2008, the Supreme Court of Appeal's chief prosecutor demanded the closure of AKP as well as the banning of 71 politicians from politics, including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul. The government's will to establish reforms for ethnic Kurds in the post-2005 period was also limited by clashes between the Turkish military and militants of the PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party), which recognised as a terrorist group by the EU. Such internal conflict caused an inevitable slow-down in the reform process (Independent Commission on Turkey 2009, p.14).

In Turkey, there are several problematic issues that blocks Turkey's accession to the EU. Limitations to human rights and freedoms, minority rights, women's rights, freedom of expression and civilian control of the military are all important political obstacles in Turkey's road to join the Union.

One of the main political problems in Turkey is the Kurdish problem. It goes without saying, some important steps have been taken in recent years in order to find a solution to this problem. As Altunisik and Tur states (2005), education and broadcasting in Kurdish have been freed. The state-run TRT has started to broadcast programs in the Kurdish language. Furthermore, following the alteration in language policy, many books have begun to be

published in Kurdish. However, these steps have not been considered enough by the European Commission.

As Oguzlu (2008, p.16) asserts, it should be perceived that private channels are not allowed to broadcast in Kurdish, and Kurdish language is not taught in regular state schools. The prime minister of Turkey has stated that Turkey has a Kurdish problem. Thus, Turkey must find a permanent solution to this problem through further democratization.

The AKP government expanded the cultural rights of the Kurdish people in Turkey. However, notwithstanding this development, Prime Minister Erdogan did not call the Kurds living in Turkey a minority. He evaluated the issue in line with the state policy, which gave minority rights only to the non-Muslim communities (Bardakci 2008, p.160). Thus, it can be argued that Turkey's approach to minority rights remains unaltered. According to Turkish authorities minorities in Turkey consist of non-Muslim communities. The minorities that recognized by the 1923 Treaty of Lousanne are Armenians, Greeks and Jews. Nonetheless, there are other communities in Turkey that could be described as minorities in the light of the European standards (European Commission, 2010 Progress Report on Turkey).

In its 2006 Progress Report on Turkey, the European Commission noted that 'the overall socio-economic situation in the Southeast remains difficult and there is no comprehensive plan to address this issue. The positive statement of Prime Minister Erdogan in 2005 stressing the need to resolve through democratic means what he called 'the Kurdish issue' was not followed up. There is almost no dialogue between the authorities and locally elected politicians.'

Furthermore, in its 2011 Progress Report on Turkey, the Commission stated that 'a large number of cases were launched against writers and journalists writing on the Kurdish issue.

Pressure on newspapers which report on the Kurdish question or publish in Kurdish has continued. Several left-wing and Kurdish journalists were convicted of terrorism propaganda.'

Thus, one may argue that, the exercise of cultural and minority rights in Turkey is still limited. No local broadcasting in Kurdish has been authorised and Kurdish language courses have closed down. Furthermore, some politicians have convicted because of using Kurdish language in certain places (European Commission, 2005 Progress Report on Turkey).

2007 and 2008 Progress Reports of the European Commission noted that reforms in Turkey have slowed down since the accession negotiations started in the year 2005, and it also points out the issues needing further progress, particularly regarding the civilian control of the military , the fight against corruption and the independence of the judiciary (Bogdani 2011, p.27).

As regards civil-military relations, a reduction of the role of the military in political life still remains a challenge. Despite the sympathy in Europe for the secular character of the Turkish army, the EU is worried by its nationalistic attitude. The constitutional reforms that adopted in recent years, have decreased the army's room for political manoeuvre, and also made it more dependent to the Parliament. Nevertheless, as 2009 Progress Report on Turkey states, the military has continued to exercise considerable political influence via formal as well as informal mechanisms (Bogdani 2011, p.27).

In Turkey, military acts as armed guardians of secular Turkish democracy, and thus the protector of 'Kemalism' ideology. It is not surprising that Turkish army is undecided about Turkey's EU accession. Of course, the Turkish army supports the Westernization of Turkey, because Ataturk stated that modern Turkish Republic should develop by following the

Western world. To put it another way, one side in the Turkish army wants Turkey to be the member of the EU parallel to the principle of Westernization as well as for economic benefits. On the other hand, the Turkish army is sceptic about the democratisation reforms aiming to meet the political criteria. Because, they think that liberalisation process can be used by Kurdish nationalists as well as Islamist activists in order to destroy the secular and unitary character of the Turkish Republic. Nonetheless, EU has always approved the dominance of political elites over state elites and supported strengthening the civilian control of the military (Oney and Halilsoy 2011, pp.8836-8840). The Turkish military is a defender of Ataturk's principles and one may argue that it is obviously more committed to secularism than to democracy (Lovell 2011, p.179). Indeed, the battle between the military and the AKP indicates the political game that exist in Turkey more than a decade. The attempts to join the EU have played a significant role in this battle. Europe's insistence on democracy as a precondition for membership has allowed the AKP to put in place some measures for greater civilian control of the military in line with the Copenhagen criteria. For instance, the constitutional referendum on 12 September 2010 passed several amendments to the 1982 Constitution, which is prepared by the military, and thus made it more compatible with EU standards. Nevertheless, the military maintains its monopoly on the instruments of armed force and we should not ignore its eagerness to intervene in the political life (Lovell 2011, p.180).

Concerning the fight against corruption, Turkey's position at number 56 of 178 countries on Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index indicates that better leadership is needed. Furthermore in its 2010 Progress Report on Turkey, the European Commission states that although some progress has been made in developing an anti-

corruption strategy, effective implementation of the strategy is essential in order to reduce corruption that still exist in many areas (Lovell 2011, p.184).

Concerning freedom of expression and freedom of the press, numerous writers, journalists and academics have been prosecuted in recent years for simply expressing a critical opinion. One of the EU demands is the revision of Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which largely limited freedom of expression by making it an offence to denigrate Turkishness. 2008 Progress Report noted that the Turkish legal system is not in line with European standards, because it does not completely guarantee freedom of expression. Therefore, in April 2008, Turkish Parliament made an amendment in order to soften the law restricting freedom of speech. This amendment was welcomed by the European Commission and Parliament. However, they added that further moves should be made in order to alter similar articles in the penal code. According to the 2009 Progress Report, some prosecutions and convictions still exist based on Article 301, and also several other provisions of the Turkish Criminal Code are used to restrict freedom of expression as well as freedom of the press (Bogdani 2011, p.28). As Paul (2012, p.2) states, media freedom is particularly an area of concern because approximately 100 journalists were in prison at the beginning of 2012.

As regards gender equality, Turkish candidacy has provided an impetus with respect to legal reforms in the area of gender equality. Especially four pieces of legislative reform reflect the shift regarding general gender equality policies taking place in Turkey: Constitutional amendments since 2001, the adoption of the new Civil Code, the new Labour Law (2003), and finally the new Penal Code (2005). Many reforms have been adopted in recent years in the area of gender equality. However, gender inequality still exists in Turkey and it constitutes a main problem. This problem is most evident in the area of employment, where

women's participation in the workforce is among the lowest in OECD countries. Furthermore, numerous necessary legislation cannot be implemented fully because of patriarchal values as well as the lack of support mechanisms. In fact, there is little political will to promote gender equality. Gender policies exist in theory, but unfortunately not in practice (Dedeoglu 2012, pp.270-271). Besides, Dedeoglu (2012, p.282) states that:

There remain policies that encourage women to comply with their traditional roles that support their exit from the labor market earlier than men. For example, in the Labour Law of 2003 (Article 14 regulating severance pay), if a woman leaves her job within a year of marriage, she is entitled to severance pay, but men are not entitled to such a payment. Again, in the Social Security Law of 2006, there is a distinct difference between women's and men's entitlement to survivor benefits, which encourages women to stay out of productive activities and focus on their domestic role. Although these policies may be seen as positive discrimination, they reflect the persistence of a normative family model.

Since it came to power in 2002, the AKP government has obviously taken some steps regarding gender equality. However, its Islamic background and pro-Islamic stance arouse suspicion about the sincerity of the party in promoting gender equality (Dedeoglu 2012, p.284). One may argue that, the AKP government has been successful in promoting gender equality. Nevertheless, this achievement has not yet been carried into the area of female employment. In fact, women's work has been predominantly been left to market-oriented measures like flexible work, tax-reduction and active labor market programs. These measures are unlikely to be helpful in increasing the participation of women in the labour market without meeting their specific needs (Dedeoglu 2012, p. 286).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

To conclude, we should cover the story so as to discuss the Turkey-EU relations' future which begs the question whether it has a future. Has the prospect of accession fundamentally changed Turkey, or is the advent of a democratic Islam more important. More fundamentally how did they merge under the EU membership aim? Or has the integration moment passed? Is the thrill to join the EU gone? Has the EU lost its allure? I will argue that, despite the EU accession is still of paramount importance, EU membership lost its converging consensus and its allure, and due to that while AKP government shaped Turkish domestic and foreign policy under the EU goal, in the absence of domestic thrill to join the EU, political Islam under the AKP becomes certainly more challenging.

Unification of Europe was a long-awaited idea. Its possible benefits for the region has always been a dream. A unification would be beneficial for everyone regarding its peace, development and security outcomes. The end of the 2nd World War and the demise of the Soviet Union provided the necessary political environment for the European Union. Thanks to this era, theories of democratic peace and security and development nexus flourished. As to that idea, peace and development could be viable and reliable in the existence of democracy. This high level of stability and development was able to exist thanks to the democratic environment. This became the ideal of under-developed world as well. Therefore, countries around the world pursuing to be developed should emulate the Europe if they really want to be developed.

Turkey, in the neighbourhood of Europe as a geographical region, was one of those countries. Turkey was a country, suffered from decades long of inadequate democracy, possible breaks from democracy through coup d'états, numerous financial crises, and insecure domestic and foreign policies. Although it started to face towards the West since the emergence of the republic, it was still faraway from its political goals. On the one hand, while European Union was flourishing especially after the 1990s, on the other hand, Turkey was staggering during 1990s. Weak, rapidly changing and unreliable coalition governments, terror and financial crises undermined the peace and prosperity decade of 1990s for Turkey. So as to end these problems, Turkey and its people increasingly began to see the EU as a solution of stability. If Turkey could join the EU as a member state, just like its neighbours, it could find solutions for its most important problems. For Turkey, joining the EU was the mean for peace and prosperity.

However, the process was slower and the border was broader for Turkey than others. Due to its weak financial and political capabilities, it had to emulate the EU standards first and form a stable political environment both domestically and internationally. In the meanwhile, Turkey was internally divided regarding the EU membership. However, following the harsh times of 1999, and 2002 elections, the consent and ambition favouring the EU membership rocketed up. Newly elected governing party AKP was also in the favour of membership. Despite they come from a very conservative background, they were breaking their paths with their Islamic background by defending the EU membership. This was legitimizing their political presence in the eyes of divided groups within Turkey: from leftwings and Islamists, to minorities and liberals.

From 2002, with a larger domestic consensus under the AKP government (Justice and Development Party), Turkey accelerated its ambitious move to be a member of the EU. Long-awaited justice and development was going to come with AKP's EU move. In regards to that, political, legal and financial emulation process accelerated as well. Legal prerequisites voted and changed one by one in order to fasten the ties with the EU. These policies were strengthening AKP's hands as well. As the integration and democratization process progresses, once multi-diverged dissensus in Turkey was coming into terms with the AKP government. Under the same goal, AKP was converging the political dilemmas both domestically and internationally. GDP was rising, the rate of inflation was decreasing, financial developments and democratic rights were being underlined, and stability was emerging. With zero-problem policy, peaceful relations with neighbours which were marked by disagreement and dispute were being promoted: Not only with Greece and Cyprus but also with Syria, Iraq, Iran and Armenia as well. While Turkish foreign policy behaviour was static and reactive before 2000s, with the AKP government it became pro-active and multi-dimensional. Lately in Turkish foreign policy de-Europeanization was evidenced by shifting foreign policy objectives. Recent developments in the region show that Turkey is exploring new foreign policy objectives. This new foreign policy has included closer cooperation and friendlier relations with its Arab neighbors, at the expense of Israel and increasing its military presence in the region, in contrast to previous policies. Since Turkey has a large population, a strong military and with the support of other neighboring Arab nations, Turkey would quickly find itself as an important power within the Middle East. Given the last of the U.S. forces having departed from Iraq, a new balance of power may shape the region.

According to this new phase of foreign policy, Turkey was going to face towards the West via the EU membership and liberal democracy but not going to neglect the East as it did before

the millenium. West should not see Turkey as it was in the EU's pocket. Turkey should seize the other opportunities. Since, as Turkey strengthens its hand with better Eastern relations, it was going to be seen as a much more compelling member state.

However, in less than a decade, the scene of peace and prosperity within the EU started to diminish with the economic crisis shattering the union's powerful countries one by one. In the meanwhile, while all the ex communist states were already accepted, continuously new prerequisites for Turkey was hampering its consensus for the EU. According to a new survey, it is easy to see how the belief, thrill and thrust have diminished in Turkey towards the EU. While the support for the EU membership was 78% in 2004 in Turkey, it decreased to 34.8% in 2011 and to 17% in 2012.

This massive upheaval also indicates a possible breakdown of consensus and political aims once converged under the EU goal within a decade. While the EU countries, specifically Greece, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Italy, were trying to deal with austerity policies, Turkey nearly got rid of its debts to IMF, emerged as a financial hub, and politically challenging international actor. Although it formally stays as a strong candidate to the EU, the thrill is internally gone. On the other hand, a new Islamist burgeoise emerged, sustaining AKP's financial and cultural aims.

Furthermore, EU's decision to suspend 8 chapters in 2006 because of the unsolved Cyprus problem indicated a major turning point in Turkey-EU relations. People in Turkey started to think that Turkey's EU membership is a distant possibility and the EU will not accept Turkey due to the fact that Turkey is different from other European countries in terms of its culture and religion. Strong opposition to Turkey's EU membership in many European cities mainly because of the cultural identity of Turkey and some alternative suggestions like 'privileged

membership' instead of full membership also contributed to this belief. Thus, nationalism started to rise in Turkey and many Turkish people supporting Turkey's EU accession, started to join the Euro-sceptic camp. As a result of these developments, Turkish government may have decided that too much emphasis on EU accession process was not too sensible. On the other hand, still a considerable number of people in Turkey want to join the EU because they think that it is an important step in the democratisation process and they believe that the EU will bring more freedom.

To sum up, despite the integration moment has not passed, relations between Turkey and the EU relatively or informally suspended due to Cyprus's current administrative role within the EU. Except that, as argued, the internal thrill converged under the membership goal has diminished. People are no longer expect financial prosperity under the EU membership, as the EU struggles itself profoundly.

Since the recent forecast in May 2011, the outlook for the EU and the euro area kept on deteriorating. The prolonged sovereign debt crisis has taken its toll on confidence affecting investment and consumption. The first signs of improvements for GDP are projected for the second half of 2012, however, with very limited impact on job creation. Given this background, the EU has no room to add another country to the union due to the recent global financial crisis and the present difficulties in the EU. The economic crisis further fuels opposition to further EU enlargement.

Besides, Islamist liberal democracy in Turkey rooted and formed a stronghold thanks to the EU policies paving the way for accession. Peace and prosperity were going to come with EU accession, but as Merkel pointed out last year, neither peace nor prosperity can be promised within the EU for so long thanks to the financial upheaval.

Overall, we can easily observe the impact of Turkish foreign and domestic policy on Turkey-EU relations. Immediately after coming to power in 2002, the AKP started to speed up the European integration process of Turkey. Many reforms were adopted between 2002 and 2005. Furthermore, the EU welcomed these developments and, as a result, accession negotiations began in the year 2005. However, the reform process has lost its momentum since then. The AKP government started to think that too much emphasis on the Europeanization process was not too sensible mainly because of the rising nationalism and Euro-skepticism in Turkey as well as the decades-old Cyprus dispute. Thus, Turkey has begun to explore new foreign policy objectives. Many scholars have called this the Middle Easternization of Turkish foreign policy. Of course, it is important for Turkey to develop its relations with Middle East. On the other hand, the EU accession process has been very crucial for Turkey, particularly for the democratization of the country. Without its efforts to reach the EU standards, Turkey may would not have achieved this level of success in its foreign and economic policy. Thus, Turkey is aware of the fact that, sustaining its good relations with the EU will provide benefit to the country even though the EU membership is no longer a foreign policy priority for it.

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