

Turkey-EU Relations: Beyond the Current Stalemate

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ABSTRACT

The prospects for Turkey's ambitions for full EU membership do not appear to be very bright in the current conjuncture. The "grand coalition for special partnership" appears to be firmly entrenched. With key chapters for negotiation already suspended what is likely to happen is that the government in power is likely to pursue a loose Europeanization agenda of gradual reforms falling considerably short of deep commitment for full-membership. The paper investigates the underlying reasons for the decline of enthusiasm for EU membership following the golden age of Europeanization and reforms during the early years of the AK Party government. The article also points to domestic and external developments which may help to reverse the current stalemate and, hence, ends with an optimistic note concerning the future of Turkey-EU relations.

Turkey-EU relations historically move in terms of cycles. At the end of each cycle, Turkey moves closer to and becomes more integrated with the EU. The long-term pattern is thus clearly oriented in the direction of further integration. The slower the path and the greater the delays on the path to membership also imply, however, that Turkey is confronted with higher barriers to entry with each turning of the cycle. The threshold for membership clearly rises over time, a fact which can be illustrated by some concrete examples. When Greece became a member in 1981, the country's democratic credentials constituted an important yardstick for membership. When Turkey pushed for EU candidacy in the late 1980s and '90s, the EU had by then become far more integrated and the criterion for entry had become not only democracy *per se*, but the quality of democracy. In the current context, Turkey's membership aspirations are faced with additional hurdles. The number of

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EU members has dramatically increased over time; ultimately all twenty-seven present members will have to endorse full membership. Furthermore, the EU appears to have reached the limits of top-down, elite-driven projects. Today, public opinion and citizen participation

are crucial, and are likely to become increasingly more important over time. This means that Turkey needs to cultivate not only elite support, but also support at the level of the individual citizens of Europe in order to accomplish its long-term goal of EU membership.¹

This line of argument clearly suggests that there is a strong case for accelerating Turkey's push for EU membership and the associated reform process. Yet, in the current context, Turkey-EU relations have reached a certain stalemate. What we observe now is the emergence of a kind of grand coalition for special partnership which is strongly rooted both in Turkey and in Europe. This grand coalition appears to be rather insurmountable for the foreseeable future. The objective of the present paper is to explain the paradox of how Turkey-EU relations ended up with the current stalemate following the golden age of Europeanization and reform, particularly during the early years of the AK Party government, reaching a climax with the decision to open negotiations with Turkey in December 2004. The paper looks to the future and tries to single out a possible mix of external and domestic influences which might help to revitalize Turkey's EU membership process.

There is no doubt that Turkey will continue to be an important regional power even without attaining EU membership. Failure to achieve EU membership will not mean a collapse of the Turkish economy or of Turkish democracy. A central premise of the present essay, however, is that membership in the EU holds very significant benefits for Turkey and represents the first-best solution. Therefore, it is an objective that cannot be easily dismissed in favor of alternative scenarios based on notions of privileged partnership. EU membership is important to Turkey for three interrelated reasons. First, the Turkish economy will be in a much stronger position in the presence of a strong, long-term EU anchor. Indeed, it is important to emphasize that the principal benefits of membership, such as access to redistributive funds and related EU programs, as well as the gains that are likely to accrue from participation in the internal EU market, actually materialize after the country's accession as a full member. It would be interesting to refer to the experience of Eastern Europe where Euro-skepticism grew during the transition

period, but actually declined after full accession in the post-2004 era. Secondly, the process leading to full membership will have quite dramatic consequences for the quality of Turkey's democratic regime. Turkish democracy, in spite of the important reforms that have been implemented in recent years, still falls short – by a considerable margin – of being a fully-consolidated liberal democracy. Thirdly, Turkey's foreign policy strengths based on soft power will be significantly enhanced if Turkey is able to act collectively with the EU, as opposed to developing a series of bilateral relations with its neighboring countries.

From a Vicious to a Virtuous Cycle: The Golden Age of Europeanization in Turkey

Arguably the process of “Europeanization” in Turkey in the formal sense of the term, meaning a process of interrelated economic and political reforms in line with EU conditionality, dates back to the process leading up to the inception of the Customs Union by the end of mid-1995. The Customs Union was important in terms of accelerating the process of trade liberalization in Turkey which had started back in 1980, and was also instrumental in promoting an important set of regulatory and democratization reforms.² Yet, in retrospect, it is fair to argue that Turkey-EU relations during much of the 1990s were faced with what Mehmet Uğur has aptly described as “the anchor-credibility dilemma.”³ In the absence of the full membership signal, the EU was not powerful enough to generate a deep commitment for macroeconomic stabilization and reforms on the part of Turkey's political elites. Similarly, the failure of the Turkish political elites to deal with endemic political and economic instability, in turn, raised fundamental question marks from the EU perspective concerning Turkey's commitment to the goal of Europeanization. The outcome was a vicious circle.

Given this background, the Helsinki Decision of the European Council in December 1999 was critical in the sense that, for the first time, Turkey was recognized as a candidate country for full membership. The decision provided a powerful incentive for reform. Coupled with the impact of the deep economic crisis that Turkey experienced in February 2001, the EU process became particularly important in creating the mix of conditions and incentives necessary for large-scale economic reforms. Especially in the post-crisis era, Turkey experienced a kind of virtuous cycle of mutually reinforcing democratization processes and economic reforms rather similar in nature to the kind of transformations that the EU's Southern European members, such as Spain, Portugal and Greece, had experienced during the 1980s, and that the Eastern European members like Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic had gone through during the prior wave

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of Eastern enlargement in the course of the 1990s and the early 2000s. Although we have identified a series of important turning points in Turkey’s recent, formal Europeanization process, such as 1995, 1999 and 2001, most analysts would agree that perhaps the golden age was the period extending from the summer

of 2002 – marked by the parliamentary passage of a dramatic reform package during the period of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government – to October 2005, when accession negotiations were formally opened. The golden age period, by and large, corresponded to the early years of the AK Party government. In spite of initial fears concerning the party’s Islamist origins and credentials, the AK Party proved to be both moderate and reformist in orientation. Indeed, the AK Party government during this period displayed a vigorous commitment to implementing the Copenhagen criteria both in the economic and political realms. As a result, the European Council at its December 2004 Summit in Brussels decided to open the negotiation process without delay. This is something that few people, even close observers of Turkey-EU relations, would have expected back in December 1999 when Turkey was announced as a candidate country but the prospect of membership appeared quite distant. The Brussels decision of 2004 clearly underlined the rapid pace of transformation and reform that Turkey had experienced during the golden age period.

The EU membership process in Turkey during this period had a profound impact in three interrelated areas. The first key area was the economy. The Turkish economy in the post-crisis era experienced one of its most successful phases of growth. Fiscal and monetary discipline was established and inflation was reduced to single digit levels for the first time for several decades. Important institutional reforms helped to create a relatively autonomous central bank and a more robust banking and financial system which created stability conducive to long-term growth. Moreover, Turkey, for the first time in its recent economic history, started to attract considerable amounts of foreign direct investment. The prospect of EU membership was critical in terms of providing the kind of longer-term anchor which the IMF program alone could not accomplish.⁴ Moreover, the EU process played a central role in providing a focus for a program of reforms and the motivation needed for different groups in society to rally around the reform program. The fact that Turkey’s foreign direct investment boom effectively started in 2005, following the decision to initiate the formal negotiation process, constitutes

further testimony to the importance of the kind of powerful signals that rapid progress in meeting the formal EU criteria helped to provide to key economic actors.

The second important manifestation of the golden age period came in the realm of democratization. Here Turkey made important strides, progressing from a formal representative democra-

cy toward a consolidated or substantive democracy during this period. Critical reform packages introduced by the Parliament represented important advances, dramatically extending the boundaries of civil and human rights as well as the rule of law in Turkish politics. The abolition of the death penalty and the steps taken towards the recognition of Kurdish identity are particularly striking elements of reform in this context. The reform process initiated steps in the direction of a democratic solution to the Kurdish problem by offering a set of cultural rights which involved the use of the Kurdish language for education and broadcasting purposes. This rights-based discourse represented a fundamental break with what had been the dominant approach of the Turkish state elites: a tendency to view the Kurdish problem primarily in economic and security terms. There is no doubt that the kind of democratization reforms that passed through the Parliament during this period would have been inconceivable in the absence of powerful incentives and pressures from the EU, particularly given the strong resistance from nationalist circles which tended to view such reforms as an existentialist threat to the unity of the Turkish state.⁵

The third broad realm in which the formal Europeanization process appears to have made a profound impact is Turkey's foreign policy behavior. The emphasis of Turkish foreign policy during this period shifted quite dramatically towards the use of "soft power" resources.⁶ Whilst the EU process constituted a centerpiece of Turkish foreign policy, there was also an explicit attempt to develop a multi-dimensional foreign policy, popularized by the slogan of "zero problems" with all neighboring countries.⁷ Indeed, there was an attempt to improve relations with all neighbors during this period, and Turkey made significant progress toward improving relations with countries such as Greece and Syria with whom Turkey had had problematic relations in the past. Similarly, significant efforts were made to develop relations with Russia and the Black Sea neighbors. This is also the period

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in which Turkey undertook important initiatives to improve relations with the Arab Middle East and to increase Turkish presence in the Islamic world by actively participating in the Islamic Conference Organization. Yet another striking feature of Turkey’s foreign policy behavior during this period, and a central feature of the AK Party era in general, involved

the push to find an internationally acceptable solution to the Cyprus dispute along the lines of the Annan Plan. This represented quite a dramatic departure from the established policy stance of the Turkish state. What is also remarkable during this period is the democratization of foreign policy itself. Turkish foreign policy is no longer monopolized by a limited number of state actors. New actors such as business associations and civil society groups have emerged as active participants in the foreign policymaking process. Furthermore, foreign policy issues are now open to public debate, and previously fixed positions on a number of issues, including Cyprus, relations with Armenia, and Kurds in Northern Iraq, are being challenged in the process. Hence, in a nutshell, all these elements put together signify a very significant shift in the direction of Turkey’s emergence as a benign regional power which would not have been possible – at least over such a limited period – in the absence of an ongoing, deep Europeanization and democratization process.⁸

What Went Wrong? Explaining the Loss of Momentum

In analyzing Turkey-EU relations during the AK Party era we may identify two distinct sub-phases. The first phase, from the end of 2002 to roughly the end of 2005, corresponds to the Golden Age of Europeanization in Turkey. During this period, the AK Party government built on the foundations laid by the previous coalition government and pushed single-mindedly for Turkey’s full membership and the associated set of economic and democratization reforms. Although there appears to be a significant degree of continuity with respect to foreign policy activism during the post-2005 era, the second sub-phase corresponds to a certain loss of enthusiasm and commitment on the part of the government to what had previously been the focal point of Turkish foreign policy efforts, namely joining the EU as a full member. Indeed, one may go further and argue that the foreign policy stance of the AK Party government in the post-2005 era deviated from an all-out Europeanization drive, to a possible retreat, to what could be described as

a kind of “loose Europeanization” or “soft Euro-Asianism” strategy.⁹

To an outside observer, the loss of enthusiasm for the EU membership project in Turkey both on the part of the government and the public at large within a short space of time represents quite a paradox and deserves an explanation. Indeed, there was no single turning point, but several interrelated turning points: a number of factors were at work to bring about this dramatic change of mood both on the part of the AK Party elite as well as the public at large. The intense debate generated in the aftermath of the Brussels Summit of 2004 concerning Turkey’s European credentials, particularly in core EU countries such as France and Germany, helped to initiate a serious nationalist backlash in Turkey, and strengthened the standing of anti-EU, anti-reform groups both within the state and in society at large. Turkish media representations of Europe as a monolithic bloc also contributed to this change of mood. The increasing questioning of the very basis of Turkish membership and Turkey’s European credentials by influential political figures at the very core of Europe such as Sarkozy in France and Merkel in Germany at a time when the decision to open up accession negotiations had already been taken made a deep impact in terms of influencing this change of mood in Turkish domestic politics. Indeed, public support for EU membership dropped strikingly from a peak of 74% in 2002 to around 50% by 2006 and 2007.¹⁰ The fact that Europe was also going through an international constitutional stalemate, as evidenced by the rejection of the proposed Constitutional Treaty in the French and Dutch referenda, injected an additional dose of pessimism. Again, media representations or misrepresentations of the constitutional crisis in Turkey contributed to growing Euro-skepticism by helping to project the EU as an unattractive, crisis-ridden project.

Some of the key decisions of the EU concerning Turkish accession also exercised a profound impact in terms of undermining enthusiasm at the elite level and among the public at large. The first of these was the clause on *the possibility of permanent safeguards on full labor mobility following Turkey’s accession to the EU as a full member*.¹¹ This clause immediately generated criticism even among the most vocal supporters of Turkey’s EU membership as a clear case of unfair treatment.¹² Whilst a temporary safeguard on labor mobility, such as the seven year transition period on the new Eastern European members, was quite understandable, the imposition of a permanent safeguard effectively meant that Turkey would be relegated to second division status and a special partner position even if it were to become a full member.

On top of the labor mobility issue, the failure of the EU to fulfill its promises to

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the Turkish Cypriots in return for their cooperative attitude toward resolving the Cyprus conflict along the lines of the UN plan for reunifying the island came as yet another major blow. The EU's failure to deal with the Cyprus problem on an equitable basis was increasingly interpreted, even among key members of

the pro-EU, pro-reform coalition in Turkey, as yet another case of unfair treatment. The fact that the negotiations process was partially suspended due to the Cyprus dispute and specifically to Cyprus's failure to open its ports to vessels from the Republic of Cyprus proved to be the ultimate blow in this context. The EU's unbalanced approach to the Cyprus dispute appeared to confirm widely-held perceptions among the Turkish elites and the general public that Cyprus was being used to place yet another obstacle in the path of Turkey's full membership, the important point being that the Cyprus issue was in itself not critical and was being used as an instrument of exclusion.

The negative external environment originating from the EU front was amplified by a process of steady deterioration in relations with the United States, whose strategic partnership had traditionally been a key element in Turkey's relations with the EU.¹³ The growing instability in Iraq and the human costs of the Iraq War were interpreted as a direct consequence of American unilateralism and aggression; this perception contributed to a major increase in anti-American and anti-West sentiments, given the fact that culturally there is no strong demarcation between "Europe" and the United States as distinct entities in the Turkish context. The mutually reinforcing tendency is to view the EU and the US as part of the same, mutually interlocking "West" or Western civilization.

While the negative and ambiguous signals originating from the EU and "the West" in general were of critical importance in swinging the pendulum away from Turkey's Europeanization drive, important domestic factors were also at work. A key element in this context was the weakening commitment of the AK Party leadership to the goal of full EU membership. We should take into account here the Islamist roots of the AKP. There is no doubt that the party has significantly transformed itself as it has progressively moved to the very "center" of Turkish politics; this became even more evident in the context of the 2007 general elections whereby liberal representation within the AK Party increased markedly. Yet one should not forget the fact that one of the core issues on the party's political agenda

is that of “religious freedoms.” It can be argued that the party leadership realized, through encounters with some of the key decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, that the domain of action for a religion-based party within the EU is clearly circumscribed.¹⁴ This insight might also have been instrumental in reshaping the attitudes of the party leadership to the question of EU membership. Whatever the case may be, evidence of a loss of enthusiasm is evident in the fact that the AK Party government has not actively pushed for some of the key reforms emphasized by the EU.

The elections of July 2007 represented a major opportunity for the AK Party to revitalize Turkey’s Europeanization and reform agenda. The party emerged from the election with an even larger coalition of support and this broad-based public support could have been utilized to reactivate a large-scale reform agenda. True, certain steps have been undertaken to modify the notorious article 301 of the penal code and new legislation has been introduced to protect the rights of Turkey’s non-Muslim minorities. However, these measures have been implemented in a rather defensive and lukewarm manner. Given its broad mandate, the government could have taken more radical steps such as abolishing article 301 of the penal code altogether. Likewise, opening the Halki Seminary could have represented a major move in terms of recognizing the rights of Christian minorities. Instead, with an exaggerated sense of its own power and a diminished sense of the importance of the EU anchor, the party leadership clearly missed an opportunity during the fall of 2007. The proposal involving a new constitution was an important reform initiative very much in line with the spirit of EU conditionality. Yet instead of pushing for a new constitution in a vigorous manner and trying to forge the kind of societal consensus needed to render such a radical project workable, the party’s focus increasingly shifted towards the promotion of fundamental religious freedoms such as allowing female students to wear the headscarf in the universities. Arguably, the crucial mistake here was to present these issues in an isolated fashion in the form of a constitutional amendment and not as part of a broader reform package. The party’s narrow focus, in turn, helped to create a very serious backlash and even alienated liberal opinion which had hitherto been quite supportive of the AK Party’s reformist and moderate credentials.

Ironically, the optimistic mood of the immediate post-election era was replaced by a serious re-polarization of Turkish society, culminating in the court case against the AK Party in the early part of 2008 on the grounds that it had violated the very basis of Turkey’s secular constitutional order. The consequences of these developments for Turkey-EU relations have been rather negative. From a

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European perspective, this set of events appeared to raise fundamental questions about Turkey's democratic credentials and has clearly empowered those members of European society committed to excluding Turkey on the grounds of culture and identity, whilst leaving Europe's pro-Turkey factions in a highly defensive position. The eventual verdict of the Constitutional Court in the summer of 2008 did not involve the closure of the AK Party, although the party did receive

a serious warning and faced monetary penalties. Ultimately, the Court's decision helped to reverse the high degree of uncertainty which the case had generated, and brought an air of stability back into Turkish economic and political life, creating the potential for a new opening in Turkey-EU relations.

Back to a Vicious Cycle? The Emergence of a Grand Coalition for a Special Partnership

There is no doubt that the EU membership process has enjoyed considerable support among different groups both in Turkey and in Europe. Otherwise, the process would not have reached the stage of accession negotiations. In Europe, whilst public support for Turkish membership has been weak, there has nevertheless been strong support among certain sections of the elite depending on their visions of the future of the EU integration process. Those elements which have been particularly favorable to Turkish membership are those that see the future of the EU moving in a more intergovernmental direction and at the same time envisage a strong role for the EU as a security actor. The same elements tend to place a very high premium on the transatlantic alliance and the role of the United States. Hence, not surprisingly, Britain, the new member states and the Scandinavian countries have emerged as important supporters of Turkish membership aspirations in recent years. Similarly, Turkish membership appears to enjoy across-the-board political support in all major Mediterranean countries with the notable exception of France. With that said, divisions also exist across the political spectrum in individual countries. Unlike France, for example, both German elite and German public opinion are divided on the issue of Turkish membership. Social democrats, with their more flexible and culturally open visions of Europe, tend to be more receptive to Turkish membership. It was, after all, Germany under the

leadership of Schröder that provided the strongest support for Turkish membership in the process leading up to the crucial Helsinki decision of the EU Council in December 1999.¹⁵

The critical point, therefore, is that the EU is not a monolithic entity and there is sizeable actual and potential support at the elite level for Turkish membership which can be cultivated by Turkey's political elites. The problem in the current context, however, is that the EU's pro-Turkey coalition has become rather subdued and defensive. Similarly, the various elements which have been supporters of EU membership within Turkey appeared to have lost much of their enthusiasm and commitment. In contrast, the opponents of Turkey's EU membership have become much stronger and more vocal, and have effectively formed a grand coalition in favor of Turkey's exclusion from the EU.

On the surface, Turkey-skeptics in Europe and Euro-skeptics in Turkey tend to be quite different. Turkey-skeptics in Europe, strongly embodied in the personalities of leaders like Sarkozy and Merkel, hold that Turkey is not a natural insider in a culturally-bounded vision of Europe and the associated deep integration process. Euro-skeptics in Turkey, on the other hand, feel that European integration and its associated conditions will tend to undermine the unity and the secular nature of the Turkish state.¹⁶ Looking beneath the surface, however, one can identify common elements. In both cases, a politics of fear, specifically the fear of fragmentation, appears to be a central factor. In the European context, these fears are based on the expectation that Turkish accession will serve to fragment Europe and jeopardize its further cohesion and governability. The negative outcomes are expected to manifest themselves both in the cultural realm, by undermining the cultural homogeneity of Europe, as well as in the economic realm, with massive migration from Turkey resulting in a loss of jobs on a grand scale for established European citizens. The second common element is that those who support a special partnership for Turkey are those who stand to lose the most from the globalization process.

Crucial developments in the internal politics of Europe over the past few years have undoubtedly made a deep, negative impact on Turkish membership prospects. One of the striking developments in Europe in recent years has been the development of right-wing populism based on the fears of immigration and loss of jobs fuelled by the rise of Islamophobia.¹⁷ There is no doubt that the events of 9/11 have left a deep imprint on the European landscape and have clearly helped to fuel anti-Muslim sentiments at the level of the general public. The clear swing of the pendulum toward right of center, Christian Democratic parties in recent years

has also generated an unattractive environment for Turkish membership and has helped to corner supporters of Turkish membership both at home and abroad in a heavily defensive position. What is important to recognize, however, is that the “Turkey question” is a reflection of deeper uncertainties and fears in European societies and the problems that they face in adapting themselves to the pressures of globalization.

Looking to the Future: Grounds for Optimism

The prospects of Turkey’s ambitions for full EU membership do not appear to be very bright in the current conjuncture. The “grand coalition for special partnership” appears to be firmly entrenched. Perhaps even most worrisome, on the top of the dramatic decline in public support for EU membership in Turkey, is the loss of enthusiasm on the part of the liberal, pro-European elites for the EU membership process. With key chapters for negotiation already suspended, the government in power is likely to pursue a loose Europeanization agenda of gradual reforms that fall considerably short of deep commitment to full membership. The pursuit of a loose Europeanization agenda, needless to say, is perfectly consistent with the vision of a privileged partnership.

There is no doubt that the EU membership process for Turkey has lost much of its early momentum. Yet there are important developments that could make one more optimistic about the future. First, the fact that the Constitutional Court case against the governing party did not end in a decision to ban the party constitutes, from a short-term perspective, a favorable development. The outcome of the court case against the AK Party could have had very serious destabilizing consequences for domestic politics and the economy, as well as for the future trajectory of Turkey-EU relations. In European circles, a decision to close the party could have been interpreted as a major breakdown of democratic order in Turkey with the natural consequence of suspending the negotiation process altogether. It would then have been very difficult to revitalize the negotiation process. Second, the change of government in Southern Cyprus, and more recently, the re-initiation of formal negotiations for the reunification of the island have helped to create a new climate of hope for an equitable settlement of the Cyprus dispute. Although it is too early to predict the final outcome, there is at least a possibility that it will be positive, a result that would then help to eliminate a major hurdle on the path of Turkey’s progress towards EU accession.

European integration and Turkey-EU relations are both long-term historical processes. In spite of serious ups and downs and periodic crises along the way, the

long-term trend has clearly been in the direction of deepening both the EU's internal integration process and Turkey's integration process with the EU. Long-term historical processes are difficult to reverse, and reversal becomes particularly difficult once the critical decision is taken to initiate EU negotiations with a candidate country. Indeed, no country has reached the point of negotiations and then failed to qualify as a full member. Having set the target of full membership as a long-term goal and having invested so much in one another, ending up with anything less than full integration will represent a sense of failure and a certain loss of credibility on both sides. Hence, a sense of historical perspective tends to inject an air of optimism regarding the future course of the integration process as well as the possibility of Turkish accession to the EU as a full member.

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The current constitutional crisis in the EU may ironically create an opportunity for Turkey. Clearly what is at stake in the constitutional debate is the future direction of the European project. If the outcome of the constitutional crisis is the development of the EU more in the direction of what Jan Zielonka calls a loosely structured "medieval empire" (which is broadly consistent with the British vision rather than the kind of deep integration project favored by the French), this will naturally embody very significant implications for the future place of Turkey in the European context.¹⁸ If the future path of the EU does involve a British-style integration process of a relatively loose, intergovernmental Europe with relatively flexible boundaries that allow significant scope for national autonomy, the prospects for Turkish accession will be considerably improved. In contrast, if the prevailing style of integration is based on the French project of deep integration – the idea of Europe as a "place" with fixed boundaries as opposed to a flexible "space" – the natural inclination will be to include Turkey as an "important outsider" rather than a "natural insider" in a special partnership arrangement. Our interpretation of the current constitutional impasse in Europe that reached a peak with the negative vote in the Irish referendum of June 2008 is that the dominant tendency in the foreseeable future is likely to conform to the first scenario, i.e. flexible integration, which clearly constitutes a development in Turkey's favor.

In the current conjuncture, the EU is clearly suffering from enlargement fatigue having absorbed ten new members in 2004 and two additional members in 2007.

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Furthermore, this was the most complex wave of enlargement to date, involving the incorporation of countries with deep legacies of communist regimes. Again, a sense of historical perspective suggests, however, that the current enlargement fatigue is unlikely to be a permanent phenomenon. Within the course of the

next five to ten years, the EU may again find itself in the midst of a new wave of enlargement that would involve expansion towards the Balkans and Eastern Europe at the same time. There is already strong support for further enlargement of the EU towards the East among the new member states. The Poles, for example, have emerged as vocal supporters of Ukrainian membership. In a world of Russian assertion, given the solid base of support for further eastward enlargement among the new member states, both for cultural and security reasons, it is highly probable that a new wave of enlargement will take place in the medium-term. Once this process gathers momentum, it might be difficult to exclude Turkey from the ongoing dynamic.

A favorable external environment for enlargement is quite crucial for revitalizing Turkish membership aspirations in the medium term. A favorable external context *per se*, however, is insufficient and needs to be accompanied by a parallel process: the emergence of a strong political movement at home that is deeply committed to the reform process and to EU membership. Clearly, a crucial element in this context will be the position of the secular middle classes in Turkey. If these groups in Turkish society feel that full membership in the EU is a necessary anchor for preserving a liberal constitutional order and preventing their marginalization in an increasingly conservative Turkish society, they may create the impetus for the emergence of a political movement which, in turn, could capitalize on a possible wave of further enlargement to successfully press for Turkey's inclusion in the EU as a full member.

Endnotes

1. See, in this context, Loukas Tsoukalis, *What Kind of Europe?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

2. For the details of this process see, Ziya Öniş and Caner Bakır, "Turkey's Political Economy in the Age of Financial Globalization: The Significance of the EU Anchor," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 2007), pp. 147-164; and Kemal Derviş, Michel Emerson, Daniel Gros

and Sinan Ülgen, *The European Transformation of Modern Turkey* (Brussels: Center for European Policy Reform, 2004).

3. Mehmet Uğur, *The European Union and Turkey: An Anchor/Credibility Dilemma* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

4. See Öniş and Bakır, "Turkey's Political Economy in the Age of Financial Globalization: The Significance of the EU Anchor" for further details.

5. For detailed treatment of the democratization reforms see Ergun Özbudun and Serap Yazıcı, *Democratization Reforms in Turkey* (Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2004); Senem Aydın and E. Fuat Keyman, "Europeanization and the Transformation of Turkish Democracy", CEPS Working Paper, No. 6072 (Brussels: Center for European Policy Reform, 2004); and Meltem Müftüler-Baç, "Turkey's Political Reforms: The Impact of the European Union," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (April, 2005), pp. 16-30.

6. For a detailed treatment see Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkish Foreign Policy in Turbulent Times," *Chailot Paper*, No: 92 (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2006). See also the special issue of *Insight Turkey* (Turkey's Rising Soft Power) Vol. 10, No. 2 (2008).

7. This slogan provided the inspiration for the AK Party's foreign policy. For the intellectual basis of Turkey's changing foreign policy during this period see Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

8. On the distinction between benign and coercive regional power see Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "The Turkish-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Spring, 2005), pp. 265-284.

9. For a detailed elaboration see Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era," forthcoming in *Turkish Studies* (Spring, 2009).

10. Euro-barometer results indicate public support for EU membership of slightly over 50% for July 2007. The results are available at http://ec.europa.eu/public-opinion/index_en.htm.

11. For a good discussion of the negotiating framework and its limitations from a Turkish point of view, see Kemal Kirişçi, "The December 2004 European Council Decision on Turkey: Is it an Historic Turning Point?," *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (December 2004).

12. See E. Fuat Keyman and Senem Aydın, "The Principle of Fairness in Turkey-EU Relations," *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 3 (Fall, 2004), pp. 83-85.

13. See Öniş and Yılmaz, "The Turkish-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?," pp. 265-284 for further elaboration.

14. In the case of Leyla Şahin versus Turkey of June 2004, the European Court of Human Rights decided in favor of Turkey. The banning of headscarves at the University of Istanbul did not violate Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

15. For a detailed treatment of the components of the pro-Turkey coalition within the EU see Ziya Öniş, "Turkey's Encounters with the New Europe: Multiple transformations, Inherent Dilemmas and the Challenges Ahead," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (December, 2006), pp. 279-298.

16. See Hakan Yılmaz, "Turkish Populism and the Anti-EU Rhetoric," *Perceptions and Misperceptions in the EU and Turkey: Stumbling Blocks on the Road to Accession* (Leiden, Holland: Centre for European Security Studies (CESS) and Turkey Institute, June 2008.)

17. For a good analysis with special reference to the Dutch context, see Rene Cuperus, "Europe's

Revolt of Populism and the Turkish Question,” *Perceptions and Misperceptions in the EU and Turkey: Stumbling Blocks on the Road to Accession* (Leiden, Holland: Centre for European Security Studies (CESS) and Turkey Institute, June 2008.)

18. Jan Zielonka, *Europe as Empire. The Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).