

THE PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EU ON TURKEY'S ACCESSION PROCESS
FOR MEMBERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

THE PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EU ON TURKEY'S ACCESSION PROCESS FOR MEMBERSHIP

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The main aim of this thesis is to examine the perspectives of the European public opinion on the issue of Turkish membership to the EU. That way the question whether Turkish accession can be managed in a similar way to that of other enlargements will be better enlightened.

This thesis will examine how the general public perspective is shaped or changed in the post Helsinki era. In order to determine the general tendencies of public opinion of EU, on Turkey's accession; three approaches on the issue, British, French and German perspectives, as sample cases will be studied. In order to fully comprehend the subject, arguments and reasons cited against or for Turkish membership in various political parties/campaigns' and non-governmental organizations, their reflections in written and visual media and recent opinion polls will be elaborated and compared as well as the official point of view on the matter.

Key words: The EU, Turkey, Public Opinion, France, Germany, Britain

ÖZ

AB KAMUOYUNUN TÜRKİYE’NİN AVRUPA BİRLİĞİNE ÜYELİK SÜRECİNE YÖNELİK YAKLAŞIMLARI

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Bu tezin temel amacı, AB ülkelerinde kamuoylarının Türkiye'nin üyeliğine nasıl baktığını araştırmaktır. Böylelikle Türkiye'nin AB'ye katılımının diğer genişleme süreçleriyle benzer şekilde yürütülüp yürütülemeyeceği konusu da kavranmış olacaktır.

Bu tez çalışması ile, Helsinki Zirvesi sonrası dönemde AB'de genel kamuoyu perspektifinin nasıl şekillendiği ve ne tür değişimler gösterdiğini incelenmiştir. Avrupa'da, Türkiye'nin AB'ye katılımı hakkındaki genel eğilimleri belirlemek amacıyla, konuya ilişkin üç farklı yaklaşıma, İngiliz, Fransız ve Alman perspektiflerine yer verilmiştir. Bu amaçla da resmi görüşlerin yanı sıra, çeşitli siyasi partilerin ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarının programlarında ve kampanyalarında yer alan olumlu ve olumsuz tezlerinden, bu tezlerin ve yaklaşımların görsel ve yazılı basındaki yansımalarından ve son yıllarda yapılan araştırmalar ile kamuoyu yoklamalarından karşılaştırmalı olarak faydalanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: AB, Türkiye, Kamuoyu, İngiltere, Fransa, Almanya

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THE PUBLIC OPINION, EU and TURKEY.....	4
2.1 The Role Of Public Opinion On Policy Formulation.....	4
2.2 The EU Today.....	6
2.3 A Brief Account Of The Turkish –Eu Encounters Since Turkish Application For Membership.....	12
2.4 Arguments And Reasons Evoked Against and/or For Turkish Membership.....	18
3. FRENCH POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION AS TO TURKISH MEMBERSHIP TO EU.....	24
3.1 A Brief History of Turkish-French Relations.....	24
3.2 French Position On Enlargement.....	27
3.3 French Position On Turkish Accession.....	30
3.3.1 Position of Major Political Forces.....	30
3.3.2 The Media’s Impact on French Public Opinion.....	46
3.3.3 Other Actors Who Have A Role On The Shaping Of French Public Opinion.....	50
4. GERMAN POSITIODN AND ATTITUDE OF GERMAN PUBLIC OPINION AS TO TURKISH MEMBERSHIP TO EU.....	64
4.1 A Brief History of Turkish-German Relations.....	64
4.2 German Position On Enlargement.....	68
4.3 German Position On Turkish Accession.....	70

4.3.1 Position of Major Political Forces.....	70
4.3.2 The Media's Impact on German Public Opinion.....	95
4.3.3 Other Actors Who Have A Role On The Shaping Of German Public Opinion.....	98
5. BRITISH POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION AS TO TURKISH MEMBERSHIP TO EU	108
5.1 A Brief History of Turkish-British Relations.....	108
5.2 British Position On Enlargement.....	111
5.3 British Position On Turkish Accession.....	111
5.3.1 Position of Major Political Forces.....	114
5.3.2 The Media's Impact on British Public Opinion.....	129
5.3.3 Other Actors Who Have A Role On The Shaping Of British Public Opinion.....	135
6. GENERAL ASSESMENT.....	144
7. CONCLUSION.....	159
REFERENCES.....	169

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The subject of enlargement is a key aspect in shaping the future of European Union (EU). Debates on the absorption capacity of the Union and the implications of the accession of new members have become an everyday calculation for both member and candidate countries.

In the case of Turkey's candidacy, the speculations, debates and various accession scenarios seem even more vivid. Turkey's many distinctive characteristics compared to those of current members make the relations between Turkey and EU quite controversial. On the road ahead, there lay many topics that need to be discussed and solved. Since a clear date of accession is still unknown, the issue of Turkish accession seems to continue to be a debated issue for quite a long time.

The main aim of this thesis is to question and examine the main factors that influence and shape the perceptions about the issue of Turkish Accession to the EU in the eyes of the governments and the peoples of EU countries. To attain this purpose, three major countries of the EU, namely France, Germany and Britain are selected for analysis.

What the publics of these countries think or how they perceive the issue is of great importance for the future development of Turkey's accession process for membership. Although sometimes there are some discrepancies between the general view point of the public and the actions of politicians, the impact of the public opinion in decision making and implementation processes is still too significant to ignore.

As for the analysis the time period between the 1999 Helsinki summit and December 2006 is selected following a short historical background since the Ankara Agreement (1964).

Although there are many more other factors that influence the shaping of the public opinion in a country in this study, only three major ones, namely, the stances of the principal political parties, the media and some significant organizations of the “civil society” are taken into scrutiny.

The reason why these three countries Britain, Germany and France were chosen is that they represent the strongest powers both in economic and political sense and possess the power to direct both the decision making processes of the EU and partly affect the general public opinion. As generally accepted the opposition to Turkey’s membership to the EU are of the strongest ones in France and Germany among the EU countries, the arguments presented are often quite different. Therefore, comparing the national debates in France and Germany allow us to corroborate the hypothesis that the debate on Turkey is highly fragmented along national lines and reveals different expectations for the future of Europe.

Britain constitutes a completely different example when compared to Britain and France, since contrary to the ones in France and Germany, British governments’ stance is much more positive. However, there are still some skepticism prevailing in the British public.

Since, all of the studied three countries display a very pluralistic political life and the political scene is highly fragmented, only the major political forces are included into the study.

As is generally accepted, the media is the principle institution in the modern times that moulds the opinions. This is why in this study the opinions evoked in the major newspapers are also included as an important component of the public opinion in the studied countries.

Lastly, the positions and the disclosed opinions of the responsible of the civil societal organizations such as business elites are inquired.

CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC OPINION, EU AND TURKEY

2.1 – THE ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION ON POLICY FORMULATION

Traditional distinction made between the international relations policy (foreign policy) and the domestic politics has faded away in our modern complex world. International relations policy is no more accepted as a domain reserved for the governments and the ruling elites in all countries with a claim to democracy. Interests and (ideological) goals embedded in and expressed by the international relations policies are public issues that interest closely every one living in a county.

The rapid evolution of ever more advanced communications foster the dissemination and exchange of information, knowledge and ideas which are central to and necessary for the deliberation, participation and practice of international relations policy. As is generally acknowledged today, it is due to this fact that the actors of international relations policy is extended to non-state private organizations.

In representative democracies such as the EU countries issue of political legitimacy is irrevocably tied to the general public's will. In such countries, this public will is not restrained with the sole results of general or local elections since modern democratic rule requires a high level of citizen participation. It is materialized at every level and instant of societal life through the activities of political organizations, trade unions, interest groups and voluntary associations. Even the individual opinions of the intellectuals matter in this context.

These remarks naturally lead one to the concept of public opinion. Although the concept itself is quite equivocal, it is generally referred to the aggregate of individual attitudes or beliefs held by the general public. Existence of a free “public sphere” where opinions on public issues at one time approaching public opinion can be found is essential.

Political organizations apart, activities of the interest groups and/or voluntary associations rooted in the civil society may exert significant influence on decision makers through collective actions. But in democratic regimes where public communication is not monopolized by the state, there is nearly universal agreement that the media play a vital and defining role in the formation of the public opinion which in turn is effective for the policy formulation.

As a matter of fact, the representative democracy is inconceivable without forms of communications to create awareness of public issues that face a modern complex society whose members are not personally in touch with each other, who lack common geographic reference points, and whose central organizations are remote from the people they serve or exploit.

In modern representative democracies, politics is essentially a struggle of competing groups with different interests. The issue is decided through a process of bargaining and compromise. No government can resist long time to a pressure exerted by the majority of the public opinion. This is why governments and policy making bodies recourse to surveys as useful tools for testing and guiding their policies. This being the case, public opinion, even in advanced (western) democracies, is also highly susceptible to (elite) manipulation. Consequently, in their turn, to promote a certain policy issue, governments can provoke and create a certain public opinion on that very issue.

International relations policy issues are the most suitable and open ones for such manipulations.¹

2.2 THE EU TODAY

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states, with almost 500 million citizens. The EU combined generates an estimated 30% share of the world's nominal gross domestic product (US\$16.8 trillion in 2007). However, although EU is considered both as politically and economically a “Super-State”, the Union has

¹For further information on the close reciprocal relationship between public opinion and the foreign policy formulation see: Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, “Foreign Policy and Public Opinion”, *Weekly Pulse*, May 01, 2008, <http://www.weeklypulse.org/pulse/article/1757.html>.

Alex Evans and David Steven, “Towards a theory of influence for twenty-first-century foreign policy: public diplomacy in a globalised world”, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/publications/publications/pd-publication/21c-foreign-policy>,

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Jerome Laulicht, “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy Decisions”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1965), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/423116>

Ofer Zalberg, “Europe and the Israelis: A Failed Case of European Public Diplomacy?” www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/intrel/EFPC/Papers/Zalberg.doc

been experiencing some difficulties as well, especially related to the issue of enlargement.

Despite a recent improvement in EU growth (last year GDP growth was 2.9%) there are concerns over fundamental problems with the EU economy. In recent years by far the worst performers in the EU have been the big 3 of Germany, Italy and France. Germany for example has experienced 6 years of sluggish growth and poor productivity rates in 2006.

One of the reasons for slowdown in European growth was cited as, the slowdown inevitable after wonder years of 1950s and 1960s. Also German Reunification has often been used to explain low growth in Germany and hence EU. Reunification was very expensive causing high levels of government borrowing. Because of high borrowing levels interest rates were higher than they needed to be. This was certainly a constraint on German growth in the 1990s however 17 years after the fall of the Berlin wall this is becoming increasingly less significant.

It is argued that many countries joined the Euro at a rate that is too high making its exports less competitive. Other countries are also experiencing declining competitiveness as a result of a strong EURO. The ECB has been accused of giving too much priority to the goal of low inflation. It is argued they have sought to maintain low inflation at the expense of lower growth.

Growth and Stability Pact is another constraint on expansionary fiscal policy because in theory it limits governments borrowing to 3% of GDP. Therefore in a recession a government is unable to use monetary policy but also they are unable to reflate the economy through higher spending and borrowing. However in practice these rules have proved to be sufficiently flexible; there has been no attempt to penalize countries like France and Italy who have broken them.

Inflexible labour markets are frequently held up as a constraint on economic growth. In particular rigidities in the labour market discourage investment from abroad. This discourages firms from expanding and investing. Both the IMF and OECD have argued that further labour market liberalisation is needed to regain competitiveness. However such reforms often face stiff opposition from powerful interest groups who wish to protect the interests of their members.

Countries like Germany and Italy have a declining birth rate, which creates a certain stagnation. This means that the population structure is becoming weighted towards those who are over 50. The traditional population pyramid is being inverted. The increased demands placed on benefits and decline in tax revenue is a serious burden for government spending. It is reflected in burgeoning public debt. Such high levels of debt are argued to cause crowding out of private sector spending.²

The enlargement challenge comes at a time when low-cost competition from the emerging economic giants of Asia is bearing down on sluggish European economies. The economically more advanced, broadly speaking social democratic societies of western and northern Europe, have grown accustomed to a historically unusual combination of steady growth in personal spending power and high levels of state-guaranteed welfare. With ageing populations and the competition from Asia, this is difficult to sustain. Then there is the double imperative of securing energy supplies, currently dependent on authoritarian regimes in Russia, central Asia and the Middle East, and doing more to slow down global warming by reducing carbon dioxide emissions.³

² "Economic Problems of European Union"
<http://www.economicshelp.org/2007/03/economic-problems-of-european-union.html>

³ Timothy Garton Ash, "Today's European Union is 27 states in search of a story", *The Guardian*, January 4, 2007
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/jan/04/comment.eu>

The timeline for the most urgent decisions is probably 2009 when the fundamental reforms of the EU budget – which is far too small and unbalanced at present to be the effective instrument for the growth, cohesion and sustainability of the EU economy which is needed – must be finalised.

Enlargement is the historic triumph of the EU, but enlargement means change and change is always disruptive. Long-term, overall, it will increase the prosperity, but short-term it can mean - or be seen to mean - east European migrants taking local jobs and burdening local services. Hence the backlash against the "Polish plumber" in France, and the regrettable restrictions on Romanians and Bulgarians coming to work in Britain.

The actual evidence about the impact of migration within the enlarged EU shows it to be a clearly positive development for the economies of the host countries although it has created problems for the countries of origin which are now starting to face serious skills shortages to sustain the remarkable economic boom which has followed enlargement. In addition the accession of Bulgaria and Romania and that of Croatia (probably around 2010) will be followed by a transitional period of several years before they take a full part in the EU labour market.

Also institutional arrangements originally designed for six member states, and still just about functional with 15, become cumbersome with 27 - but the proposed constitutional treaty has been rejected in France and the Netherlands, partly in reaction to the perceived consequences of enlargement. For some, the European Union does not have the governance capacity to effectively run a union of twenty-seven – let alone thirty or thirty-five member-states. With its planned constitution in suspension it certainly lacks the minimum degree of integration needed for effective decision-making. And the essential development of a transnational European democracy is still lagging behind the

limited progress made in strengthening the EU's executive powers. Besides, the need of a definition of a wider European Commonwealth that does not bind both sides into the detailed legal structures drawn up fifty years ago was expressed for European countries facing quite different challenges.⁴ And the proposed solutions will need to win the active support of both the existing members and the new-comers to this Union.

Moreover, Turkey's candidacy raises fears of a loss of cultural coherence. The issues of immigration, crime, terrorism and the integration of Muslims into European societies get stirred up together by the gutter press and populist politicians. The EU has been experiencing some problems especially in the post 9/11 period such as Islamophobia, radical nationalism, enlargement exhaustion, debates on constitution, Sarkozy's opposition to Turkey and Mediterranean Union proposals, Angela Merkel's privileged partnership proposals, arguments of EU being a holly Union of Christians and finally the debates on Lisbon Agreement that protected the interests of nation states that were concerned about the EU's supranationality and EU Commission's strong influence. These also triggered some developments to cause the EU to lose some ground and legitimacy in the eyes of Europeans.

Today the residents of the EU member states are witnessing a dialect about enlargement between the states that have a more open tone towards enlargement such as Britain and the ones that express their concerns over the burdens of enlargement such as France, Germany and Austria.

According to the "Old Europeans" led by Germany and France, an excessively enlarged Europe could eventually create a division of a core and a periphery within Europe, where more active and economically sufficient and developed states' progress

⁴http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracyeurope_constitution/enlargement_3572.jsp

would outpace the less developed members. That is why a border should be drawn into the map of the EU.

Moreover, “the too much enlarged Europe” would cause EU to lose its functioning mechanisms and turn into a stagnant and inefficient body, since the organizational and legal structure, as well as the decision making mechanisms were not originally designed for a crowd of nations.

On the other hand, a group of states led by Britain would define EU as a more economy oriented union, rather than a political one. That is why enlargement of the EU can contribute to the competitiveness of the EU against the other developed and newly emerging markets.

In addition to that, provided that the candidate states fulfil the necessary criteria, the enlargement would be beneficial to the mission of spreading the democracy and the rule of law to the other parts of Europe, thus increasing its role in becoming an influential, global actor that address a variety of cultures and societies.

The debates of enlargement have been dominating the agenda of both the EU officials and the everyday discussions of the public of the EU. Considering the fact that expanding and modifying the club which have many members with different sensitivities involves great risks as well as many benefits.

It would not be very wrong to say that the EU that has been dealing with the socio-economic costs of enlargement, also tries to re-build itself against “three others”, that are Islam, enlargement and USA of Bush. On the other hand the inadequacy of neo-liberal EU states in constructing a social Europe and the failure of governments in overcoming some fundamental problems like unemployment, poverty and exclusion have created new “scapegoats” and “enemy within” in Islam and migration problems in order to obtain palliative solutions to more serious issues mentioned above.

In an environment of cultural and religious arguments taking the place of political and socio-economic arguments, a strong opposition to migrants and especially Muslims can be observed in conservative governments. That is why it is not very surprising for Sarkozy and Merkel to emphasize their anti-Turkish stance in their election campaigns. Naturally, in such a culturalist, nationalist and religious platform, it is not unusual to see a declining support for Turkey in the EU public opinion.⁵

2.3 A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE TURKISH-EU ENCOUNTERS SINCE TURKISH APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Ever since the foundation of modern day Turkey in 1923, this country has been a secular democracy closely aligned with the West. Turkey was a founding member of the United Nations, and a member of NATO (since 1952), the Council of Europe (1949), the OECD (1961) and an associate member of the Western European Union (1992). Ankara chose to begin co-operating closely with the then European Economic Community in 1959, and Turkey's prospective membership in the EEC's successor, the European Union, has been a source of much debate since.⁶

Turkey first applied for associate membership in the European Economic Community in 1959, and finally signed an Association Agreement in 1963 (known as the Ankara Agreement). The Agreement sought to integrate Turkey into a customs union with the

⁵ Ayhan Kaya, "AB Ülkelerinin Kamuoylarında Türkiye Algıları", May 05 2008.
<http://www.euractiv.com.tr/yazici-sayfasi/analyze/ab-ulkelerinin-kamuoylarinda-turkiye-algilari>

⁶ "The EU-25's view of Turkey's membership bid", *Euraktiv*, 17 December 2004.
< <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-25-view-turkey-membership-bid/article-133328>>

EEC whilst acknowledging the final goal of membership. In November 1970, a further protocol established a timetable for the abolition of tariffs and quotas on goods traded between Turkey and the EEC. 1980 saw a temporary freeze in relations as a result of the 1980 military coup following political and economic instability, though the recommencement of multiparty elections in 1983 saw Turkish-EEC relations fully restored.

On 14 April 1987, Turkey submitted its application for formal membership into the European Community. The European Commission responded in December 1989 with a refusal to begin accession negotiation. Although confirming Ankara's eventual membership, Turkey's economic and political situation, as well its poor relations with Greece and conflict with Cyprus were cited as creating an unfavourable environment with which to begin negotiations. This position was confirmed again in the Luxembourg European Council of 1997 in which accession talks were started with central and eastern European states and Cyprus, but not with Turkey.

During the 1990s Turkey proceeded with a closer integration with the European Union by agreeing to a customs union in 1995. Moreover the Helsinki European Council of 1999 proved a milestone as the EU recognized Turkey as a candidate on equal footing with other potential candidates. The next significant step in Turkish-EU relationships came with the December 2002 Copenhagen European Council. According to it, "the EU would open negotiations with Turkey 'without delay' 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"

In its 17 December 2004 decision, the European Council recognized Turkey's "significant legislative progress in many areas" but added that "these need to be further consolidated and broadened". Furthermore, the report also took note of the improvements in the country's economic stability and predictability and the strengthened independence and efficiency of the judiciary. Regarding the respect for

human rights and the exercise of fundamental freedoms, “Turkey has acceded to most relevant international and European conventions”.⁷

The political reform program that included the abolition of the death penalty except for terrorist offences, or in times of war, crackdown on torture, increasing right to free expression, restriction to ban political parties, and increase in the number of civilians on the national security council, the easing of restrictions on public demonstrations and association, revision of press laws and regulations, reduction of some police powers, right to broadcast in languages other than Turkish and improvement of minority rights, resulted with the European Commission’s recommendation that the negotiations should begin in 2005. Despite an attempt by the Austrian government to offer Turkey less than full membership, EU membership negotiations were officially launched as the governments of the EU's Member States unanimously approved the start of accession negotiations with Ankara. The joint objective of these negotiations is EU membership. That being said, even if Turkey does meet all the EU's stipulated accession criteria, it will not automatically be granted membership. The decision also included various precautionary measures.⁸

Under the Council’s decision, a framework for Turkey’s EU membership negotiations was established by the Commission. This document was released on 29 June 2005. The negotiating framework, which has been described by Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn as "rigorous", rested on many elements.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Daniela Schröder, “A wasted Year”,
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/ c-476/ nr-988/i.html

The underlying and shared objective of the talks would be Turkey's accession. However, the negotiations will be "open-ended", which meant that their outcome cannot be guaranteed beforehand.

At the end of the talks, should Turkey fail to qualify in full for all obligations of EU membership as specified in the Copenhagen criteria, EU member states would still ensure that Ankara is "fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond".

The accession negotiations would be conducted in the framework of an Intergovernmental Conference with the participation of Turkey and all EU member states. The policy issues would be broken down into 35 policy areas (chapters) - more than ever before - and the decisions would require unanimity.

The EU may consider the inclusion of long transition periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses in its proposals for each framework. Membership talks with candidates "whose accession could have substantial financial consequences" (such as Turkey) could only be concluded after 2014, the scheduled date for the establishment of the EU's new financial framework.

Accession negotiations could be suspended in case of a "serious and persistent breach of the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on which the Union was founded". Suspension would require a Commission initiative or a request to that effect by one third of the member states. The final decision would be made by the Council by qualified majority, and the European Parliament would be informed.

Under a compromise formula agreed at the December 2004 EU Council, before 3 October 2005 Turkey would have to sign a protocol that will adapt the 1963 Ankara Treaty to the ten new member states of the EU, including the Greek Cypriot

government. For practical purposes this would amount to an implicit recognition of this government for the first time since the island's division in 1974. "The adoption of this protocol is in no way recognition, and I've put this on the record," Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said.⁹

Turkey's accession talks have since been interrupted by a number of domestic and external problems. Several European states have made clear their reluctance to allow a large and populous Muslim country into Europe. The issue of Cyprus continues to be a major obstacle to negotiations. European officials have commented on the slow-down in Turkish reforms which, combined with the Cyprus problem, has led the EU's enlargement commissioner to warn of an impending 'train crash' in negotiations with Turkey. Despite these setbacks, Turkey has closed its first chapter in negotiations in June 2006.

12 June 2006 has marked the opening of negotiations on the individual "chapters". The negotiating framework specifies 35 chapters. Each chapter needs to be unanimously opened and closed by the Council. On 4 September 2006 the European Parliament voted on report concerning Turkey's progress on preparing for membership. The report said that Turkey had made insufficient progress in the areas of freedom of expression, minority rights, corruption and violence against women.¹⁰

The report, repeated its call for recognition of so-called Armenian genocide prior to EU full membership of Turkey. Different from previous reports, the report claimed that Turkey committed genocide against Pontus Greeks and Assyrians besides Armenians. The Turkish Foreign Ministry said it strongly rejected the EP report compiled by the Dutch legislator Camiel Eurlings, saying that it was incompatible with the prestige and

⁹"The EU-25's view of Turkey's membership bid", *Euractiv*, 17 December 2004.
< <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-25-view-turkey-membership-bid/article-133328>>

¹⁰ Ibid.

gravity of the EP. The controversial report asked Turkey for recognizing so-called Armenian genocide as well as Assyrian and Pontus genocides. With this report, so-called Pontus and Assyrian genocides have entered in an official EU report for the first time.¹¹

In November 2006, the European Union expressed concern over restrictions to the free movement of goods, including restrictions on means of transport to which Turkey had committed by signing the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement. Then, the European Council decided on 14-15 December 2006 to suspend negotiations on eight chapters relevant to Turkey's restrictions with regard to the Republic of Cyprus. (Chapter 1 Free movement of goods, Chapter 3 Right of establishment and freedom to provide services, Chapter 9 Financial services, Chapter 11 Agriculture and rural development, Chapter 13 Fisheries, Chapter 14 Transport policy, Chapter 29 Customs union, Chapter 30 External relations)

It was also decided that no chapter would be provisionally closed until Turkey fulfils its commitments under the additional protocol to the EU-Turkey association agreement. However, this did not mean that the process of negotiations was blocked. As of January 2007, the negotiations were back on the track on the chapters that were not suspended.

Chapter 20 on Enterprise and Industrial Policy was opened for negotiation at the end of March 2007. Turkey's membership talks with the European Union then continue with the opening of two more negotiation chapters; Chapter 18 on Statistics and Chapter 32 on Financial Control. Two more chapters have been opened on 19th December; Chapter 21 on Trans-European Networks and Chapter 28 on Health and Consumer Protection. In

¹¹ "Turkey's Growing Pain towards EU Accession", *Turkish Weekly*, September 06 2006. <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=37981>>

June 2008, two new chapters, namely Chapter 6 on Company Law and Chapter 7 on Intellectual Property Law were opened to negotiation.¹²

2.3 Arguments And Reasons Evoked Against and/or For Turkish Membership

“Turkey is part of Europe”, declared the first president of the European Commission Walter Hallstein at the signing of the association agreement with Turkey in 1963. Some decades later, this statement is deeply contested. Whether Turkey is “European” and whether it should become a member state of the EU is at the origins of countless debates amongst politicians, researchers and journalists. Moreover, the debates on Turkey have now transcended the elitist circles and spread out to the wider public. Very often, however, the discussion remains nationally bounded.¹³

Turkey’s prospective EU membership divides political groups on both right and left, Europhiles as well as Euroskeptics, but for entirely different reasons. Some Euro-enthusiasts are against it because they see it as a dilution of the union. On the anti-EU side, some people support Turkey’s membership precisely because it could dilute the Union, ending dreams about a politically unified EU. Others are opposed to it because they do not want a “Muslim state” in the EU.¹⁴

¹²http://www.avrupa.info.tr/AB_ve_Turkiye/Muzakereler,Muzakereler_Sayfalar.html?pageindex=3

¹³http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2007/2007_eu-turkey.pdf

¹⁴ “*EU-Turkey Agenda*. No.10, June 2006”
<http://www.bilgi.edu.tr/+OtherSites/docs/CESBulletin10.pdf>

Many EU countries officially welcome the prospect of Turkish membership - albeit at least 10 years down the line and subject to consistent evidence of Turkey's commitment to democratic values. There are many arguments cited for a "yes" to a EU member Turkey. An important argument in favor is that Turkey has a very dynamic, rapidly modernizing economy. In 2004 and 2005, growth was above 7%, being far above average growth in the EU. An important argument in favor is that Turkey has a very dynamic, rapidly modernizing economy. In 2004 and 2005, growth was above 7%, being far above average growth in the EU.

Turkey is a strong regional military power that might give the EU more weight in hotspots like Syria, Iraq or Iran. Alternatively some believe that conditional Turkish membership would encourage moves towards more stable economic growth, democratic government and a less interfering military. Also a military dynamic such as Turkey would contribute to the Common Security and Defense policy as argued by some states such Germany and Britain. Furthermore, Turkey being in the middle of the crossroads for some important energy routes make it an appealing candidate for some members.

Turkey has been involved in European history for about 1000 years, through the Ottoman Empire and as the seat of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Ottomans made key contributions to European culture.

Turkey is considered a strongly secular state, just as the EU defines itself. In addition to that Turkey's overwhelmingly Muslim population would lend considerable weight to EU multi-culturalism efforts and might help to prevent potential scenarios involving a clash of civilizations. At the same time, Turkey's young and well-educated population might act as a balance for the increasingly aging populations of the current EU.

There are also many arguments that are against the possibility of a Turkey inside the EU as a full member. In some states, such as France, Germany and Austria, the opposition

ratio is very high compared to other members. In other words, opposition to Turkey's entry into the EU varies among the public of the current EU member states, as does political support or opposition to the entry bid. The anti-Ankara alliance in the EU - which is headed up by France, Austria, and conservatives in Germany - argues that Turkey simply doesn't fit into Europe and that it is much too big, much too poor, and much too different.

Differences in fundamental values and culture between a predominantly Muslim country with current dominantly Christian and non-religious EU members, all of which are historically Christian are emphasized by some members such as France. Some states like Poland, Portugal, Greece, insisted that the Judeo Christian heritage is enshrined in the constitution, again stressing the Christian character of the EU.

The Turkish government's refusal to officially recognize the state of Cyprus and open its ports to Cypriot planes and vessels construct the biggest obstacle to Turkey's accession to the EU, much before other issues, according the some members such as the UK and Greece. Greek Cypriots have subsequently threatened to veto accession talks unless Turkey complies. However Turkey refuses this and insists it will only do so as part of a settlement to the Cyprus problem.

According to some, only 3% of Turkey's territory lies in geographical Europe. Furthermore, the Turkish capital is not in Europe, but, like Cyprus, in Asia. Turkey's membership would mean that the European Union's external borders would now reach Middle Eastern nations such as Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Turkey's large size and poverty is another point of concern. Turkey would represent an expansion almost equal in population to that of the 2004 Enlargement. Many question whether the EU can support and "absorb" such a large state, and many member states are wary of a potentially huge wave of Turkish immigration. And also Turkey's large

political power once in the Union means, its almost 70 million inhabitants will bestow it the second largest number of representatives in the European Parliament, after Germany. With the current rate of population increase some fear it might even surpass Germany by the time of accession.

Many have continuing doubts on the commitment of the Turkish state to democracy and human rights, and its ability to reach European standards in these issues as gender equality, political freedom and minority rights. Some groups in the European Parliament have urged Turkey to recognize the Armenian deaths in the Ottoman Empire during World War I as genocide but Turkey denies responsibility, stating that the events were part of a civil war during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover Recognition of the events as genocide is not a formal prerequisite for entry, with other EU members still not recognizing the events as such.

Many believe that the inclusion of such a large country with a different culture and an unstable economy might make it extremely difficult for the EU to deepen its integration, and might force it to be reduced to a simple zone of economic cooperation. This is something that is considered a benefit by many eurosceptics, who want the EU to structurally remain as is or even revert to an earlier state, being mainly an economic free market project and not a wider political and cultural project, but the opposite view is espoused by the European federalists.

In many EU countries, there is a deep gap between the rhetoric and action of the political elite on the one hand and the opinion of the mass public on the other. It is not only European governments that will have to be convinced to make Turkish accession possible. Turkey will not be able to join the EU without the consent of the people.¹⁵

¹⁵http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2007/2007_eu-turkey.pdf

Public opinion in EU countries generally opposes Turkish membership, though with varying degrees of intensity. The Eurobarometer March-May 2006 survey shows that 48% of EU-25 citizens are against Turkey joining the EU, while about 39% are in favour. Citizens from the new member states are more in favour of Turkey joining (44% in favour) than the old EU-15 (38% in favour). At the time of the survey, the country whose population most strongly opposed Turkish membership was Austria (con: 81%), while Romania (pro: 66%) a state that is most in favor of the accession, followed by Sweden (pro:61%),. These communities are even more in favor of the accession than in the Turkish populace itself (pro: 54%).

Article 6 of the Treaty establishing the EU stipulates that the "...Union (is) founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States". Article 49 stipulates the procedure for the accession of new members: "Any European State which respects the principles set out in Article 6 may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members."

Turkey has already gone through this procedure. Its membership application was received confirming its qualification as a European State, with the unambiguous reference to its membership of the Council of Europe. Then all the competent EU institutions approved this candidacy. Following several turbulences on the way, this membership process has finally reached the stage of accession negotiations in 2005. At this point, it has also become clear that this would still be a "long and narrow road" as the popular Turkish poet Aşık Veysel would put it.

CHAPTER 3

FRENCH POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION AS TO TURKISH MEMBERSHIP TO EU

3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF TURKISH-FRENCH RELATIONS

France, who gave birth to the idea of the European Union (EU), is also considered as the birthplace of a centralist and laicist state, which inspired the fundamental principles of the Republic of Turkey. The ideals of democracy have one of the oldest and strongest historical roots in France; however this multicultural state also has always had very conservative and nationalistic principles in its foreign policy. That is why the history of Franco-Turkish relations is more complicated than most states in world politics.

France and the Ottoman Empire, has one of the longest diplomatic relations in modern Europe history, interrupted only by a brief break of three years (1798-1801) during shipment of Egypt. The first Ottoman embassy traveled to France in 1484. The contacts were further enhanced, especially in a commercial viewpoint, with the capitulations granted by the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, in 1535. These privileged trading conditions were to mark the relations, both in commercial terms and beyond, till their abolition with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

Apart from those involved in politics and diplomacy, also the authors and their immediate public during the various successive stages of modern Turkish literature overwhelmingly had the French language as their primary western reference. The recently growing immigrant communities of Turkish origin, at all levels of the society,

in France, Belgium, Switzerland and Canada also helped strengthen the position of the knowledge of French in Turkey, both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

French support for the newly emerging nations in the Balkans and Middle East started to occur in 19th century. Ironically it was France with its republican spirit, its ideals of the Enlightenment and its laicist system of state which was the example which Turkey chose to follow.¹⁶

The two countries have been in a state of war three times. The first time was during Napoleon's Egypt-Syria campaign in 1798-1800. The second time was during the First World War, especially in Gallipoli campaigns where the French forces were comparatively less heavily invested than British and ANZAC troops. In that time French forces occupied Syria and Lebanon and participated in the occupation of Adana. And the last time between 1919-1921 in the phase of the Turkish War of Independence, in what is generally termed as the Cilicia War, where the conflicts were often localized and sporadic in character, and the diplomatic negotiations were being pursued during the very occurrence of the clashes. With the Accord of Ankara signed on 20 October 1921 between the two countries, France became the first western power to abandon the claims that had been instituted by the Treaty of Sèvres and then to reestablish relations with the new Turkish governments based in Ankara. The long conflicted Hatay issue was resolved with an alliance protocol between France and Turkey against Germany, right before World War II.

Other factors also came to worsen the distance with Istanbul and Ankara during the Twentieth century, to the point where politicians of French, right and left, showed France as hostile to Turkey, in contradiction with the traditional line of French diplomacy. One is the Armenian issue. France hosted large numbers of Armenian

¹⁶ Zafer Senocak, "Where Europe's Boundaries Lie"
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/ c-476/ nr-805/i.html?PHPSESSID=133099

refugees after 1920, and today established a strong Armenian community of 450 000 people. This led French Parliament to adopt January 29, 2001 a law, proposed in 1997, recognizing Armenian genocide. In practice, this returns to France to add the famous de facto "Copenhagen criteria" as a precondition of additional recognition by Turkey of the genocide.

The issue of the French human rights record in Algeria is also politically sensitive in Turkey. In response to the French recognition of Armenian genocide by the Turks, of the French parliament, making it an offense to deny the existence of such a genocide, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey drafted a bill in October 2006 to make it illegal to deny that the French committed genocide in Algeria. Turkish party leaders, including CHP, MHP, BBP and ANAP called France to recognize 'Algerian genocide'. However, the draft never became an official law.

Other occasional tensions occurred in political and relations that created some crisis from time to time. For example, with the Armenian attacks against Turks in France, including diplomats during 1970s and early 1980s; or with French government financially supporting the establishment of the Kurdish Institute of Paris.

But there is not a always a dark picture in Franco-Turkish relations. A Partnership for accession was concluded 2000 under the French presidency, and revised April 2003 after Copenhagen Summit.

Turkey has become a major tourist destination for French, with a more positive image. The French companies become one of the largest investors in Turkey. The promising role of the Turkish dynamism in Central Asia after the end of the Soviet Union, further strengthens this interest in the Turkish market. The announcement of the year 2009 as the Turkish year demonstrates the existence of the highly intensive relations, which will continue although being troubled by occasional frictions.

With the open market conditions set off with the EU-Turkey Customs Union starting in 1996, trade figures between France and Turkey were boosted by two and a half fold during the ensuing five years, reaching 5,8 billion Dollars in 2000, and with France registering a clear surplus. Turkey became France's third largest trade partner outside the EU and France became Turkey's third largest partner overall. The loss of impetus caused by the late 2000 and early 2001 financial breakdowns in Turkey were already compensated in 2002.

In the period 1980-2000, France was cumulatively the first foreign investor in Turkey, investing 5,6 billion Dollars in value. In 2003, according to the Turkish Treasury, there were 270 French enterprises in Turkey, corresponding to significant market shares in automotive, construction -especially for the production of electricity, cement, insurance, distribution and pharmaceutical industries. France is now ranked seventh in terms of investments made, but remains the leader with regard to total FDI (foreign direct investment) for the past decade. In 2006, trade between Turkey and France increased to reach USD 12.4b, i.e. growth that is in line with the upward trend observed for several years. All sectors combined, French imports from Turkey grew significantly (19%), while French exports also increased 12%¹⁷

There is also a rapid increase in Turkish migration to France. According to French officials, there were only 111 Turkish workers in France in 1962. After the ratification of the first bilateral protocol between France and Turkey in 1966, the individuals and small groups of migrant workers under contract started to come to France between years 1969-1974. The numbers of Turkish migrants become 392.000 in 2000 according to French statistics. France has the second biggest Turkish migrant population, after Germany and statistics show that the number of these migrants has been doubled in every decade.

¹⁷ http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files_156/turkey_358/index.html

3.2 FRENCH POSITION ON ENLARGEMENT

There is more than one French doctrine for the enlargement of the EU. Jacques Chirac, president of the French Republic, has long supported the EU's enlargement to include Turkey. His main argument was that Turkey has been a secular state, often compared to France and France's respect for secularity.¹⁸

However, the French President had to take into consideration that the majority of the French public is hostile to Turkey's accession. Chirac tried, unsuccessfully, to lighten the debate about Turkey in the heat of the campaign leading up to the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty, which was failed. Chirac promised and included in the French Constitution a stipulation that a referendum should be staged to approve all future enlargements.

Senior members of the French government have also called for a national referendum on the issue. This did not include the integration of Romania, Bulgaria or Croatia, which were already on the way.

Chirac had not always been a keen supporter of enlargement. In the early 80s, he was very reticent about the accession of Spain and Portugal to the European Communities. As Minister of Agriculture of the time, he was concerned about the competition Mediterranean produce would present to French farmers. The same concern cropped up in the context of the 2004 enlargement, and spread over to other areas of industry and services. That was illustrated by the heated debate on the directive on services, known as the Bolkestein directive.¹⁹

¹⁸ "EU-Turkey Agenda. No.10, June 2006"
<http://www.bilgi.edu.tr/+OtherSites/docs/CESBulletin10.pdf>

¹⁹ Ibid.

The Union for Popular Movement (UMP) would prefer a “privileged partnership” with Ankara. Nicolas Sarkozy, former Minister for Home Affairs and current president, is opposed to Turkey’s EU accession. He is not alone, either in his own camp or in the left-wing opposition.

His opponent in the presidential elections, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, also distanced himself from Chirac’s position on Turkey. In August 2005, in the midst of the debate on whether accession negotiations should be opened with Ankara, Villepin declared it “inconceivable” that the EU should consider admitting a country which does not recognize one of the member states (Cyprus). Shortly after this, France reaffirmed its official position in favor of the negotiations. Villepin then softened his stand, but he had already set the tone.

At a conference organized by the Austrian presidency in Salzburg in January 2006, Villepin summarized his position in a single sentence: “The identity crisis we [Europeans] experience is closely related to the speed of enlargement.” The fears are not new. They were not triggered by the accession of ten countries in 2004, or by the prospect of future rounds of enlargement already decided. They go back to the inception of the Common Market. At that time, the main concern of France’s leaders, from De Gaulle through Mitterrand to Chirac, was to circumvent the process of enlargement. In the rhetoric, not specifically French, of the 80s and 90s about the “dialectics of enlargement and deepening”, there is no enlargement without deepening, they said, if the efficiency of the EU institutions is to be maintained. This dialectic has doubtless worked, but only within very narrow limits. Enlargement, or as certain French politicians prefer to put it, “the flight forward”, has been faster than the deepening process.²⁰

²⁰ Ibid.

Before the 1995 enlargement, bringing in Austria, Finland and Sweden, French President François Mitterrand clearly formulated the reserved French position. He said the Union should deepen integration and reform its institutions to be able to embrace new members. This principle did not last long. At a state visit in Vienna in 1993, Mitterrand changed his tune. He claimed the idea that the community institutions needed to be transformed in order to keep them operating once membership increased from 12 to 15 was “artificial”. So the door opened without any decision on reforms.

Mitterrand sacrificed the need for deepening for the sake of enlargement. He did that for tactical reasons. In fact Mitterrand needed the support of Austria and other candidate countries for a plan he had cherished, about a Great Europe. On December 31, 1989, a few weeks after the Berlin Wall came down, Mitterrand raised the idea of a European Confederation. His concern was to avoid the debate on opening the way to enlargement of the European Community, so he proposed a new organization, with regular meetings of the heads of state, heads of government and ministers and a permanent secretariat. Its job would be to develop the framework of these new democracies’ naturally belonging to Europe, without jeopardizing the Community edifice. The idea was not very successful but it gave rise to the European Commission’s concept of “privileged partnership” and “new neighborhood policy”.²¹

But the countries aspiring to full membership of the EC, then the EU, saw the confederation as a waiting room, or, worse still, as a dead end. For the time being, unless the EU proves to be a spectacular failure, the only goal for the states along its peripheries is to become full-fledged members.

French companies and the French in general have traditionally been afraid of opening the borders. The protectionist reflexes, going back to before World War II, have

²¹ Ibid.

survived, despite the highly positive experience of the French economy in the Common Market. These fears may take the shape of a fear of globalization, the relocation of French business activities abroad, or more recently the image of the “Polish plumber”, a symbol of cheap labor ruining the French trades. The French diplomacy has been striving for a politically united European Community since the 60s. As the EU enlarges, so this goal gets further away.

In general, power lines changed to the detriment of the six founding members. France was one of the Big Three, together with Germany and Italy, and was also the only one of the six with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and the only one with nuclear arms. France has been relegated to a medium-rank power although EU enlargement did not so much cause this development as reveal it.²²

3.3 FRENCH POSITION ON TURKISH ACCESSION

3.3.1 Position of Major Political Forces

France can be considered as one of the key actors in determining the future of EU-Turkey relations and the negotiation process. The historical examples reveal the fact that both the opposition and the support coming from the French side has always been a big and strong variable that Turkey has to take into account. As France being one of the most influential states in the EU with a very strong public stance on certain issues, it is also a crucial factor in understanding the big picture of the European public opinion. That is why analyzing the strong effect of politics on French public and the fundamental point of views of the French center-right and center-left on the Turkish membership is beneficial.

²² Ibid.

The policies vis-à-vis the Turkish accession are divided into three main groups; the right is mostly hostile to the issue, the left is mostly divided over the issue and the French governments do continue to issue mixed signals.

Over the years, the authorities of French governmental continue the policy of rapprochement with Turkey, to be considered as one of its best allies in Europe, despite some moves, as the law on Armenian genocide. Important political figures of French right, as Raymond Barre, Alain Juppé, Herve de Charette, Philippe Séguin, rejected the thesis of Christian club. And President Chirac confirmed the strongest of the polemic that "he did not see why Turkey has no place in Europe." Part of the French Right and left also seem to oppose the claim of "Christian roots of Europe" in the future constitution. This sort of continuity and autonomy of French diplomacy, when we compared the positions of political forces, especially among majority right, which is opposed to the entry of Turkey, gave the impression that this matter is a sort of "state vision".

The UMP, the presidential party was, against Turkey's accession while the former president was for. It must be said that for many years, the Gaullists, including Jacques Chirac, were supporters of the newly secular Turkish republic founded by Mustafa Kemal.

“Is it in our interest for Turkey to lean toward Europe, toward our values or concept of human rights, peace, and democracy, and not toward Asia where it could take another path that would probably generate instability or insecurity for Europe,” said Jacques Chirac, in an interview with TF1 Television on December 15, 2004.²³ He has ruled the accession of Turkey "not very desirable in the short term" but necessary in the long term. “Turkey is a country with "European vocation", both by its history as by its participation

²³ Nuray Nazli Inal and Düden Yegenoglu, “German and French Leaders’ Views on Turkey’s EU Membership”, *Washington Policy Institute*, June 27, 2005
<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2333>

in the North Atlantic Treaty” has said the President. He nonetheless indicated that, Turkey did not meet the criteria for accession to the European Union referring to a possible integration into "ten to fifteen years."²⁴

But today, the French right, influenced by the emergence of international Islamic terrorism and the questioning of secularism, is distant to the weight of the decisive Turkey, a large Muslim country, in Europe. The UDF is also against Turkey's accession. They believe that to open the doors of the European Community then might cause a request by Ukraine, Russia, and why not Maghreb. The institution will then simply be a vast free trade area and would no longer be a project of political integration.

In France the National Front, a right wing extremist party, has grown over the years and now obtains 15 to 18% of the ballots. This party is followed closely by an affiliated faction of sovereignists, which obtains 4-10% of the votes. These two political trends have made the refusal of Turkey's membership one of the main lines of their political stance.²⁵ The Socialist Party for its part has already demonstrated its divisions over the possible entry of Turkey into the Union.²⁶

The leaders of the Socialist Party admit that while they feel relatively positive toward Turkey, they cannot afford to ignore the deep trend of negative sentiment. While the right has gained ground with its clear anti-Turkish stance, the left remains in a bit of a quandary over what to do. Candidates on the left are extremely cautious on the topic of

²⁴ “Le point de vue de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République sur le dossier turc”, *Turquie Européenne*, April 29, 2004
<http://www.turquieeuropeenne.eu/article66.html>

²⁵ Didier Billion, “The Worrying Developments of the Debate in France”, *Today's Zaman*, June 19, 2008
<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=14772>

²⁶ Les Français contre l'adhésion de la Turquie
http://www.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/058/article_31043.asp

Turkey because they would run the risk of compromising their generous globalist heritage by exposing a pro or anti-integration position.²⁷

One also ought to consider the fact that some leaders of the Socialist party are not any different in terms of their position vis a vis Turkish accession. Although one must acknowledge the fact they do not use the religious issue as a political tool, they are nonetheless embarking on a kind of demagogic spiral, intensified by the Armenian lobby's pressures, known for its influence on some socialist representatives.²⁸ French left politicians also evoked the problems of secularism, the weight of the army and human rights and also the issue of demography and the only 3% of Turkey belonging to Europe.

One of the major points of concern in France is related to the notion "European values". It is a very common statement that Turkey is European neither by history nor geography, or "values". The Republic of Turkey, which claims Rousseau, Jacobinism, democracy, an egalitarian citizenship, secularism? No, what they meant by this is legacy, heritage, in short religion. The absolute border in question is a "cultural and historical barrier." A heavily Muslim country should or could not be European, Europe is using the formula, often resumption of former Chancellor Kohl, a "Christian club". This position seems dominant in the French right, it is claimed as such by the UDF (Union for French democracy).²⁹

In an interview with *Le Monde* published on 8 November 2002, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former president of France who also headed Europe's constitutional

²⁷ "The French disconnection duck and cover", *Turkish Daily News*, Dec 18, 2006
<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=72308>

²⁸ Billion, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=14772>

²⁹ <http://www.turquieeuropeenne.eu/article66.html>

convention, alluded to Turkey's Muslim population and high birthrate and said the country had a different culture, a different approach, a different way of life. "Its capital is not in Europe, 95 percent of its population live outside Europe, it is not a European country", Giscard d'Estaing said. If Turkey were admitted, he said, other Middle Eastern and North African states, starting with Morocco, would demand to join. "In my opinion, it would be the end of the European Union", he said.³⁰

Turkey for him is simply not part of Europe. He turns the Turkish question into a simple border issue as if Europe were already a state which has to define its borders in order to exist. Sarkozy's need for a border can also be seen as part of an attempt to ensure the maintenance of French influence in the EU. A country as big as Turkey, which will soon have 80 million inhabitants and already has a dynamic economy, should not be allowed to join.³¹ French Minister for European Affairs, Jean-Pierre Jouyet said, in an interview published in *Le Figaro* on 14 October 2007 that French government wanted a group of "wise men" to launch, an examination of Europe's borders, even beyond the specific case of Turkey, which is not destined to join the EU.³²

With regard to future enlargements, which all the opinion polls show are a source of anxiety to many French people, Nicolas Sarkozy shows himself to be not immune to a fairly classic French reflex response of great caution. He opposes Turkey's EU membership and does not hesitate to draw a distinction between the states that can someday join the EU (Switzerland, Norway, and the western Balkan countries,) because

³⁰ Thomas Fuller, "Head of EU panel angers Ankara by maligning entry : Giscard:Turkey isn't part of Europe", *International Herald Tribune*, November 9, 2002
http://www.iht.com/articles/2002/11/09/giscard_ed3.php

³¹ Zafer Senocak, "Where Europe's Boundaries Lie" http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/c-476/nr-805/i.html?PHPSESSID=133099

³² "Jean-Pierre Jouyet : 'Franco-German partnership no longer a steering body'" http://www.lefigaro.fr/english/20070625.WWW000000553_jean_pierre_jouyet_franco_german_partnership_no_longer_a_steering_body.html

they are European, and those that comprise the "Euro-Asian and Mediterranean space, "whose European destiny is no foregone conclusion and who are neighbours without being European." In a way, Nicolas Sarkozy seems to think that there are clear criteria - both geographical and cultural - that make it possible to say "who is European and who is not."³³

These emphasize on religion, geography and the abstract concept of values can be seen as the central arguments of the French right against Turkish membership. But different than the rightist emphasis on Christian roots of the EU, the French left does not favour this argument against Turkish membership. Also there are some Socialist governments and politicians that contradict the general anti-Turkish sentiment the right wing and most of the leftists show toward Turkey.

For example, according to Kader Arif, who is a member of the socialist group of the European Parliament, European Union is a project of multiculturalism and tolerance, not a geographical, cultural or religious body. So the accession of Turkey would be crucial to build a bridge of variety between different cultures and religions. He believed that the ones that oppose to Turkish membership, such as extreme nationalist, far right and communist politicians, have an ulterior motive to prevent a further integration of the Union and so Turkey was only being used as a tool for that motive. That is why people's fears about Turkey are usually fed by those politicians in France. He stated that most of the Socialist politicians in France are not against Turkish membership, given that Turkey fulfills the necessary criteria.³⁴

³³ "What kind of EU for future Elysee leader?"
http://www.lefigaro.fr/english/20070103.WWW000000288_what_kind_of_eu_for_future_elysee_leader.html

³⁴ <http://www.anadolu.be/2005-05/7.html>

The government of Lionel Jospin also took a special interest on the arguments of future membership of Turkey on the eve of Nice Summit in December 2000, to avoid the issue of Judeo-Christian roots of Europe. The Socialist delegation of French Parliament, led by a Pervenche Bérès, also worked for the similar purpose during the debates on the European Constitution. The Prime Minister supported the compromise proposal developed by Romano Prodi and Gunther Verheugen on the eve of summit in Helsinki. The minister of European Affairs, Pierre Moscovici, Ambassador Lévitte, diplomatic adviser of Jacques Chirac and Ambassador Steiner, adviser of Gerhard Schröder, prepared a "Letter of the Presidency," that has a more open tone vis-à-vis Turkish membership, that Javier Solana was responsible to bring to Ankara. These years have seen, with the support of the France, the cause of Turkish accession progress clearly, yet without a sufficient support from the general public. In any case, Lionel Jospin was deeply convinced that the European Union has over the years taken a large responsibility towards Turkey by signing the successive agreements, including the customs union, and it must lead this logic to the end, in good faith, without a hidden condition, and without excluding the final accession.

However his ministers and parliamentarians on this issue had different opinions, not only about the Turkey itself, but their vision of Europe. According to PS Senator Robert Badinter in an interview with *Le Monde*, October 12, 2004, Europe has nothing to gain from having to apply the solidarity clause to Turkey that is far from having resolved its disputes with its neighbors. It will gain nothing from moving its borders to the limits of Asia.

“I am in favor of a privileged partnership with Turkey, but not a membership. First, there is the problem of democracy. Our regions would no longer have any financial

support... Turkey would have 20 percent more votes in the EU than France would”, said Laurent Fabius (PS deputy) to Agence France Press on November 2, 2004.³⁵

After the PS leadership of Lionel Jospin for 12 years, Ségolène Royal had been designated Socialist Party candidate for the 2007 presidential elections. The other two contenders were Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the finance minister in Lionel Jospin’s Plural Left government (1997-2002), and Laurent Fabius, prime minister under PS president François Mitterrand (1984-86).

The most noticeable difference between the candidates was on the question of the European Union. In the 2005 referendum on the European constitution Fabius argued for a “no” vote, while Royal and Strauss-Kahn supported the constitution in line with the party majority. Fabius reiterated his theory of circles: the inner group would be the countries of the eurozone, the second would be the non-euro countries such as the UK and the third would be an outer ring which would have special trading relationships with the EU—countries such as Ukraine and Turkey. They all agreed that there had to be a pause in the expansion of Europe and categorically ruled out the idea of a Europe of 50 nations.

Strauss-Kahn, favoured the continuation of negotiations with Turkey on EU entry, although he did not think that was possible before 2040-2050. “But Turkey, if not linked to Europe, will go over to the other side and we will have at our gates a country strongly connected to Iraq and Iran,” he said.³⁶

³⁵ Inal, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2333>

³⁶ Antoine Lerougtel, “France Socialist Party chooses a Blairite presidential candidate”, November 18, 2006
<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/nov2006/frsp-n18.shtml>

On the controversial subject of Turkey, Segolene Royal preferred to state that her position will be that of the French people. However Royal criticized Sarkozy for his opposition to Turkey's EU bid, declaring, "I don't think it is good politics to slam the door on a big country." When Sarkozy said, "I don't think we should kill the European Union."³⁷

Another issue that raised some debates about the Turkish membership in French politics is the economic capacity and the burden of Turkey. Most of the French politicians saw Turkey as a giant demography of 71 million that would cause an influx of migration and a loss of economic sources that could have been directed to France.

According to Giscard d'Estaing, the standard of living of Turkey remains very far from the European average. Per capita income is half that of the 10 new member states, and only one-fifth that of Europe at 15. The structure of its economy, although there is a significant progress in recent years, remains far from the "norm".³⁸

But probably the most sensitive issues that came up along the way and created a lot of tensions between the two states are the French interpretation of Turkish record on human rights and the allegations of the Ottoman Empire committing genocide against Armenians. The issue of Turkey has often been raised during the law on the Armenian genocide, issues related to NATO reform, or slowness of the Cyprus crisis, with the

³⁷ "What kind of EU for future Elysee leader?"
http://www.lefigaro.fr/english/20070103.WWW000000288_what_kind_of_eu_for_future_elysee_leader.html

³⁸ «Turquie: pour le retour à la raison», *Le Figaro*, November 25, 2004
<http://turquieeuropeenne.eu/article212.html>

refusal of make reunification a precondition for accession, the risk of a de facto membership limited to southern part of the island.

In early February 2005, four group presidents of the French National Assembly and the president of the French National Assembly Jean-Louis Debre made a statement about their major points of concern about Turkish accession after their visit to Turkey. Jean-Marc Ayrault (PS) expressed concern about Kurds, Bernard Accoyer (UMP) about the progress of reforms, Alain Bocquet (PCF) about torture and Herve Morin (UDF) about freedom of expression and the place of the army.

According to their statement, they found that even if steps had been taken, little had been done for the Kurdish "minority". And in the area of education, the equality between girls and boys was not yet a reality in some regions, taking into account the weight of tradition.³⁹ In addition the French Party Socialist, used its weight so that Socialist International accepts the Kurdish party in its ranks as observer.

On the Armenian issue Sarkozy required Turkey to fulfill three conditions. The first is that there is a Joint Bilateral Commission between Armenia and Turkey. The second condition is that Turkey reopens its borders with Armenia. And the third condition is that Turkey renounces the criminal law which prohibits in Turkey to speak of genocide.

The Socialist party also gave a strong support to the Armenian claims, in fact French Socialist party has been known as the biggest supporter of the Armenian Genocide allegations to be accepted around Europe. Since 1981, the Armenian Socialist Party (Dachnaksoutioun), has maintained intense political relations with the Socialist Party.

³⁹ "Les entretiens de la délégation parlementaire française en Turquie", February 2, 2005
<http://www.info-turc.org/article1004.html>

In 1981, Claude Cheysson was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the first socialist government, which recognized the Armenian genocide. In 1984, François Mitterrand was the first head of state in the world to recognize the Armenian genocide. In 1987, it was the French Socialist Party that Parliament recognized the Armenian genocide in Strasbourg. In 1998, the Socialist Party used its power in the Parliament to pass the bill on recognition of Armenian genocide by the National Assembly. In 2004, the Socialist Party signed a joint statement with the Dachnaksoutioun that asserts that Turkey today does not meet the criteria for Turkey's accession to the European Union, adding that accession will not be possible without prior recognition of the Armenian genocide. In 2006, the Socialist Party has again used his parliamentary power to adopt, by the National Assembly a draft law punishing the denial of the Armenian genocide. On October 12 2006 and the draft law was adopted.

François Hollande was the only leader of a major political party in Europe to mobilize personally on the recognition of Armenian genocide by Turkey, on punishing the denial of Armenian genocide and against the entry of Turkey in Europe this without recognition Armenian genocide. Ségolène Royal, candidate of the Socialist Party, reiterated in writing in the Armenian press, the commitments made by the Socialist Party in her 2007 presidential election campaign.⁴⁰

As seen from the arguments above French politicians attached a series of criteria for Turkey to fulfill in order to become an EU member. This conditionality made France one of Turkey's biggest obstacles to overcome during negotiations.

Jacques Toubon, an UMP MEP (EPP-ED, F) and Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee EU-Turkey has raised his oppositions in European Parliament plenary

⁴⁰ "Dangereuse collusion entre le PS et l'extrême droite arménienne", December 2, 2007
<http://www.info-turc.org/article2673.html>

session on the debate on Turkey in Eurlings report in Strasbourg on September 26, 2006. Jacques Toubon insisted in particular on three injections determinants of the report: the integration capacity as the fourth criterion, unconditional normalization of relations with Cyprus, the recognition of Armenian genocide as a precondition for accession. Toubon has asked EU governments to show lucidity and courage and decide not to take any further enlargement before the decision-making mechanisms should be reformed and sufficient budgetary resources provided.

Repeating his view that Turkey's eventual admission to the EU is welcomed, Jacques Chirac also said that Turkey has made a considerable effort recently to bring its legislation, methods and practices in line with the EU. But these must advance still further before they respect the criteria on democracy and a market economy".⁴¹

In a press conference given by Michel Barnier, Minister of Foreign Affairs in December 3, 2004, the position of Jacques Chirac is explained as such;

The issue for 17 December isn't Turkey's membership, is whether we open or don't open, when and under what conditions we open the accession negotiations which have never been opened with Turkey. This has to be explained, since it is the truth. If these negotiations are opened, they are going to go on a long time. We are working in this vein on the European Council conclusions; indeed, the European Commission has proposed the conditions under which, in its view, these negotiations should be opened in the framework of a process which has to remain open-ended. President Chirac has said, and I repeat it after him, that we hope they can succeed. If, for one reason or another, they don't, it will very probably be necessary to provide for a special link with Turkey; we wish them to succeed after all the stages have been completed and all the conditions met. Should they be successful, whatever the circumstances – what President Chirac has said is extremely important in order to avoid this conflation, here too –, it's the French who will decide.

⁴¹Independent, The (London), Oct 2, 2004

So in a way Barnier confirmed that Chirac not only attained some conditions for Turkey to become a member; but also affirms the fact that even if Turkey fulfilled all its requirements it still will be subject to the approval of the French public. "If, one day, there is an accession treaty to ratify – I can't say if there will be – that day the people will be consulted. No one will take the decision on Turkey's future accession in place of the French, the French will take that decision", said Chirac to Le Monde, on March 30, 2005.

Chirac has repeatedly said he favors Turkey's entry into the EU, provided it meets all criteria required for membership. But also in an interview given in Beijing to state-owned France 2 television in October 2004, he said France reserves the right to bar Ankara from joining the bloc if, at any stage of the negotiation process, if it believes Turkey is not meeting the democracy standards required for membership. And also French people will be consulted on the issue whenever it is deemed necessary. In any case, it is the French people who, if need be, will have the final say through a referendum.⁴²

Though Jacques Chirac supported the proposal "when the time is right", his successor as leader of the centre right - Nicolas Sarkozy - remains sceptical, as did Jean-Pierre Raffarin, the former Prime Minister, and most of the UMP rank-and-file.

Sarkozy called for a referendum on the issue, saying he favoured giving Turkey a status as privileged partner of the EU rather than a full member. "I am cautious about Turkish membership not because it is Muslim ... but because by itself Turkey is the equivalent of 10 new members from Eastern Europe."⁴³

⁴² Les Français contre l'adhésion de la Turquie
http://www.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/058/article_31043.asp

⁴³ Independent, The (London), Oct 2, 2004

"Turkey is 71 million people. In 2050 that could be 100 million. Given the new voting rules in the constitution, it would be the country with most votes," he said. Jean-Pierre Raffarin was more direct, telling the Wall Street Journal newspaper: "Do we want the river of Islam to enter the riverbed of secularism?"⁴⁴

"A decision as important as Turkey entering Europe could only be taken after there had been a referendum in France, to know what the opinion of the French people is", said Nicholas Sarkozy, in an interview given to BBC, September 27, 2004⁴⁵ France, by this measure, arrogates to itself the right, only to block any further enlargement, and with regard to Turkey, knowing how easy to manipulate public opinion, the basic reluctance on this issue, to ban the event.

However there were also some French leftists that took a very positive stance on the issue. For example, according to the former Minister for European Affairs and current Vice-President of the European Parliament Piere Moscovici; the lack of referendum is both little respect for France's European partners and insulting to Turkey. It would ultimately mean that its accession is prohibited. He found it both unfair and dangerous since Turkey is directly targeted, it would be an insult, it must at all costs be avoided.⁴⁶

Other than those issues, several French politicians from right to left on the political spectrum linked Turkey's membership with the constitution and called on the French public to vote "no" on May 29, 2005. It is an exaggeration to say that French people voted "no" on the constitution only because of Turkey. As a matter of fact, French

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Inal, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2333>

⁴⁶ "Sarkozy et le verrou sécuritaire turc", May 02, 2008
<http://moscovici.typepad.fr/blognational/2008/05/sarkozy-et-le-v.html>

people were also complaining about the EU's moving away from the concept of enlargement and the understanding of a social state. One of the most controversial issues, however, was Turkey.

During these debates about the constitution former French president Jacques Chirac has generally maintained his cautious support for Turkey's EU membership, even after his country's May 29, 2005 vote against the EU constitution.

“To say “no” to the constitution is not to say “no” to Turkey’s accession to the EU. This is because there is no connection, either in law or in fact, between these two issues. And rightly so, the text of the European constitution concerns only the twenty-five EU member countries and contains nothing that relates specifically to Turkey”, said former Foreign Minister Michel Barnier to *Le Monde* on March 30, 2005, reflecting the view point of the Chirac era.⁴⁷

Finally, there is a recent issue that stirred a lot of debates both in Europe and in Turkey. In the longer term, Nicolas Sarkozy wants to include Turkey in a Mediterranean Union comprising all the seaboard states. He wants to anchor regional cooperation in the fields of energy, security, counter-terrorism and immigration on a trade agreement, and create a Mediterranean Investment Bank, modeled on the European Investment Bank, that would help develop the economies on the eastern and southern edge of the region. A Mediterranean Union would work closely with the European Union and might eventually form joint institutions with the 27-nation bloc. But it would be a separate

⁴⁷ Inal, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2333>

organization. Some critics see his Mediterranean Union plans as an alternative to Ankara becoming part of the bloc.⁴⁸

In 13 July 2008, French President Nicolas Sarkozy has launched the first meeting of the Union for Mediterranean with the participation of Turkey. Comprising 27 EU members with states from North Africa, the Balkans, Israel and the Arab world, the union's membership will include 756m people from Western Europe to the Jordanian desert. Welcoming the presence of Arab states alongside Israel, Greece alongside Turkey and Morocco alongside Algeria, Sarkozy said the group would not be "north against south, not Europe against the rest... but united". He outlined the group's determination to focus on concrete projects focusing on the environment, immigration, security cooperation, transport and education.

Turkey has from the very beginning actively supported strengthening cooperation in the Mediterranean; it joined the Barcelona Process, which was established in 1995, and within this process lent support to improvement of cooperation in many fields in the Mediterranean. However Turkey refused to see the project as a substitute to its EU vocation and resisted Sarkozy's proposals to be limited in a Mediterranean Union.

Critics have also dismissed the new union as lacking substance, and said there are continuing disagreements over key issues such as how to address the Middle East peace process and a possible role for the Arab League.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Katrin Bennhold, "Sarkozy's proposal for Mediterranean bloc makes waves", International Herald Tribune, May 10, 2007
<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/05/10/africa/france.php>

⁴⁹ "Mediterranean union is launched"
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7504214.stm>

Since Turkey's reluctance to see this project as an alternative to the EU membership, Sarkozy had to soften his tone on the issue. The official name of the project is no longer the Mediterranean Union but the "Union for the Mediterranean". Far from being the great success Paris had intended, the Union for the Mediterranean is now merely a reactivation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership established in Barcelona back in 1995.

In short, one may acknowledge that Sarkozy is planning to be in control of the EU enlargement process, specifically on the Turkish case. For that purpose he may be considered as a manipulative leader in creating alliances as he did with Germany and creating a public opinion in favour of his plans for future of Europe, changing the traditional line of cautious French foreign policies.

3.3.2 The Media's Impact on French Public Opinion

Similar to the heated debates and various opinions in French politics; the issue of Turkish accession occupied a great place in French media. Without a doubt there are many examples of commentaries and editorials about Turkish accession to the EU in French media, but in order to keep the essence of the structure only some samples of these will be elaborated.

The issues that were discussed in the media were mainly centered around themes like concept of European identity, religion, EU's variable geometry, Turkey's strategic importance, human rights issues and the reformation process that Turkey has to success. It is possible to see both a lot of sympathy and skepticism for the Turkish case, but the ones that really attracted a lot of attention from the public are probably the ones that also

triggered the agitation and the ancient fears about the image of Turkey in the back of French's mind.

According to Jean-Daniel Tordjman in his commentary in *Le Figaro* published on November 28, 2002, Turkey is not only a part of Europe but is an essential component of European cultural and historical heritage, European civilization. Even when it was "the sick man of Europe", Turkey was part of "European concert." Victor Hugo said in the *Rhine* where he described the "Six Powers of the First Order of Europe: the Holy See, the Holy Empire, France, Britain, Spain and of course Turkey, as European power."

Rejecting Turkey today would be a major strategic mistake, with incalculable consequences for Europe. It would deprive Europe of a powerful ally, a member since 1949 of the Council of Europe, with a tradition imperial millennium, who has chosen the West and was a loyalty test in any NATO. Turks know Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan better than any other European state. It would also offer to Europe the chance that it did not now play a positive role as concrete in the Middle East. Water tower of the Middle East, controlling a resource as precious as oil, well-integrated Muslim country in the Islamic world while being on good terms with Israel, Turkey's presence immediately increase the credibility and capability of influence of Europe in this strategic area.

History offers Europe the unexpected chance to integrate the Muslim country which has a century has chosen modernity against fundamentalism, education against ignorance, the emancipation of women against their subjugation, the Civil Code against Sharia law. The entry of Turkey into Europe is changing the strategic world to Europe's advantage, commented Jean-Daniel Tordjman to point out the tight link between Turkey and the EU.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Jean-Daniel Tordjman, "A mediator between Islam and West", *Le Figaro*, November 28, 2002 -

When it comes to 14 October 2007, this time an article “With Sarkozy, the choice for transparency in foreign policy” in Le Figaro again said, there will be a real break with the 12 years of the Jacques Chirac presidency. On European policy, Nicolas Sarkozy's policy is in contrast to the past vagueness of the French stances. The question of Turkey's EU membership is no longer being put off to some distant future, the result of a long process of negotiations in Brussels and the random results of ratification processes, some of which are subject to a referendum. Words of Nicholas Sarkozy as "Turkey is in Asia Minor, so it has no reason to be part of the European Union, were accepted as a solid and strong steps and stances for France. It was interpreted as, ‘Nicolas Sarkozy is free of complexes when it comes to foreign policy. This time a different and a more distant approach towards Turkey was reflected, which was quite close to the one Sarkozy defended.’⁵¹

In another commentary written by Ignacio Ramonet in the November 2004 issue of Le Monde Diplomatique, he mentioned some "technical" arguments against Turkish entry such as it being a large country with a Muslim majority and it should be disqualified because of its geography, since much of the country is in Asia Minor. “This is absurd” he said. “French Guyana in Latin America and Réunion in the middle of the Indian Ocean are both part of the European Union, then”.

He also commented on some historical stereotypes about the Turks that the Aegean coast of Turkey, the location of ancient Troy, was the east wing of ancient Greece, the cradle of European civilization about the ones that invoke history. The Ottoman Empire, as successor to the Byzantine Empire, had ambitions to dominate the Mediterranean and

<http://www.info-turc.org/article650.html>

⁵¹ “With Sarkozy, the choice for transparency in foreign policy »
http://www.lefigaro.fr/english/20070510.WWW000000344_with_sarkozy_the_choice_for_transparency_in_foreign_policy.html

Europe. But such ambitions do not mean that Turkey is anti-European by nature. Other countries - notably Spain, France and Germany - also cherished projects for subjugating the continent, and nobody would suggest that they are not truly European.

On the other hand he praised the transformation of the modern Turkey at the same time. He wrote that when the new Turkey founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, he embarked resolutely on Europeanisation. He commented on that as; “No country has ever agreed to sacrifice so many fundamental aspects of its culture in order to affirm its European identity”. Then he mentioned that throughout the 20th century Turkey continually consolidated its European character and has made progress in enacting democratic reforms in recent years. The prospect of EU membership has already reinforced Turkey’s democratization, secularism and respect for human rights. For the other major countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey’s membership will provide a concrete message of hope, peace, prosperity and democracy.

However as concluding remarks he ended up repeating some generic remarks used as a precondition to Turkish membership despite saying that there is still much to be done on civil liberties and basic human rights. Turkey also needs to recognize formally the genocide of the Armenians in 1915. And an amnesty will be required for “ex-fighters” of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to release more than 3,000 of its imprisoned activists, including its leader, Abdullah Öcalan”.⁵²

In brief, the change of tone in French media can be explained with a very similar change pattern in French politics. As the skepticism towards Turkey in France increased especially in the recent years, the doubtful articles in the mainstream media about Turkey also started to ascend. Without a doubt many more debates whether Turkey is a

⁵² “Turkey: welcome to Europe” By Ignacio Ramonet. *Le monde Diplomatique*. November 2004. http://mondediplo.com/2004/11/01Ramonet?var_recherche=turkey%20and%20the%20EU

European state or not will occupy the French media as the negotiation process experienced new tensions, since France is one of the strongest skeptics about Turkey.

3.3.3 Other Actors Who Have A Role On The Shaping Of French Public Opinion

Other than the politicians and the media, there are many institutions and individuals that take a special interest on the Turkish membership issues. Since there is an intensive flow of capital and investments and a great deal of trade between the two states, economic actors and business elites are deeply concerned with the route the relations will follow.

With their solid positions in the country, French companies are busy behind the scenes. But the goal is strategic, with its 66 million consumers; the Turkish market needs to be secured to give its full potential. And for these companies, there is no guarantee than a better entry into the Union.

The hub of this network of economic influence is called Jean-Antoine Giansily. He is the leader the French economic mission in Istanbul. As former Deputy Mayor of Paris and former Member of the European Parliament, he is an advocate of the cause of Turkey.⁵³ Companies such as Renault, Carrefour, Michelin, Servier, Danone also play an important role for lobbying on behalf of Turkey's accession to the EU, as they would secure their high ranked positions in the Turkish market with more political stability.

Tüsiad, which has succeeded in recruiting French companies, also works with French political circles. While officially, the UMP member Alain Juppé and PS member François Hollande have distanced themselves with the proponents of integration; Tüsiad made connections with several tenors of the French left: Michel Rocard, Pierre

⁵³Those French who bet on Turkey
<http://www.turquieeuropeenne.eu/article81.html>

Moscovici, Jack Lang, Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, along with the two senators of UMP, Robert Del Picchia and Hubert Haenel, authors of a very favourable report on "Turkey and the European Union."⁵⁴

There are also many French-Turkish networks and associations working to create a positive public opinion on the issue, through dialogue with politicians and NGOs, such as; "France Turkish Immigrants Associations Council", "Bleau, Blanc, Turc", "Turquie Europeenee", "Tete de Turc". There are also many associations and research institutions based in France, that elaborate the Turkish accession to the EU.

According to Jean NESTOR, the Secretary General of the Association "Our Europe" founded in 1996 by Jacques Delors, there are three main disadvantages of Turkey's accession. First, it is ultimately the biggest in EU countries, by its surface and its population. So this is a big piece to swallow, in a Europe that has struggled to find his balance between large countries. The second difficulty is that it brings Europe to expand in a direction where many people are wondering where the boundaries are and where it will stop. A third fact is that in the dialectic between widening and deepening. The European Union has been a bit quicker on enlargement vis-à-vis the population and vis-à-vis opinions.

Europe's leaders have much more immediate concerns vis-à-vis their national opinions. If there were no public opinion, the European leaders would say a much warmer yes to opening negotiations with Turkey. All, more or less, have said that this was what they were intending to do and they will find a way to say "yes, provided that it takes a long time and even on condition that they never end. The reaction of public opinion is to the assumption that Turkey's accession raises unresolved questions, not all of which are sound, but which were never discussed. So increasingly, it is possible to see solutions

⁵⁴ Ibid.

that call for a privileged partnership with Turkey, as the one with Russia, in terms of common market, assistance to agriculture, and so on.

However he did not agree with the claim that Turkey could not be considered European because of its geography. He said, one way to prove that the geographical approach has changed is to look at Cyprus. There it did not raise the issue of borders of Europe. It is very far to the East, very close to the Middle East. The Europe is therefore primarily a community project.⁵⁵

Sylvie Goulard, an economist and a professor that has worked with Romano Prodi in the Commission for three years, claimed that although the European Council has made some promises about accession to Turkey, the real policy makers that will vote for Turkish accession, the public, is unaware of those promises. That creates a potential disappointment when the official policies collapse when met with public voting.

She also claimed that the “Christian Club” notion is already false considering the fact that many Muslims have been living in Europe for years. So the claim of accepting Turkey to falsify this notion has no real sense.⁵⁶

Didier Billion, who is a Turkish expert in IRIS (Institute de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques-Institute for International and Strategic Relations), located in Paris, expressed that when the European Union (EU) had only six members, France was the leader, now it is one of 25 members, so when it sees that its effect has diminished, it

⁵⁵ "The unsaid and the flight of policies to address Turkey's accession would leave the public face of his fantasies"
http://66.102.9.104/translate_c?hl=en&sl=fr&tl=en&u=http://www.cfait.org/_immigration/analyse/80.htm
1

⁵⁶ Ayça Abakan, “Adım Adım Avrupa – Fransa”, bbc turkish, December 08, 2004
http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/europe/story/2004/12/041208_euviews_france.shtml

feels isolated. Billion thinks that the increasing opposition against Turkey's accession to the EU in France is related to domestic politics and unrelated with Turkey itself.⁵⁷

Paris considers that it must play a central role in the European process and that the E.U. ought to reflect its own values, models and ways of life. Yet, with the ongoing enlargement of the European Union, this stance becomes less and less relevant. This explains how the French identity crisis, in the face of the other European countries, is taking such a considerable role in Turkey's chances of accession. If France was convinced to keep its central position in the EU, it would be less inclined to see Turkey's application as an Anglo-Saxon plot aimed at weakening its own vision of Europe.⁵⁸

"In France, there is a conflict between the right-wing extremists and the central right. The right-wing extremists follow a path, which is against the Islamic world; and has a voting potential between 15-20 percent. The leader of National Front Party (FN) Le Pen and the leader of the Movement Party of France (MPF) Phillippe de Villiers will try to achieve new successes in the future elections by making use of opposition against Turkey; however, the actual problem is with the Republican parties such as the Union for the Popular Movement (UMP) and the Union for French Democracy (UDF). Saying, "UMP and UDF follow this policy due to reasons for elections", Billion explained that Turkey is the mirror of France's complaints about the EU and the Islamic world, and even the scapegoat.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ "Becoming Europe's 'Sick Man', France Makes Turkey Scapegoat"
<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=18775>

⁵⁸ Didier Billion, "The Worrying Developments of the Debate in France", *Today's Zaman*, June 19, 2008
<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=14772>

⁵⁹ "Becoming Europe's 'Sick Man', France Makes Turkey Scapegoat"
<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=18775>

For some who consider that the difficulty of Turkey's accession to the European Union is that this country is too large, making its "upgrade" costly for Europe, Billion said that a country with 66 million people is actually not easy to enter the European Union. However, the level of economic growth in Turkey is not as bad as that of some countries that come to join Europe. The Turkish economy is more advanced and Turkey is a dynamic country with a very large industrialization rate. The EU should, in reality, try to unlock the economic potential of Turkey, which already has a customs union agreement to which it has made many efforts, although it was finally revealed more profitable for Europe itself. In addition, the European Commission, in its annual report for 2003 on the economic situation of candidate countries, presented the Turkish economy as viable.⁶⁰

According to Billion, another issue is the migration problem that France developed in line with its 'fantasies'. According to these 'fantasies' when Turkey becomes an EU member, the French people will lose their jobs because Turkish people will occupy European markets with their cheap labor force.

What is more, one of the important aspects of the Turkish debate in France is religion. French political scientist Jean-Yves Camus, who wrote the report "Using Racist and Anti-Jewish Arguments in Political Discourses" for European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), pointed out that the French believe Turkey is still a radical Islamic country.⁶¹

⁶⁰Turkey is doing better than some new EU members, *News of Turkey and translations of the Turkish press*, June 23, 2004
<http://www.turquieeuropeenne.eu/article79.html>

⁶¹ "Becoming Europe's 'Sick Man', France Makes Turkey Scapegoat"
<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=18775>

Although this case is acceptable, it only partially reflects the complexity of this issue. It is otherwise difficult to understand why other members of the European Union, with strong religious beliefs, such as Spain, Italy and Poland, are as far as they are concerned rather favourable to the prospect of Turkish membership.⁶²

According to Camus, Europeans believe only a Christian country can have a real secular administration. Therefore, it does not matter at all that the Turkish constitution contains a secularism article that was taken from the French in 1937. "Though Turkey is a secular country, Europe sees it as a religious state. And the issue of religion comes on the agenda only when Turkey is concerned." said Camus.

Most French do not know anything about Turkey's history at all. French have never fought with the Turks, the Turkish army stopped at Vienna, and they never came to Paris. So this opposition derived as the 9/11 attacks were perceived as global Islamic threat. Later, Turkey's EU membership came on the agenda, added Camus.⁶³

Furthermore, Prof. Semih Vaner from France National Political Science Foundation cited that Turkey has occasionally been considered as a loyal ally of U.S.A or Britain; which would be in contradiction with the policies of one of the most influential figures of French politics, Charles de Gaulle.⁶⁴

⁶² Didier Billion, "The Worrying Developments of the Debate in France", *Today's Zaman*, June 19, 2008 <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=14772>

⁶³"Becoming Europe's 'Sick Man', France Makes Turkey Scapegoat", <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=18775>

⁶⁴Ayça Abakan, "Adım Adım Avrupa – Fransa", *bbc turkish*, December 08, 2004 http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/europe/story/2004/12/041208_euviews_france.shtml

When it comes to the future of French and Turkish relations, the majority of French experts assume that Sarkozy will tone down his statements against Turkey just like Germany's Angela Merkel did after taking office as chancellor in November 2005. "Sarkozy has other things to do," said Frédéric Allemand of the Paris based-Institute of Political Studies. Sarkozy will not take the risk of "being excluded" by highlighting the issue of Turkey's EU bid, Allemand noted. Describing Sarkozy as "a pragmatist and realist politician," François Géré, head of the French Institute for Strategic Analysis (IFAS), said, Sarkozy will assume a manner in compliance with files and France's interests."⁶⁵

However, Nicholas-Jean Brehon, Professor of Public Finance, University of Paris, Sorbonne, and advisor to the French Senate did not take such a sanguine view about Turkish membership. His first concern was about the practical challenges that would arise if Turkey joined and the effect it would have on the EU institutions and the EU budget.

“The key institutional issue is how we will integrate the most populous country in Europe”, he noted. As voting in the EU Council takes demographics into account, if Turkey were to join it would have the greatest voting power in both the Council and Parliament. If Turkey enters, voting rules will have to be changed because of its size, so as soon as the Constitution is ratified it will have to be rewritten.

In addition to that France would not be happy to be the third after Turkey and Germany. It was not a question of power, but of rank, he explained, as in France people would not accept being overtaken by Turkey.

⁶⁵ “French experts say Sarkozy cannot block Turkey’s EU talks”
<http://www.peacebuilding.am/eng/pages.php?page=panorama&id=197>

The second issue around Turkish membership that Nicholas-Jean Brehon raised concerned the cost of Turkey's entry on the EU budget. He was concerned about structural funds and the fact that Turkey's standard of living was lower than the other new member states. He estimated that the cost of Turkey's entry into the EU would be €10 – €15 billion per year from a total EU budget of €150 billion a year.⁶⁶

The Istanbul-based Centre for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM) released a report in November 2006, on the troubled Franco-Turkish relationship in which they asked dozens of French opinion leaders about the surge of antagonism toward Turkey. The report's author, Dorothee Schmid, argued that Nongovernmental organizations should take on a bigger role engaging the French public and leaders through consortiums because the French are no longer receptive to efforts and statements by Turkish government or state players, the report concluded. The latest polls in France indicate, unsurprisingly, the left and younger populations are likely to be most amenable to outreach from Turkey. It also makes sense that interaction between French and Turkish actors should be ongoing and created in long-term contexts rather than limited to crisis and discord. For the time being, France's leverage on issues such as EU membership is still ailing from France's "no" vote on the EU constitution. Cyprus is a more potent variable on Turkey than 31 million French opinions, which relegates Turkey to a diplomatic matter for the French, perpetuating a "safe distance" zone for politicians, policy think tanks and organizations.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Kirsty Hughes, "Turkey And The European Union: Just Another Enlargement? Exploring The Implications Of Turkish Accession". On the occasion of the "Turkey's EU end game?" *European Policy Summit* of 17 June 2004.
<<http://www.friendsofeurope.org/pdfs/TurkeyandtheEuropeanUnionWorkingPaperFoE.pdf#search=%22TURKEY%20AND%20THE%20EUROPEAN%20UNION%3A%20JUST%20ANOTHER%20ENLARGEMENT%3F%22>>

⁶⁷ "The French disconnection duck and cover", *Turkish Daily News*, Dec 18, 2006
<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=72308>

Overall in the big picture, the vast majority of French politicians are against Turkey's EU membership. This attitude, which began in 2004, has now become a factor that affects Turkey's relations with the European Union. Why a country which has in recent history shown Turkey real and frequent political support should have these concerns. Preventing a further enlargement before the completion of the deepening process or the prevention of a major influx of immigrants; or otherwise reluctance of accepting a crowded, Muslim state with democratic and economic issues; which is not even in Europe geographically can be named as a sample of concerns for French politicians and public. It really seems that in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, Islam has become the epitome of "Otherness" in the French collective unconscious.⁶⁸

However regardless of Turkey's application to the EU, Islam is already present in Europe. It is by the number of its followers, the second religion in France and Germany, and large Muslim communities exist in Britain, Benelux, in the Scandinavian countries, Austria, Switzerland. It also means not recognizing the vocation of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, or Romania, with significant minority or a majority Muslim population, to integrate a day the European Union.⁶⁹

Although different reasons and political motives lay behind the decreasing support for Turkish membership from French politicians and officials, there is now a trend of abandoning the cautious "wait and see" policy prevailing in the French foreign policy for many years. This means the breakdown of the notion, "The policies of the French State towards Turkey in its continuity will always be a different approach from that of conservative politicians". However the real challenge for Turkey lays in the fact that the

⁶⁸ Didier Billion, "The Worrying Developments of the Debate in France", *Today's Zaman*, June 19, 2008 <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=14772>

⁶⁹ <http://www.bleublancurc.com/Tr-Europe/Ana-euro.htm>

tone of the French public seems to continue to be pretty distant to the prospect of Turkish membership to the EU for a long time.

Whether in opinion polls and statements of politicians, it appears that France is disrupted by a possible entry of Turkey within the European Union. The French and their political representatives gave an image of "turcoscepticism. The Louis Harris Institute, which conducted the survey for AOL, i - Television and the daily Liberation said that if a referendum were held to ask the French for their views on Turkey's entry within the European Union, three-quarters of them (75.3%) would say no to this accession. The opinion survey was conducted two days after the green light-theoretically given by the Commission in Brussels, October 6, at the opening of accession talks with Ankara. The supporters of the UMP are most opposed to the possible accession. 64% of the French who vote for Socialists, would say no to the accession. The Greens voters are more favourable with 47.1% in favour of "yes".

In socio-professional class, only one third (33.3%) of executives and professionals are in favour of the entry of Turkey into Europe. This percentage is even lower than that of workers and employees (35.6%). Only 18-24 years are mostly for the entry of Turkey into the EU (65.1%).⁷⁰ So one of the most conservative and negative attitude towards Turkish accession comes from the older, retired population.

They said in another poll conducted in 2004, by the CSA Institute (The Chartered Securities Analyst Program), a New York based non-for-profit educational organization, in which 66% of respondents say they would have liked to be consulted by referendum before the decisive date of Turkish accession.

⁷⁰ Les Français contre l'adhésion de la Turquie
http://www.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/058/article_31043.asp

Many adults in France reject Turkey's aspiration to join the European Union (EU), according to a poll by Ifop published in Le Figaro. 67 per cent of respondents in France oppose the country's accession into the continental alliance. (Angus Reid Global Monitor : Polls & Research French, Germans Oppose Turkey's EU Accession)

Turning the Armenian genocide allegations into a principle in the world for the first time, France has a public, which has the deepest objection to Turkey's EU membership. According to the 2004 Eurobarometer opinion poll, 56 per cent of the French public say that they are opposed to Turkish entry with only 36 per cent in favour.⁷¹

In 2005 as seen in the table below there is a sharp fall in the support for Turkey in just one year. It decreases from 36% to 21% confirming the strong opposition increase in France especially with Turkey granting a candidacy status for the EU.

Table 3.1. *Net support for Turkey's membership of the EU in France*

For	Against	Net support
21	68	-47

Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

Note: The difference between the percentages for and against is those persons who did not answer or did not know.

⁷¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb64/eb64_en.pdf

The general negativity in French public opinion on Turkish image depends on several reasons such as the lack of information on history books and documents, the negative comments of French media on Turkey, the publications of Armenian lobby, the French affiliation of Turks with their former Arab colonies, the adjustment problems of Turkish migrants in France, general and financial concerns about EU enlargement process, negative reports on Turkish human rights, underdevelopment, education and minority cases, Turkey's lack of self promotion.⁷²

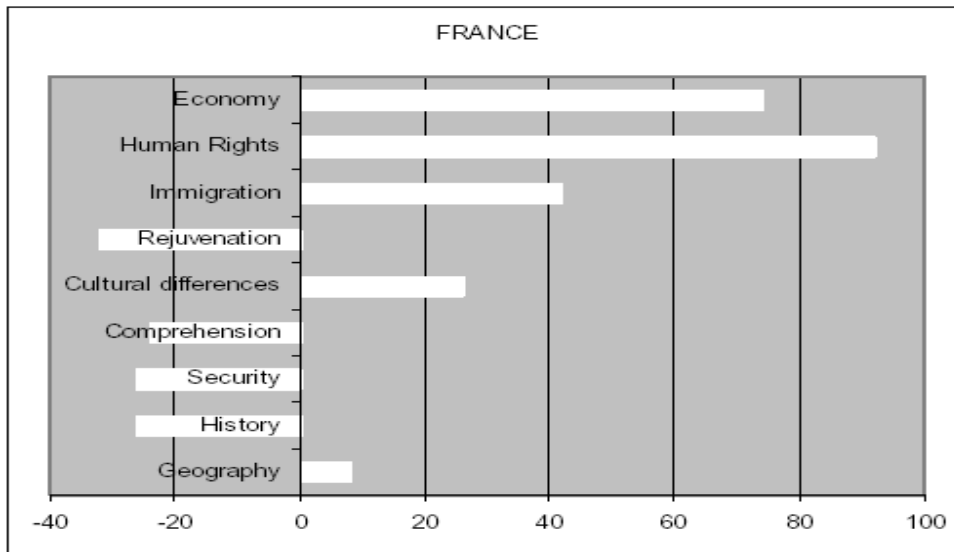
In the Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1 below, the points of concern which the public show a consensus on opposition are shown in Eurobarometer conducted in the fall of 2005. According to this, the issues of human rights and economy are the leading factors of concern about Turkey where historical matters and security, as well as mutual understanding are not as strong factor as they used to be.

Table 3.2 *Net agreement on each aspect of attitude towards Turkey's membership, in France*

Geography	History	Security	Comprehension	Cultural differences	Rejuvenation	Immigration	Human rights	Economy
8	-26	-26	-24	26	-32	42	92	74

Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

⁷²Bahadır Kaleağası, "Fransa'nın karmaşık ruhu ve Türkiye", *Radikal*, December 17, 2007
<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=241796>



Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

Figure 3.1 Net importance of single items of attitude towards Turkey's membership (supporters minus contesters) in France

In 2004 the 27 members agreed unanimously to initiate negotiations with Turkey. France was one of the most active countries in this process. The changes of government in a member state must not call into question decisions taken unanimously. The promise of "equal treatment" is brushed aside with this constitutional amendment to make a referendum obligatory solely in the case of Turkey, and by a country that propagated the principle of "pacta sunt servanda". In recent years France has associated itself with a policy towards Turkey as in the words of General de Gaulle: "Never let the Turks in but never leave them out either".

In such a political and social environment a decrease in the public support for Turkey seems inevitable. However the political initiatives would not be enough to overcome this skepticism prevailing, so in order to alter the negativity towards Turkey to a more positive attitude, both the political and civil actors should work in collaborations. Since France is seen as one of the biggest oppositions that Turkey has to face the problematic areas such

as human rights, economy, immigration and difference of cultures and religions can be overcome by both the reforms that inspire confidence and a web of social, political and economic dialogue that will contribute the enrichment of the bilateral relations. Successively the political populism shaped as opposition to Turkey would eventually decrease as Turkey will always prevail as a crucial ally of France which France cannot afford to lose.

CHAPTER 4

GERMAN POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF GERMAN PUBLIC OPINION AS TO TURKISH MEMBERSHIP TO EU

4.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF GERMAN-TURKISH RELATIONS

Germany and Turkey have wide-ranging and intensive ties that have developed over many centuries. Relations between the two countries today are based on three key factors: politically by Turkey's candidacy for membership in the European Union, at a human level by the presence of around 2.5 million people of Turkish origin in Germany, as well as by strong economic ties.

Turkish-German relations have their beginnings in the times of the Ottoman Empire and have culminated in the development of strong bonds with many façades that include economic, military, cultural and social relations. With the pending accession of Turkey to the European Union, of which Germany is the biggest member, and the existence of a huge Turkish diaspora in Germany, these relations have become more and more intertwined over the decades. Turkish-German relations seem to become one of the main axis of the European Union when Turkey becomes a member of the European Union, in which case Germany and Turkey will become the two biggest members in terms of population.

German-Turkish relations are roughly 800 years old. For more than 300 years there have not been any violent disputes. Later, when the Ottoman Empire posed a real threat to the Germans, their foreign policy towards the Ottomans was mainly shaped by military

concerns. However, already in the 17th century some political relations were established. Germans had always been very reluctant to join anti-Ottoman pacts and the last time Germans fought against Turks was, when Kara Mustapha Pasha's troops beleaguered Vienna in 1683.

Although the Ottoman Empire declared impartiality, with the two German battle cruisers, that were sheltered to Turks, bombarding the Russian coasts caused Turks the inclusion to the World War I as an ally of Germany. The German Turkish relations were frozen with the Mondros ceasefire at the end of the war in 1918. In 3 March 1924, a friendship agreement was signed between Germany and the newly established Turkish Republic, reestablishing the relations. More than 80 renowned German scientists and artists took refuge in Turkey from Nazi persecution in the 1930s and 40s, contributing in many fields of medicine, science, architecture, technology and arts, including the establishment of theatres and operas in the new republic.

There was again a break in relations between the two countries as Turkey declared war against Germany in 2 August 1944. The relations were restored after Turkey's declaration ended the status of war in 24 July 1951. A breakthrough in relations has occurred in 1961 with the establishment of the Treaty regarding the "Turkish workers to be sent to the Federal Republic of Germany". This was followed by the Social Security Agreement in 1964.

Based on good Turkish-German relations from the 19th century onwards, Germany promoted a Turkish immigration to Germany. However, large scale didn't occur until the 20th century. Germany suffered an acute labor shortage after World War II and, in 1961, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) officially invited Turkish workers to Germany to fill in this void, particularly to work in the factories that helped fuel Germany's economic miracle. The German authorities named these people *Gastarbeiter* (*guest workers*). Today, Turks are Germany's largest ethnic minority and form most of

Germany's Muslim minority. Until the year 1973, when Germany declared that it ended receiving foreign workers, thousands of Turkish workers had gone to live and work in Germany. In 1967 the official number of Turkish population in Germany was 150.000. Today that population has reached to 2.3 million Turks. These developments have also created one of the major issues between the two states; the integration of immigrant workers and now residents in Germany.⁷³

Another source of tension occurred in 1994, when Germany aborted the arms shipment, claiming that Turkey was using the arms for internal security reasons, violating the international agreements. In 1997, after the Luxemburg Summit, there was again deterioration in relation, when Turkey was not granted a candidate status for European Union membership.

There had been a dynamism in relations after Helmut Kohl government was replaced with a SPD-Greens Coalition, led by Gerhard Schroeder. The new government signaled better relations as well as higher support for Turkish membership for the EU. That process also accelerated the initiatives to increase the integration of the Turkish minority in Germany. Under the German EU Presidency, the stage was set at the 1999 Cologne summit for Turkey's EU candidacy. This status was formally laid down at the Helsinki European Council on 8 December 1999 and reaffirmed in more detail at the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002. The German Bundestag also voted on December 16 2005 in favor of the EU beginning accession negotiations with Turkey.⁷⁴

Germany has with no other country such a long history of relations as with Turkey – more than a century of close and altogether friendly relations. The fact that there are

⁷³ <http://www.tuerkischebotschaft.de/tr/turkcalman/tarihce/tarihce.htm>

⁷⁴ <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Laenderinformationen/01-Laender/Tuerkei.htm>

more than 2,5 million ethnic Turks, more than 700,000 now German nationals, living in Germany on the one hand, and that Turkey in 2005 expects more than 4,4 million German tourists on the other one, shows that there is an extraordinary intensity of low-level interconnectedness between the two cultures as well as a great cultural potential for a special German-Turkish relationship. The new German Nationality Act adopted in 1999 has afforded many Turks in Germany new opportunities. The new Immigration Act, which came into force in August 2007, aims to facilitate the integration of those newly arriving in Germany. Owing to the presence of many people of Turkish origin in Germany, Turkish domestic issues and disputes also impinge on German political debate.

The EU-Turkey Customs Union (in force since 1 January 1996) has given bilateral economic relations a new institutional framework. Germany has long been one of Turkey's most important trading partners. In 2007, trade rose again sharply in both directions as compared with the previous year. The bilateral volume of trade in this period was worth over EUR 24.8 billion, thus exceeding the previous year's record (2006: EUR 23.6 billion). In 2007, Turkish exports to Germany increased by 5.3%, to over EUR 9.7 billion, while German exports to Turkey increased by 4.8%, to nearly EUR 15.1 billion.

In recent years, the number of German companies and Turkish companies with German capital interest has risen to over 3,100. Since 1980, Germans have invested over USD 5.8 billion. German companies are active in a wide range of fields in Turkey, from manufacturing and overall product marketing to services of all kinds to retail and wholesale business management. Germans make up the largest group of visitors to Turkey. Nearly 4.15 million German tourists visited Turkey in 2007 (an increase of 10% compared with 2006). Since the mid-1990s, there has been increased interest in European universities, especially ones in Germany. An intergovernmental agreement

was initiated by both sides on 6 December 2007 with the objective to set up a German-Turkish University.⁷⁵

4.2 GERMAN POSITION ON ENLARGEMENT

Germany's three main political parties (CDU-SPD-Greens) have formally signed the agreement to set up a "grand coalition". The coalition agreement signed on 11 November 2005, indicated the major points of contemporary Germany policies including foreign policy, in that case more specifically European Enlargement.

The general outlook on the issue of enlargement is defined as; "A circumspect enlargement policy, which does not overtax the European Union's capacity to absorb new members, constitutes an important contribution to peace and stability on our continent".⁷⁶ In this context, the further development of an ambitious and differentiated EU Neighbourhood Policy is regarded as significant. The document considered the past enlargements a major step towards overcoming the painful division of the continent. Germany, in particular, was one of the beneficiaries of the process.

The coalition welcomed the fact that accession negotiations have begun with Croatia. They stood by the European perspective for the other states of the Western Balkans, too, as agreed at the European Council in Thessaloniki. Angela Merkel said in 10th International Bertelsmann Forum, 22 September 2006;

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ http://www.cdu.de/doc/pdf/05_11_11_Coalitionagreement_foreignpolicy.pdf

“There should not be new promises on EU accession beyond the Balkans. This is a tough statement. However, we have to primarily focus on better EU integration in the face of recent enlargement rounds now... Regarding negotiations with Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Turkey, it is key the criteria are being complied with.”⁷⁷

The document of Coalition Agreement stated that Germany has a particular interest in a deepening of mutual relations with Turkey and in binding the country to the European Union. “The negotiations launched on 3 October 2005 with the aim of accession are open-ended processes which does not imply any automaticity and whose outcome cannot be guaranteed at the outset.” This poses a particular economic, demographic and cultural challenge. However against this background, the coalition welcomed the reform efforts undertaken in Turkey. They expressed their willingness foster development in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and economic affairs in Turkey, with which Germany is also closely linked within NATO.

The coalition agreement summarized the policies of German government on Turkish enlargement with some conditions attached to the issue.

“Should the EU not have the capacity to absorb Turkey, or should Turkey not be able to comply completely and in full with all of the commitments which membership entails, Turkey must be linked to the European structures as closely as possible and in a way that further develops its privileged relationship with the EU”.⁷⁸

⁷⁷http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=156&document_ID=94

⁷⁸http://www.cdu.de/doc/pdf/05_11_11_Coalitionagreement_foreignpolicy.pdf

4.3 GERMAN POSITION ON TURKISH ACCESSION

4.3.1 Position of Major Political Forces

Germany has a multi-party system, with two large parties, three substantial smaller parties, and a number of minor parties. The parties currently participate in the German parliament, the Bundestag, sorted by the number of seats are; Christian Democratic Union (CDU) / Christian Social Union (CSU), christian-democratic, centre-right with 27.8%, 180 seats and 7.4%, 46 seats, Social Democratic Party (SPD), social democratic, centre-left with 34.2%, 222 seats, Free Democratic Party (FDP), liberal, centre-right with 9.8%, 61 seats, The Left (DIE LINKE), socialist and eurocommunist, left-wing with 8.7%, 54 seats and the Alliance '90/The Greens green, centre-left with 8.1%, 51 seats. Since 1949, the party system has been dominated by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Since autumn 2005 Germany has been governed by a Grand Coalition of Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The Social Democratic - Green party coalition that ruled Germany for seven years saw Turkish EU membership as a crucial bridge to the Muslim world, while the Christian Union parties and their opposition partners, thought of it as an integration challenge too overwhelming for Europe. The question of whether Turkey should be granted a full EU membership or the "privileged partnership" favored by Merkel and her conservative allies in Europe dominates German political agenda.

The argument that Turkey is geographically not "European" can be found in German case as well as in French. Furthermore, the human rights situation in Turkey is an often-cited argument: in both countries, the lack of respect for human rights is the main reason

for popular rejection. But whereas the geographic argument is by definition unalterable, the human rights argument leaves the door principally open for Turkey's EU membership in case of improvement. However, contrary to France, geopolitical arguments are also used by proponents of the accession of Turkey to the EU in Germany. The integration of Turkey would not only strengthen the EU's role in the Mediterranean and in the Caucasus region, but also contribute to forge a veritable European security policy.

There are numerous differences between the French and the German debates – even if the positions appear sometimes to be the same. For example, in both countries, opponents to Turkish EU membership argue that the country is still far behind the European level of economic – as well as political and cultural – development. They share indeed the view that the integration of Turkey would thus lead to a financial overload for the EU, but in different ways. In Germany, the largest contributor to the European budget, many people are afraid of the financial cost of an enlargement to a big and comparatively poor country like Turkey. On the contrary, French people are rather alarmed by the social consequences of Turkey's accession, especially by the relocation of the production and an increase of unemployment.

Another apprehension is about the future of the European project. As the French are traditionally sceptical of the American superpower, it does not help much that the United States strongly advocates Turkey's EU membership. In their opinion, Turkey's accession would hinder the political integration process and degrade the EU to a mere free trade area. In Germany, it is mainly the CDU/CSU that justifies its opposition to Turkey's accession by its pro-European attitude. The idea that the United States would advocate the Turkish accession in order to weaken the EU, by contrast, is in Germany far less common than in France. This is mainly to be explained by the traditional US-friendly attitude of a wide range of policy makers in Germany.

Moreover, cultural arguments in France and Germany can have different forms, too. French rightist extremist parties, which see the European integration as a danger to the French nation and are traditionally against it, justify their opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU with cultural arguments. In this context, Turkey is considered as an Islamic "Trojan horse" which is about to enter and endanger the European Union. By contrast, the idea of Europe as a "Christian Club" is not common in France. In Germany, it is mainly the CDU's Bavarian sister party CSU that uses cultural arguments. They, however, stress explicitly the Christian heritage of the EU and consider it incompatible with an accession of Turkey with its mainly Muslim population.

As the principle of "laïcité", which dictates a strict separation of politics and religion, play an important role in French political culture, neither an Islamic nor an explicit Christian Europe is wanted. In particular leftist parties – in France and occasionally in Germany – evoke it in order to justify their support for Turkish EU membership. In addition, proponents of the accession of Turkey to the EU fear that a rejection of Turkey could boost Islamic forces within Turkey and hinder the modernization process of the country.⁷⁹

The Christian Democrats called for a mention of Germany's Judeo-Christian tradition in the constitution whereas the Social Democrats, Liberals, and former communists opposed this formulation. The Greens called for a compromise wording mentioning "god" in the preamble, but not specifying which one.⁸⁰

The biggest difference between the two countries is doubtlessly constituted by the importance of the "Armenian question". In France, even proponents of Turkey's accession think that Turkey should recognize the 1915 "Armenian genocide" before

⁷⁹http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2007/2007_eu-turkey.pdf

⁸⁰<http://aei.pitt.edu/3076/01/Davidson-Schmich.pdf>

entering the EU. This concern is to be explained by the historical background of Franco-Armenian relations, but also by the pragmatic interest of winning the votes of the large Armenian diaspora in France. In Germany, where immigration structures are different, the Armenian issue has only been “discovered” quite recently and does not play an important role in the public debate.

Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder expressed support for a Turkish proposal in 2005 to create a joint commission of experts with Armenia to study the disputed history of the massacre allegations of Armenians by Turks in 1915. Schröder said during an interview with Turkish television station NTV on 29 April 2005, it was important that a "nation looks at its history with a sense of self-criticism." However Schröder added that this question would "never" be a pre-condition imposed on Turkey, for its entry into the European Union.⁸¹

By contrast, the large number of German citizens with Turkish origins partly explains the advocacy of the Turkish EU membership by the former SPD/Green Party government. Here again, electoral motivations were working. The weight of the German-Turkish community explains also that the Berliner district “Kreuzberg” with its high numbers of Turkish immigrants has become a point of reference for many Germans in framing their image of Turkey and impact the actual German scepticism vis-à-vis Turkey.⁸²

In contrast to the expectation that national parties are divided over the issue of Europe, mainstream German parties were by and large united over most of the European issues

⁸¹ “Germans Back Study of Armenian Massacres”, *Deutsche Welle*, April 29,2005
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,1568855,00.html>

⁸²http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2007/2007_eu-turkey.pdf

like the highly controversial issue of whether the European Council should open accession negotiations with Turkey. The Christian Democrats came out primarily against fullfledged EU membership for Ankara, instead calling for a partnership that would fall short of membership. Former CDU Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Ex-Defense Minister Volker R  he, who had favored Turkish accession while in office, disagreed. The Liberals too came out against Turkish membership, although their former Foreign Ministers Genscher and Kinkel were in favor. The leftist parties including the Social Democrats and Greens favored Turkish EU membership if/when the Copenhagen criteria are met, although some members of these parties, including former SPD Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, vocally disagreed with their party’s overall stance. As a result of these divisions, none of the mainstream parties planned to focus on the Turkish issue in their campaigns; however, this topic proved difficult to avoid in practice.

However when it came to the far right parties, this notion was not applicable anymore. A Republican poster for the EP election of Germany in 2004, featured the slogan “Europe without Turkey.” This set them apart from even the Christian Democrats who favored some type of partnership with Turkey. The other main far right party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), focused their campaign against Turkish EU-accession in an overtly racist manner. Their main campaign slogan was “Germans Defend Yourselves” – the same slogan used by the Nazis in 1933 in conjunction with their boycott of Jewish businesses. This slogan was accompanied by the image of an Islamic crescent eclipsing the EU’s circle of stars, set against a backdrop of burning cities, police cars, and minarets.⁸³

In the same election, although the SPD had not planned to stress the Turkey issue, it came up repeatedly in the campaign. One of the top SPD candidates for the EP was the

⁸³<http://aei.pitt.edu/3076/01/Davidson-Schmich.pdf>

German citizen of Turkish origin, Vural Öger, an outspoken proponent of Turkish EU-accession. In May, Öger made public comments suggesting that German families should have more children to solve Germany's demographic crisis. These remarks immediately prompted outrage from the right, leading to comments about Öger having a harem and criticisms both of Turkish immigrants' treatment of women and of their failure to "integrate" into German society. This conflict made headlines, as did the far right's campaign, and most media attention given to the campaign came to focus on the issue of Turkey's future in the EU and the parties' attitudes toward Turks living in Germany.

While the CDU, like the Social Democrats, did not plan to stress Turkish accession to the EU in its campaign, the need to counter the far right's populist appeals on the topic combined with the opportunity to gain the support of some anti-Turkish SPD supporters helped the party overcome its divisions on the issue. In media appearances Christian Democrats stressed their plan for a "privileged partnership" rather than EU membership for Turkey. Ultimately, however, their statements regarding Turkey often moved into a discussion of the domestic role of Turkish immigrants living in Germany, a longstanding national political debate.

For the EP election, the CDU's Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), unsurprisingly had a less nationally focused and more regionally-focused campaign. Its main slogan was "CSU – A Strong Voice for Bavaria in Brussels." The CSU's second focus in the campaign, however, was its opposition to Turkey's membership in the EU. The party was more united on this front than the CDU and was happy to oblige the media's interest in the issue. Some observers argued that the CSU stressed the Turkey issue rather than placing emphasis on the Red-Green government's economic record as the CDU did in order to divert voter attention away from the CSU-led Bavarian government's budget cutbacks.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Ibid.

The SPD has remained as a coalition power within the new government of CDU/CSU-SPD partnership, and so far there has been continuity in the SPD's position on Turkey. Although the party had four party leaders since 2005, (Gerhard Schröder, Franz Müntefering, Matthias Platzeck and Kurt Beck) the pro-Turkish position adopted by Schröder in 1998 has remained official party policy.⁸⁵

On the Turkish accession issue Schröder saw himself in continuity with all prior governments since Konrad Adenauer. On various occasions former Chancellor Schröder has indicated why his government is in favor of opening membership talks with Turkey and played an important role in EU granting a candidate status to Turkey. As seen in his statements, Turkish membership would mean an enormous increase in stability for the Middle East as well as for Europe as a whole if EU and Turkey were to succeed in combining a non-fundamentalist form of Islam with the values of the European Enlightenment.⁸⁶

Again in a meeting with Turkish journalists at the hotel Adlon in Berlin in 27 August 2005, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder explained his views on Turkish membership.

First, there is the economic contribution of Turkey to the EU. But this is not the determining factor. (...) When you look at a map of the world, it is clear why Turkey's accession to the EU is important for us. What Turkey, as a Muslim country, defends the values of Europe, is fundamental for us. The entry of Turkey in the EU is mutually beneficial. If we manage to integrate Turkey into the Union, this will be a significant event, "he said."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=156&document_ID=94

⁸⁶ <http://www.bundesregierung.de/en/Latest-News/Information-from-the-Government-10157.762928/artikel/Membership-talks-with-Turkey-k.htm>

⁸⁷ "Le oui à la Turquie de Chirac et Schröder", October 31, 2004

In a speech given Speech by Dr Klaus Scharioth, former State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, at the meeting of the German-Turkish Cooperation Council in Berlin on 24 January 2003, continuing to Turkey's pre-accession process is considered in the strategic interest of Germany, the EU and all partners in NATO. A stable, democratic, secular Turkey with close ties to the West was given as an advantage. Given its location, Turkey with geostrategic importance for the oil and gas transit routes from the Caucasus and Central Asia, the control of migration flows and the fight against the drugs trade is mentioned. If Turkey succeeded in its attempt to marry democracy with Islam, that would be an important example for other Islamic countries, according to Scharioth.

Bringing Turkey into the EU was also in the economic interest of Germany. Germany is categorized as Turkey's principal trading partner - more important even than the United States and Russia - both in terms of imports from Turkey and exports to Turkey. That was why German industry is committed to Turkey joining the EU. He expressed Germany's will to support Turkey on its path towards Europe. The network of ties between the countries was close and based on trust, thanks also to the presence of 2.4 million people of Turkish origin in Germany and the ever-increasing economic links between the countries, said Dr Klaus Scharioth.

There were also some members of SPD that attain more cautious attitudes. It will still be a very long time before Turkey can become an EU member state. The prerequisites must be met. This means that the political conditions must be fulfilled and the reform process must go on, according to former Minister of State for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office, Hans Martin Bury as expressed in an interview with, on the debate about Turkey joining the EU, on Deutschlandradio, 27 November 2002.⁸⁸

<http://www.turquieeuropeenne.eu/rubrique84.html>

⁸⁸ [http://www.auswaertiges-
amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index.html?bereich_id=4&type_id=0&archiv_id=3806&detail=1](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index.html?bereich_id=4&type_id=0&archiv_id=3806&detail=1)

In an interview with the "Berliner Zeitung" on 28 February 2004, former Federal Foreign Minister Fischer (SPD) explained his changing perspective on Turkish accession; as previously being one of those people who were 51% in favour of Turkey's accession and 49% beset by doubts. But he has fundamentally changed his position following the attacks of 11 September 2001. Since then it has become ever clearer that European unification also has a strategic dimension. From that point of view a Turkey that meets European standards is just as important as the EU's common foreign and security policy.

In an interview on BBC radio on October 20, 2004, Fischer spoke about the prospect of Turkey joining the European Union; the need, in the context of an enlarged EU, for a European constitution; and the strategic significance for the EU of enlarging its borders into the region. Fischer spoke of the potential for Turkey's "strategic bridge function" in the Arab and Islamic world as a part of Europe. Former Foreign Minister Fischer reiterated this support in the BBC interview saying that Europe should stick to the promises it has made to Turkey since 1963, for denying membership to Turkey, a large Islamic country with strong democratic and economic potential, would have very negative consequences.⁸⁹

But despite his changing perception towards Turkish membership, he, as an important representative of his government, still attained some conditions for giving a green light to Turkey. In an interview in the "Rheinischer Merkur" on 1 September 2005, former Federal Foreign Minister Fischer said that, Turkey still has a long way to come, since the EU will demand a new social reality, not just paper changes. The EU is not however taking any risks when they commence accession negotiations on 3 October. The outcome is entirely open. At the end there will be a decision to be taken, which could go either way – yes or no. The accession process is subject to clear conditions, and can be

⁸⁹ http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/politics/new/pol_fischer_turkey_2004_2.html

suspended or even broken off if developments so warrant. But it is very much in Germany's interest to foster the broad drives for modernization and further Turkey's long-term integration into Western structures, until the EU is negotiating with a genuinely EU-compatible Turkey. That would represent a tremendous step forward for many Christians in the Middle East. For then totally new standards of religious tolerance would suddenly apply and be applied in Turkey.⁹⁰

Taking into account opposition to Turkey's EU membership, Fischer indicated that any rate a decision on Turkey's membership would come at the conclusion of accession talks and only after a "Europe-capable" Turkey has come into existence. "The decision would come within 15 years at the earliest," he said.⁹¹

Despite the existence of some cautious attitudes within SPD, the majority of the party is still the biggest supporter of the existence of a Turkey as a strategic ally and a model state that could contribute significantly.

Vural Öger, a MEP of Social Democrats from Germany, said in an interview that the ones support Turkish membership use logical explanations whereas the ones that oppose use only sentimental arguments. For example Turkey having different values than Europe and never having experienced the Enlightenment is one of the opposition points. But Öger suggested that the European Orthodox members have never gone through Enlightenment either. He said that Europe should be a set of values such as human rights protection, gender equality, democracy and protection of minorities; all which are not

⁹⁰ http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/ausgabe_archiv?archiv_id=7573

⁹¹ "Fischer Discusses EU Future in US Germany", *Deutsche Welle*, June 08, 2005
<http://www.dw-club.de/dw/article/0,2144,1608366,00.html>

specific to one religion. And to use these arguments against Turkish membership would only create discrimination for Turkish case.⁹²

Current German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD), for a long period Schröder's most trusted advisor, has defined government policy also as one of continuity. He argued that Turkey has a right to fair accession negotiations. It is a key question whether Turkey, in the long run, commits itself to European values. Turkey struggles with itself, but it is on the way towards Europe. (Stuttgarter Zeitung, 26 September 2006; Die Welt, 30 September 2006)⁹³

In another interview given by Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier to BILD newspaper on 28 June 2006, he once again explained his view about Turkey by saying;

Turkey intends to, and indeed will, prove that democracy, human rights and the rule of law can also prevail in a predominantly-Muslim country. This process has already begun, and it is a long-term, highly-ambitious one. We must therefore not be surprised if there are sometimes setbacks as well as progress. Our task is to strengthen those forces in Ankara who are in favour of further progress. (...)The EU heads of state and government unanimously decided to start negotiations, and they decided equally unanimously that the aim of those negotiations was full EU membership. I can only warn now against questioning the aim of that process, because by doing so, we encourage those forces in Turkey who reject Europe as a matter of principle and discourage precisely those who are courageously and committedly dedicated to rule-of-law reforms.

⁹² <http://www.anadolu.be/2004-09/8.html>

⁹³ http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=156&document_ID=94

In September 2006 SPD party leader Kurt Beck also warned that it would be a capital mistake to close the door to Turkish EU membership. And that membership of a lesser quality would not be an adequate offer.”⁹⁴

In an interview with the Turkish daily *Hürriyet*, published on February 20, 2004, Schröder said that this policy of proposing a 'privileged partnership' - which was actively pursued by conservative-led governments – is no just to the promises that have been made to Turkey) Former Chancellor Schröder as a major backer of Turkey’s EU membership bid. He has argued that the conservatives would make a fatal foreign policy mistake by blocking Turkey’s way into the EU.

The two successive chancellors- Schröder and Merkel held contrasting views over Turkish accession to the European Union (EU). While Schröder argued that Turkish membership would ensure long-term security in Europe, Angela Merkel firmly opposed Turkey joining the EU and proposed a "privileged partnership" instead. Merkel argued that the EU, which took on 12 new member countries in recent years, will not be able to successfully integrate Turkey with its population of 70 million and an economic power that amounts to only 23 percent of the EU average.

Christian Democrat / Christian Social and Free Democrat factions opposed the decision of the EU to start accession negotiations with Turkey. From the point of view of CDU Chairman Angela Merkel, Turkey has not fulfilled the criteria for the start of negotiations. Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, CDU, also voiced criticism, saying it is unfair, dishonest and cynical for European leaders to encourage Turkey. “These leaders won’t be in office by the time Turkey fulfills the necessary requirements

⁹⁴ Ibid.

for membership”, Kohl said in an interview with the conservative newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine*.⁹⁵

Before 1998, the coalition of CDU/CSU and FDP under Chancellor Helmut Kohl had opposed Turkey’s EU aspirations. In 2004 Angela Merkel, still lobbied for her party’s preference of a privileged partnership for Turkey. "Yes, we have friendly relations with Turkey, but Turkey's accession will challenge the European Union. That is why we do not want Turkey in the EU. Instead, we offer a privileged partnership "said Merkel, during a political meeting in the city of Augsburg in Bavaria in 21 August 2005.

"We, Germans, as members of the European Union, have obviously an obligation to ask ourselves what should be our Europe," she added. Merkel has suggested that EU integration of Eastern Europe after the Cold War had been a good thing "But everyone is not intended to join the Union," she said.⁹⁶

"We are 27 countries, and as far as that is concerned, we must face the central question of whether the integration power of the current EU is suffering. That Europe can't handle it at the moment, and so I support the option of a privileged partnership," she said.⁹⁷ Merkel and others have said Turkey's large and growing population, which might eclipse Germany's as early as 2020, mean the “poor”, “Muslim” country would place too much economic and cultural pressure on current EU states if it were admitted to the union.

⁹⁵http://www.germany.info/relaunch/politics/new/pol_eu_turkey_12_2004.html

⁹⁶“Angela Merkel : Nous ne voulons pas de la Turquie dans l’Union Européenne”, August 25, 2005
<http://www.info-turc.org/article2274.html>

⁹⁷ “German Politicians' Turkey Divide”, *Deutsche Welle*, September 28,2005
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1724309,00.html>

The CDU chief told German television station ZDF on October 2004 that the CDU were supporting the creation of a petition against Turkey's membership to the European Union and considering taking their resistance to Turkey's membership of the EU to the streets and reiterated an earlier call for an alternative offer. The proposal for a petition against Turkish membership was originally presented by Michael Glos, a senior politician in the Christian Social Union (CSU).⁹⁸

In a more similar but more international manner in August 2005, in a letter to the EU's conservative heads of government, Merkel said negotiations with Turkey, which are due to start on October 3, should not automatically lead to membership. They should instead lead to a "privileged partnership" and should be "open ended". Merkel sent her letter to the leaders of France, Italy, Austria, Holland and Greece, as well as to other conservative-led countries.⁹⁹

In October 2006, after her visit to Ankara, Angela Merkel stressed the point that the European Union does not intend to admit new members "in the foreseeable future" other than those who have already begun accession discussions. Furthermore with a very similar attempt to what Sarkozy had proposed, she also urged Europe to delineate its borders, and called for open discussions with Turkey. "The accession negotiation with Turkey should take place without any preconceived objective," Merkel said.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ "Merkel Calls For Petition Against Turkish Membership", *Deutsche Welle*, October 11, 2004
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,1356052,00.html>

⁹⁹ <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=170>

¹⁰⁰ "Merkel EU's Door Closing for Near Future Europe", *Deutsche Welle*, 07_10_2006
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2197917,00.html>

However unlike what happened in France, the 2005 elections and the Grand Coalition of Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel did not change the German foreign policy on Turkish accession in a dramatic way. On the other hand, one must note that there is not a certain support from Merkel for the EU membership, and the statements were merely vague and focused on the fulfilment of the conditions by Turkey.

Angela Merkel's position on Turkey - and on enlargement in general - has been consistent, summed up in her defense of *pacta sunt servanda*. The optimism from her statements should not be interpreted as a change in her position in the debate about Turkish accession. What Merkel still supported was, a significant cooperation between the two parties, recognizing Turkey's geopolitical role in the EU's security dimension. Thus, in September 2006 she noted:

“Turkey has been promised EU accession negotiations by a former German government, and that is why these accession negotiations are now being continued. ... Negotiations are open-ended, but are being led in a fair manner. While the CDU and I personally prefer a privileged partnership of Turkey to membership, we are still reliable partners.” (Angela Merkel on ZDF TV, 28 September 2006)

Confirming the Merkel's point of view, the deputy chairman of the CDU/CSU faction in the German Bundestag, Dr. Andreas Schockenhoff, underlined on 5 February 2007 in Ankara that Germany has a substantial interest that Turkey continues its reform process - accession negotiations are a catalyst for doing so. No one intended to end the accession negotiations; their continuation is in the European interest.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ “THE GERMAN EU PRESIDENCY: Implications for Accession Negotiations with Turkey” by Jan Senkyr *ZEI EU-Turkey-Monitor* Vol. 3 No. 1 March 2007
http://www.zei.de/download/zei_tur/ZEI_EU-Turkey-Monitor_vol3no1.pdf

Besides the conservatives' emphasis on the reinforcement of the reform process in Turkey, there were also other conservatives that are in favor of admitting Turkey to some processes of the EU. Volker Rühle (CDU), the former defense minister of Kohl cabinet, gave a speech on 21 January 2001, on the "Guiding principles for a German and European Foreign and Security policy". He said that the EU should respond positively to Turkey's desire to be integrated into the CESDP's decision-making processes; in other words, Turkey should be granted CESDP "associate member" status. But he showed reluctance as did his cabinet and chancellor about Turkish accession to the EU.

We back all efforts to support Turkey in its European orientation and bind it more closely to the EU economically, politically and institutionally. Also for this reason the EU should take into account Turkey's desire to be integrated into the CESDP's decision-making processes, especially as the majority of potential deployment scenarios lie in geographical proximity to Turkey. The granting of EU accession candidate status was, however, at the least premature and threatens to lead to disappointment for Turkey and to further alienation between Turkey and Europe if the high expectations linked with this status are not met as quickly as Turkey had hoped.¹⁰²

There was also a strong resistance and opposition from another conservative coalition partner party Christian Social Union (CSU). "Europe is a community of values, and I say yes to close cooperation, to friendship with Turkey but if we want to make the European Union an intellectual center, then I say Turkey has no place here," said Bavarian governor Edmund Stoiber who is also the chairman of the CSU, the Bavarian sister party and coalition partner of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), in October 2006 at a CSU party convention in Augsburg.

¹⁰² http://www.cdu.de/en/doc/leitsaetze_englisch-15-01-2001.pdf

Stoiber, even contradicted US President George Bush on the issue of Turkey's potential accession to the European Union. "I disagree very clearly with President Bush when he says that Turkey must join Europe for security policy reasons," Stoiber said. "I say, bring Nicaragua into the US and then we can talk about it."¹⁰³ "We will do everything possible to achieve a privileged partnership with Turkey instead of EU accession. . . . The country is a close partner of Germany and should remain so. That is no reason, however, to offer membership in the EU", he said to the *Der Spiegel* on May 6, 2005.

He explained his views in an interview with *Suddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich), on December 16, 2004, saying that Europe's basic freedoms should also be extended to Turkey; free movement of goods, greater freedom for the movement of individuals, freedom of provision of services, free movement of capital. And Turkey should also be fully integrated into the common foreign and security policy.¹⁰⁴

In late 2004 several CSU members of parliament were opposing the EU constitution because they argue it would leave the bloc hamstrung if Turkey did eventually become a member. CSU deputy Johannes Singhammer told daily *Münchner Merkur* that Turkey was too populous and too poor for the bloc to take on.¹⁰⁵

The speaker of the CSU parliamentary group for European issues in the Bundestag, Gerd Müller, called the notion of expanding the EU while strengthening it at the same time a "grand illusion". "The deepening and the parallel widening of the EU is the grand illusion

¹⁰³ "Stoiber Speaks Out Against SPD and Turkish EU Membership", *Deutsche Welle*, 16_10_2006
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2205390,00.html>

¹⁰⁴ Inal, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2333>

¹⁰⁵ "Conservatives to Huddle to Block Turkey's EU Bid", *Deutsche Welle*, 24_12_2004
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1439823,00.html>

of the European Union," Müller argued. "You can't hope to ratify a European Constitution, transfer major powers of national sovereignty of the EU states to Brussels, and at the same time extend the borders of the EU to Anatolia, to Asia Minor," he said.

106

The other partner of the grand coalition, the Greens (die Güne), however, had differing ideas about the Turkish membership. Volker Beck, former parliamentary leader of the Greens, called the initiative of Angela Merkel to associate Turkey in a "privileged partnership", "foul" and "irresponsible", in an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.¹⁰⁷

Other than the strategic importance and the reformation process there are of course other matters that German politicians show an interest to. One of the most important ones can be named as the human rights issues in Turkey. And about the claims of human rights violation with "anti-terror legislations" Ankara had issued Frank Walter Steinmeier noted that like any other country Turkey has the right to protect itself against the threat of terrorism. The urgency of this theme was demonstrated by terrorist attacks. But he also mentioned that Germany will keep a close eye on whether these legislations are in line with human rights and the rule of law, and it will also pay special attention to press freedom.

The Greens are specifically sensitive about the human rights issues in Turkey. Claudia Roth, the co-chair of the German Greens Party, noted that Turkish membership in the EU would force major improvements in Turkey's civil rights and human rights practices.

¹⁰⁶ "German Politicians' Turkey Divide", *Deutsche Welle*, September 28,2005
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1724309,00.html>

¹⁰⁷ "Merkel Calls For Petition Against Turkish Membership", *Deutsche Welle*, October 11,2004
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,1356052,00.html>

"On paper we have passed really crucial packages of bills, but now it's about concrete implementation, especially when it comes to 'zero tolerance for cruel and unusual punishment'," Roth said.¹⁰⁸

There is also the critical issue about Turkey opening its harbours and ports to Greek Cypriots. Turkey has refused to open its ports and airports to Greek Cypriot ships and planes, until the EU ends its trade embargo on Northern Cyprus. The Cyprus problem resulted in the suspension of accession talks in eight policy areas in November 2006.

On this Steinmeier stated that there is a mutual responsibility and all sides must now move so that this conflict does not escalate further. According to him Turkey has the clear duty to open its ports and airports to ships and aircraft from Cyprus, which is an EU member. But the EU also has a duty that Northern Cyprus improves in economic terms, and that includes direct trade with the EU.

When asked about the position of French Prime Minister which has conditioned the opening of negotiations with Turkey on the recognition by the Greek Cypriot administration, the former German Chancellor Schröder said that Turkey was not responsible for the stalemate on the island. "There is a Cyprus problem. But it is not Turkey, who has violated the rules. They are those who feel close to Greece, which have hindered the process," he said.¹⁰⁹

Speaking at the opening of the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce in Cologne on April 27, 2004, former Chancellor Schröder noted that Turkey acted in a European spirit

¹⁰⁸ "German Politicians' Turkey Divide", *Deutsche Welle*, September 28, 2005
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1724309,00.html>

¹⁰⁹<http://www.turquieeuropeenne.eu/article195.html>

with its decision on Cyprus on the Annan Plan, saying it has worked constructively and responsibly towards reunification of the long divided island. He added that it is extremely regrettable that a historical opportunity to overcome the division of the island was not seized upon by the Greek Cypriot community.¹¹⁰

About the Cyprus issue the CDU, had usually been pursuing a distant and cautious approach that emphasized their equal distance and neutrality to the both sides of the island. According to the Resolution of the National Committee of the CDU for Foreign and Security Policy chaired by Dr. Friedbert Pflüger MP on March 18, 2002; the CDU welcomed the prospect that president of Cyprus, agreed with the political leader of the Turkish ethnic group, to take up intensive negotiations at the presence of the representative of the United Nations, in order to achieve a political solution of the Cyprus conflict. The CDU Germany considered that some aspects should be taken into account to achieve a successful conclusion of the negotiations. First of all The Greek and Turkish ethnic group must refrain from regarding the annexation of Cyprus by Greece or Turkey as an option. Secondly none of the two ethnic groups should be able to dominate the other one.

Then the resolution continued with some suggestions to the both sides, guarantors and the mediators as saying that, since the ethnic groups are not to be limited to the present settlement areas, a solution must be found of a federal government with two federal areas and two ethnic communities. The European Union and the United Nations should take the responsibility of as guarantors for the solution for a durable and stable peace solution in Cyprus negotiated by the two ethnic groups. A particular problem represented the resettlement of many thousands of persons from Turkey to the Northern

¹¹⁰<http://www.bundesregierung.de/en/Latest-News/Information-from-the-Government-10157.643701/artikel/German-government-optimistic-a.htm>

part of Cyprus. Therefore a solution must be found to enable them to remain in their new homeland.

Also the CDU demanded the abolition of the commercial boycott against the Northern part of the island after the achievement of a political solution of the Cyprus conflict. But for the reason that region will be one of the poorest regions of the extended European Union and has not been able yet to benefit of the advancement strategy of the European Union. Both measures are preconditions for a rapid adjustment of per capita income in the Northern part to the Southern part of Cyprus.¹¹¹

However, the issue of Turkey opening its harbours and ports to Greek Cypriots became a “cine qua non” condition for Turkish membership to German conservatives in recent years. Merkel’s reaction to this was her suggestion of a time period of 18 months to evaluate the whole situation and to see if Turkey fulfils the conditions for the membership. Her use of the EU’s so called “review clause” was significant because it demonstrated that she is distancing herself from the Turkey-friendly course of her foreign minister Steinmeier of the SPD.¹¹²

The CDU Germany claimed that they supported all efforts to keep the promise of the European Union that the Republic of Cyprus has also a claim to full membership of the European Union, when there were no political solutions of the Cyprus. They also defended the idea that Cyprus, that met all preconditions to become a member state of the European Union, is a model at the EU accession negotiations, and must not be made responsible for a possible blockade by Ankara. That’s why Turkey should recognize Cyprus as a legitimate EU member state.¹¹³

¹¹¹ <http://www.cdu.de/en/doc/zypern-engl.pdf>

¹¹² <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=170>

¹¹³ <http://www.cdu.de/en/doc/zypern-engl.pdf>

Visiting Turkey for the first time as chancellor in October 2006, Angela Merkel said that the country must meet its obligation to grant Cyprus trade privileges if it wants to avoid jeopardizing EU membership talks. "The Ankara protocol must be implemented," Merkel said, referring to an agreement that extends the customs union between Turkey and the EU to the 10 countries that joined the bloc in May 2004, including Cyprus. "It is standing before us as a pre-condition," the chancellor added. "This issue must be resolved for the continuation of (membership) talks."¹¹⁴

By far the most sceptical senior Christian Democrat, CSU party leader Edmund Stoiber decided at the last moment in October 2005 not to take up an influential ministry in Berlin. Thus he remained minister-president of the state of Bavaria. Stoiber has since become even more out-spoken in his opposition to Turkish accession, Bavarian State Premier Stoiber called on the EU to freeze the accession negotiations with Turkey on November 2006. Stoiber said it was unacceptable that Turkey did not recognize EU member Cyprus.¹¹⁵

The Greens have also taken a great interest on the conflict between Turkey and Cyprus. Claudia Roth gave a speech on the relations of EU with Turkey and Cyprus in conference organized by Cyprus Policy Center (CPC) at the Student Activity Center of Eastern Mediterranean University on March 2008.

As vice-chair of the Subcommittee on Turkey and Europe in the European Parliament, as Chair or Member of the German-Turkish Parliamentary Friendship Group in the German Bundestag, focusing on Turkey while Chair of the Bundestag Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid and as commissioner of the German red-green

¹¹⁴<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2195732,00.html>

¹¹⁵<http://www.germnews.de/dn/2006/11/07>

government Roth explained her and her party's expectations and efforts on the Cyprus issue.

She noted that, Cyprus is a different country, with its own history and its own problems - problems which can only be solved by and with Cypriots. But because many of those who are against Turkey joining the EU often cite Cyprus as an obstacle, she said that a democratic Turkey is part of Europe and an interest is to support the dynamic of change. And that it is wrong to point the finger at Turkey, which is in the midst of deep and radical changes, which is undergoing a process of reform and democratization, and which is on its way into Europe.

According to Roth, the EU would lose credibility if it used the Cyprus issue to freeze accession negotiations with Turkey in certain areas. The chapters need to be opened up as soon as possible, without any political calculation and game-playing. She also stated that Turkey must fulfill its obligations under the Ankara Protocol and also apply the customs union with the EU to the Republic of Cyprus. And the government of the Republic of Cyprus should not see its own membership of the EU as a means of exerting bilateral pressure on Turkey, thus making the entire negotiation process even more complicated.

“It was Papadopoulos and his unholy alliance that continued to hold on to the old policy of non-cooperation, flexible in rhetorical terms during the decisive phase, but nationalistic, irreconcilable and exclusive in the matter itself”, Roth commented.¹¹⁶

She said that in some cases, she did not find particularly helpful what the then EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Günther Verheugen, was doing. There were some who

¹¹⁶http://www.cypruspolicycenter.org/dosyalar/Claudia_Roth_speech.pdf

warned against the Republic of Cyprus's EU membership being exploited to work against reunification and not against Turkey.

“Buffer zones, barbed wire fencing and minefields are unacceptable for political and humanitarian reasons - they are a disgrace for an EU which espouses the cause of peace and understanding. The goal must clearly be a demilitarized and independent Cyprus”, she said. In that sense she explained that she agreed with those who are calling for Turkish troops to be withdrawn. However, that it is wrong to make that a precondition for further talks.¹¹⁷

She explained that in the run-up to the German EU Council Presidency in 2007 the German Bundestag, on the initiative of the Green Party, adopted a cross-party motion confirming the will to overcome the division of Cyprus. This motion also emphasized the need for visible steps to be taken to restore full state unity and sovereignty of the island. It was made clear that work on developing special trade regulations with the North should be resumed without delay. The importance of financial support from the EU, on the ground in the North was emphasized. Support in developing and restructuring the infrastructure, especially in the environmental, energy, transportation and telecommunications sectors; in promoting social and economic development; in getting the population in the North used to the idea of EU membership by promoting communication, scholarship programmes and EU information events. The willingness of the authorities in the North to support gradual adaptation to the EU's legal system was welcomed. The government in the South is called upon to drop its ban on contact to the parliament, to the authorities, to public institutions and educational facilities in the North.

¹¹⁷ Ibid

But the more serious are the accession talks, the more obstacles for the EU membership of Turkey are mentioned. A relatively new issue had been brought up to German public eye when, on February 22, 2005 the German Bundestag, the German parliamentary faction of Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Socialistic Union (CSU) submitted a statement to the parliament which states that around 1.5million Armenians died as a result of premeditated mass deportation and massacre on the part of the Young Turk authorities in the course of the World War. The document signed by 20 CDU/CSU deputies and chairs of the parliament faction Angela Merkel and Michael Glos was titled: “In memory of the 90th anniversary of deportation and massacre of Armenians on April 24, 1915: Germany should assist to the reconciliation of Armenians and Turks.”¹¹⁸

What is more, the Greens and especially Roth have also been dealing with the Kurdish minority in the South East of Turkey. A delegation of German Greens have been making visits to the South East of Turkey since the early 1990s. The recognition of the Kurdish identity has been considered a key issue on the path leading to the European Union membership according to Claudia Roth.

In general, the three major German parties agree only that Turkey will need to continue with reforms if negotiations are to continue. But where the negotiations should lead will continue to divide German politicians and the electorate. The SPD focused on the Turkish contribution of the regional stability and the prevention of clash of civilizations once the Copenhagen Criteria were fulfilled; where CDU and CSU focused on the point where Turkey is politically and culturally “not enough European” and the EU is not ready to digest such a big and crowded Muslim country. The Greens however supported the Turkish membership with a special emphasis on human and minority rights.

¹¹⁸http://www.parliament.am/news.php?do=view&ID=1013&cat_id=1&day=01&month=03&year=2005&lang=eng

4.3.2 The Media's Impact on German Public Opinion

The media forced all parties to address the question of Turkish EU membership, likely because this European theme was closely related to the broader high salience political debate in Germany regarding the role played by Turkish immigrants in German society.¹¹⁹ That is why very similar issues to the ones that have been debated among politicians were also discussed in the German mass media, thus increasing the level of comprehension of the public of the concerns expressed by the politicians. In other words, the issues such as the European identities, religion, human rights, Turkish reform process, Cyprus and Armenia have been even more publicly visible via the articles and commentaries that engaged a huge place in German media.

According to Baha Güngör, who is the head of Deutsche Welle RADIO's Turkish department and an expert on Turkish affairs, Angela Merkel has toned down her stance on Turkey as federal chancellor which entails a logical consequence of her taking over the responsibility of leadership.

On her first trip to Turkey as head of the German government, Merkel decided not to pursue her previous course of pushing for a privileged partnership over full EU membership and, indeed, left the topic of EU entry off her agenda in October 2006. Despite this groundwork and diplomacy, Merkel did say that Turkey's slow progress towards EU membership would have the support of Germany as long as the country continued to develop in line with European standards. Güngör interpreted the cautious approach of Merkel as a struggle for transparency in Germany's Turkey policy. For Merkel to be seen to be supporting Turkey would help in the problems integrating Turks

¹¹⁹ <http://aei.pitt.edu/3076/01/Davidson-Schmich.pdf>

in Germany, while Turkey could call on its historical experiences to offer her advice in creating a dialogue between cultures and religions.¹²⁰

Again in Deutsche Welle, this time a different dossier was elaborated on Turkey. The Turkish side of the negotiations process was examined in a different setting in which Turkey was seen as a resistant candidate that blocked the negotiations process by refusing to open its ports to Cyprus. The article argued Turkey, despite a customs union agreement with the bloc, refused to open its ports to EU-member Cyprus, which it does not recognize, triggering warnings from Brussels that Ankara's failure to comply could result in the suspension of accession talks. And that the divided Mediterranean island is proving to be one of the biggest obstacles in Ankara's talks for membership which created a widespread skepticism about whether the “overwhelmingly Muslim country of 73 million” has a place in Europe.¹²¹

Some German press organs also brought up the issue of Armenian Genocide allegations stating that if the statement is supported by the Bundestag majority and passed this will be a turning point for the German politics. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung journalist Regina Moench criticized those German political analyst and diplomatic circles that blamed Armenians for tension in Armenian-Turkish relations stating that “they focus too much on their past and have lost sight of their political goals” in the daily’s February 23, 2005 issue. The journalist disapproved of those sharing the same opinion that Turkey will change something about the Armenian issue even if there was not a negotiation process. And wrote that Turkey needed a “push” and will need even more to deal with this problem.¹²²

¹²⁰ <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2196908,00.html>

¹²¹ <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2195732,00.html>

¹²² http://www.parliament.am/news.php?do=view&ID=1013&cat_id=1&day=01&month=03&year=2005&lang=eng

According to Bernd Riegert's editorial in Deutsche Welle on 18 October 2006, Turkey was going to have to accept that the only way forward is to recognize EU member Cyprus if it wanted to join the club. However there's no point in the EU harping on about the Armenian question and Turkey's outrage at French lawmakers' adoption of a bill which makes it a crime to deny the Armenian genocide. He stated that "the country's failure to come to terms with its past is no reason for the accession talks to break down". Nor was it helpful to say Turkey was being given the run-around by the EU, by constantly coming up with new entry conditions which was simply wrong. Admitting the Armenian genocide has never been a condition of Turkey's accession, but freedom of opinion and freedom of the press have. And solving the Cyprus question most certainly had.¹²³

Mechthild Brockamp, who is an editor and commentator for Deutsche Welle, claimed that in the laic Turkish state, in which Christian and Jewish minorities should have also feel at home, only existed on paper. The Turkish government and the Islamic clergy together need to make clear that the right to change religions or do missionary work is an inalienable human right applying equally to all religious organizations, and that the right to religious freedom should not simply be guaranteed in the constitution, but that people should be able to practice their religion openly.

It can be seen from his comments that he suggested that Turkey lacked religious freedom and the non-muslim community was being discriminated. He commented that Europe has long demanded that Turkey clarify its position, meaning more freedom for the Christian minority. Any country that wants to join Europe needs to adopt a European identity. So in a way he associated Turkish accession to religious criteria as well as

¹²³ "Cyprus Issue Shouldn't Spike Turkey EU Accession Europe", *Deutsche Welle*, 18_10_2006
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2207608,00.html>

European entity with Christian roots; repeating a cliché that has been dominating the political and public spheres of the EU for many decades.¹²⁴

Marco Overhaus, the project manager of "Deutsche-Aussenpolitik.De" and research fellow at the Chair for International Relations at the University of Trier, claimed that the current debate about a future EU membership of Turkey is marked not only by a cacophony of opinions both within Germany and other member countries, but also by a worrying lack of depth of the arguments.

By contrast to the former CDU-Green government, the Christian Democratic and Christian Social opposition parties opposed membership more or less categorically on the grounds that differences of "culture" and "mentality" between Europe and Turkey are too big and Turkey's proximity to potential crisis areas outside the European Union, as well as its low democratic standards stand in the way of its membership even in the long run. According to Overhaus, what is striking in this plurality of opinions on Turkish membership in the European Union is how short-sighted the arguments often are. European leaders who make European defense or Cyprus the benchmark for Turkish EU membership are unable or unwilling to admit what this membership is all really about. These issues have to be settled before Turkey enters the Union; they should not, however, be constructed as sufficient reasons for Turkey to qualify for membership.

Overhaus stated that the question of Turkey's accession to the EU has all the ingredients of fundamental debate over the future of Europe. It raises the question of the Union's future geography and character of borders. Also, given Turkey's huge territory, a population of approximately 68million people and a fertility rate almost double that of the EU's average it raises the question of the future distribution of power within the

¹²⁴ "Opinion Turkey Must Resolve the Issue of Religious Freedom Europe", *Deutsche Welle*, 19_04_2007
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,2448198,00.html?maca=en-rss-en-all-1573-rdf>

Union and of the future design of its institutions to cope with such an increase in size and population. The proximity of Turkey to well-known trouble spots in the Middle East and Central Asia will also have a deep impact on the future missions and design of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Finally, Turkey's candidacy raises the very important question of Europe's identity. Despite the official stance that the Union represents a "community of values", many Europeans still tend to see it as a "community of religion".

To Overhaus it is regrettable that the issue of Turkey ranks so low on the agenda of the European Convention, which is supposed to think about the EU's long-term future. This lack of common strategy and vision among its principal actors also explains why the European Union has so far followed a rather confusing and at times hypocritical policy towards Turkey. To bring this process to a successful conclusion, however, it will be essential to base decisions on clear political and economic criteria and not exclusively on the benign behavior of Ankara towards European defense or Cyprus or on any other "tactical" issues, no matter how important they are.¹²⁵

In another editorial of Overhaus, concerning Angela Merkel and her party's idea to offer Turkey some form of "privileged partnership" instead of full membership and repeatedly endorsed an "open" outcome of the accession negotiations, he stated that the demand to negotiate with an "open end" instead of full membership "only" sounded like a real alternative, but it was not. For one thing, the negotiation process will probably last a decade, during which the EU itself will change profoundly. It was far from clear what terms such as "full membership" and "privileged partnership" will mean in ten years. So

¹²⁵ http://www.deutsche-aussenpolitik.de/index.php?digest/op-ed_01.php

the Turkish question is so crucial because it directly touches on the future of the European integration process itself.¹²⁶

4.3.3 Other Actors Who Have A Role On The Shaping Of German Public Opinion

“I think that the German people are very much aware that in view of the progress which has been made, the door cannot now be slammed in Turkey's face”, said former Minister of State for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office, Hans Martin Bury in an interview with, on the debate about Turkey joining the EU, on Deutschlandradio, 27 November 2002.¹²⁷

However there were other factors that occupied German the public debate on Turkish accession. Instead of debates on European history and borders like the ones in France, other debates – on Islam in Germany and on the position of Turkish women – have moved to the top of the German national agenda and shaped public perceptions of Turkey.¹²⁸ A heated public debate has broken out in Germany about Turkey joining the EU. The opponents of its accession argue above all that Turkey has a different culture, that its human rights situation is unsatisfactory and they also raise the issue of the freedom of movement within the EU.

¹²⁶http://www.deutsche-aussenpolitik.de/digest/op-ed_inhalt_20.php

¹²⁷[http://www.auswaertiges-
amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index_html?bereich_id=4&type_id=0&archiv_id=3806&detail=1](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index_html?bereich_id=4&type_id=0&archiv_id=3806&detail=1)

¹²⁸ http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=156&document_ID=94

In Germany during the summer 2002 the debate on Turkey was dominated not by experts on the country but by prominent German historians (Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Heinrich-August Winkler) arguing that Turkey was a different civilization and for that reason could not be integrated. They were both widely quoted and discussed, and dominated the public debates. Interest in Turkey has since then increased and a number of new books have appeared in recent years. Internet platforms and newsletters on Islam and summaries from the Turkish media have multiplied (www.islamedia.de, issued by Mathias Rohe at Erlangen University; www.oezdemir.de, issued by German-Turkish MEP Cem Özdemir; etc ...).

Since the start of accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005, the German government co-organized an Integration Summit (Berlin, July 2006) and an Islam Conference (September 2006). Events on migration and Islam are no longer handed over to lower administration officials, but involve the chancellor, the leaders of the larger parties, the interior minister and state governors.

A debate on the borders of Europe has been replaced by a much larger debate of stake holders in politics and civil society on integration, Islam and European values, and the position of Turkish women. With the beginning of accession negotiations in 2005 arguments to define the borders of Europe historically to exclude Turkey have largely ended. Instead, the public debate on (Turkish and European) values is today dominated by women's rights activists and discussions about the integration of migrants in Germany.

The debate on Islam in Germany has reached a new stage with the start of the Islam Conference in September 2006, chaired by Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU). Most of the participants that involved 30 people, 15 Muslims (of which 10 of Turkish descent) and 15 non-Muslims representing different public institutions, stressed the

importance of the position and perception of the large Turkish minority in Germany to the wider debate on Turkey.¹²⁹

The overarching goal was to define an equal status for Islam to other religions, such as Christian Churches or Judaism. The process was meant to lead to a new Social Contract between 3.5 million German Muslims (80 percent of whom are of Turkish origin) and the German state. This process launched at the highest level and widely discussed also creates opportunities for Ditib (and thus Diyanet) to play a constructive role.

Today one public debate in particular overshadows other discussions related to Turkey society and its contribution to and compatibility with European values; the debate on violence against (Turkish) women in Germany. The immediate trigger of this new debate was a particularly spectacular and widely discussed honor killing in Berlin on 7 February 2005, the murder of Hatin Sürücü. This led to a wide debate in the media. It was pointed out that no less than 45 people had fallen victims to similar crimes in Germany since 1996. The debate quickly shifted to the debate on Turkey as well. As a result of this national debate “the Muslim, Turkish and Kurdish family appears to the German public increasingly like a criminal association.”¹³⁰

When, in a recent representative survey, the "Center for Turkish Studies" Foundation polled German citizens on their opinion regarding Turkey's accession to the EU, one of the most interesting results was the arguments used respectively by proponents and opponents of Turkish accession.

Not surprisingly, was the most common argument against Turkey's integration into the EU. Rather than concerns about the immigration of workers to Germany or the strain put

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

on the federal budget, the most common worries related to the human rights situation in Turkey and/or the perception thereof.

The most common argument expressed by supporters of Turkish accession was, however, truly surprising. The hope for improvement in the integration of Turkish immigrants living in Germany proved to be more important than trade advantages, the supply of resources or issues concerning political security;¹³¹ commented Faruk Şen, the director of the Center for Turkish Studies Foundation at the University of Duisburg, on the results of the survey.

However still, the economic relations also affected the nature of German Turkish relations and the public perspective on Turkish accession to the EU. German firms such as DaimlerChrysler and Siemens were among the first big foreign investors in Turkey. Mercedes-Benz Türk, MAN Türk and the subsidiaries of Bosch in Bursa and Hugo Boss in Izmir, to name but a few, produce mainly for export and thus make a significant contribution towards integrating Turkey into the world economy. Conversely, there are more than 40,000 Turkish companies in Germany, led by men such as Kemal Sahin and Vural Öger.¹³²

While German government policy has not changed, neither has the deep scepticism expressed in popular opinion polls dissipated. The German population remains, according to the most recent Eurobarometer surveys, among the most sceptical in

¹³¹ Faruk Şen, "EU Accession and the Integration of Turks in Europe - New Perspectives for Social Acceptance", *Qantara*, http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/c-301/nr-77/p-1/i.html?PHPSESSID=5

¹³² http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index.html?bereich_id=17&type_id=0&archiv_id=4012&detail=1

Europe. As seen in the Table 4.1 below, in 2005, when the accession negotiations were opened, 74% of the German people were against the accession of Turkey. Since then, polls regularly show that this position has been rather reinforced.

Table 4.1. *Net support for Turkey's membership of the EU in Germany*

For	Against	Net support
21	74	-53

Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

Note: The difference between the percentages for and against is those persons who did not answer or did not know.

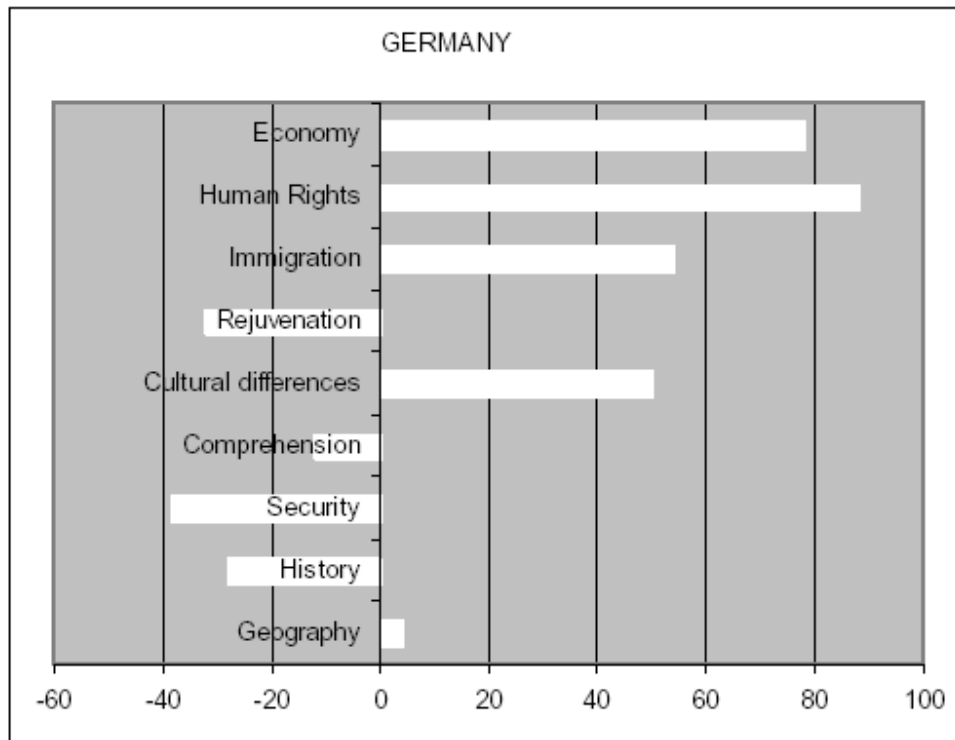
In Germany as well as in France, public opinion appeared to be “crystallized” on the question of Turkey. While the first Eurobarometer polls revealed a high level of “don’t know” answers, today most of the interviewees position themselves on the “pro” or “contra” side. It is however clearly the “contra” side which benefited most from this change. Furthermore, the approval or rejection of Turkey’s accession to the EU is “multidimensional”. Several factors came into consideration for each position, so that the groups of adversaries as well as of proponents are far from being homogenous.¹³³ “The problems within the EU are not going to diminish and the differing opinions on

¹³³ http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2007/2007_eu-turkey.pdf

Turkish accession are not going to go away," predicted EU expert Sarah Seeger of the Centre for Applied Policy Research in Munich.¹³⁴

Below in the Figure 4.1, some specific arguments and their relative importance in the minds of the German public are shown in a Eurobarometer of fall 2005. According to this, concerns about the human rights issues in Turkey are the biggest obstacle for Turkish membership. Other than that the economic situation of Turkey and its potential burden to the EU and the prospect of an influx of migration from Turkey are other reasons of concern, as well as the cultural differences of Turkey and Europe and more specifically Germany. The same chart also indicates that Turkey's contribution to European security and its young population does not really impress the German public opinion.

¹³⁴Daniela Schröder, "A wasted Year",
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/c-476/nr-988/i.html



Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

Figure 4.1. *Net importance of single items of attitude towards Turkey's membership (supporters minus contesters) in Germany*

In an interview in 2004, member of European Democrats (EEP-ED) of European Parliament from Germany, Thomas Mann had made some statements that are quite striking about Turkey. He stated that Turkey was being deceived by empty promises of membership which will never happen. “Let’s convince Turkey that it will someday be a member but let’s hope that day never comes”, he said.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ <http://www.anadolu.be/2004-03/22.html>

That expression would be quite enlightening to see what a great challenge is waiting for Turkey on its way to the EU. Germany, as one of the key determinants has a very skeptic public opinion about Turkey being ready for Europe in terms of especially being fit for the European values such as human and minority rights and democracy. That is why it is crucial for Turkey to continue its constructive reforms and work on building an objective and open minded atmosphere of dialogue between Germany and Turkey.

CHAPTER 5

BRITISH POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION AS TO TURKISH MEMBERSHIP TO EU

5.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF BRITISH-TURKISH RELATIONS

Relations between Britain and Turkey go right back to the early 16th Century, when the first strong contacts between the two countries developed as trading interests in Britain sought new market outlets in the East. In 1580 Britain obtained "capitulations" granting to merchants in Turkey privileges similar to those accorded to the French. Soon afterwards the Levant Company was formed in London, thus becoming in effect England's first official diplomatic representative. For the next two centuries the history of British relations with Turkey was mainly the history of the Levant Company, which remained a power in the eastern Mediterranean until it was taken over by the British Government in 1821.

British troops participated in the war with the French against Russia on behalf of the Ottoman Empire in the Crimean War of 1854-56. Ottoman territorial integrity against Russian encroachment prompted Britain's intervention. Ten years later, with other European powers, Britain intervened to soften the harsh terms of the Treaty of San Stefano, signed after the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-78.

From a parting of the ways to new alliances towards the end of the 19th century Britain and Turkey drifted apart. The policies of Sultan Abdulhamit II were not popular in Britain, and Turkey resented Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882. Turkey fought

alongside Germany against Britain in the First World War and the tenacious Turkish defence of Gallipoli against British forces is still remembered in Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Britain was slow to recognize the political changes taking place in Turkey as the Republic of Turkey emerged from the Ottoman Empire in the years immediately after World War I. But the policies and leadership of Kemal Ataturk, architect of the modern Turkish Republic, saw to it that relations with the West, including with Britain, continued to develop and prosper.

In 1930s Britain and Turkey discovered a common interest in checking the ambitions of the Italian dictator, Mussolini, in the Mediterranean. In the disturbed state of Europe at the time, Britain hoped for Turkish support in the coming war against Hitler's Germany. However, Turkey chose to remain neutral until almost the end of World War II. In February 1945, Turkey declared war on Germany and Japan. Shortly afterwards the Soviet Union renewed old claims to Turkish territory. Thereafter Turkey's relations with the western Allies, including Britain, became closer.

In July 1950 Turkey sent troops to Korea to fight alongside British, American and other NATO troops, becoming a full member of the Alliance in February 1952. Occasional disagreements over the future of Cyprus in the 1950s were put to rest with the Cyprus settlement of 1960. The UK was also a signatory to a treaty with Greece and Turkey concerning the independence of Cyprus, the Treaty of Guarantee, which maintained that Britain was "a guarantor power" of the island's independence. In that case Britain maintained two sovereign area military bases on the island of Cyprus. When Turkish troops intervened to the island in 1974, Britain refused to recognize the newly established Turkish Republic of North Cyprus.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ <http://ukinturkey.fco.gov.uk/en/working-with-turkey/bilateral-relation/history-bilateral-relation>

In September 1963 in Ankara Turkey signed an Association Agreement with the European Economic Community. One of Turkey's key supporters for its bid to join the EU was the United Kingdom. In May 2008, Queen Elizabeth II said during a visit to Turkey, that, Turkey is uniquely positioned as a bridge between the East and West at a crucial time for the European Union and the world in general. It plays a key role in promoting peace, stability and development in an unsettled area. And it has remained a staunch NATO ally throughout the Cold War and during decades of Middle East turmoil.¹³⁷ For Britain Turkey has also played a responsible role in promoting unity and stability within Iraq.

For Turkey, Britain is equally crucial. This country has been one of the most consistent champions of Turkish entry into the European Union. It was Tony Blair who began formal entry negotiations during the British presidency, and the Government has pushed hard to stop its EU partners backsliding on this commitment.

The relationship between Turkey and the United Kingdom is of crucial and growing importance. The two countries share close ties and common perspectives on a wide range of international issues and global challenges. The UK-Turkey Strategic Partnership was signed by Prime Ministers on 23 October 2007. It drew together into one high-level bilateral document the breadth of co-operation across the two governments on a wide range of issues, including on climate change, trade, security, EU membership and counter-terrorism. Under the Strategic Partnership, Turkey and the United Kingdom will carry out consultations on key strategic priorities at six-monthly intervals.¹³⁸

¹³⁷<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article3054469.ece>

¹³⁸<http://ukinturkey.fco.gov.uk/en/working-with-turkey/bilateral-relation/strategic-partnership>

The United Kingdom is the second biggest importer of goods from Turkey, after Germany. Turkey exports around 8% of its total goods to the United Kingdom. Around 1,000,000 Britons take holidays in Turkey every year, while 100,000 Turks travel to the UK for business or pleasure.

5.2 BRITISH POSITION ON ENLARGEMENT

The notion that, on some distant horizon, an 'end-state' of perfect integration existed simply carried little cogency in the British discussion. It seemed too abstract, too speculative, and, hence, not a productive area of debate. This reluctance to engage with a debate that was much more popular in continental Europe was, partly a result of the history of British policy towards the EU.

However it was increasingly recognized among British policy-makers that this 'wait-and-see' attitude was a disadvantage in European circles, since it was so quickly elided with a preference for disengagement. Hence, lately there are many new arguments for the British to enter this EU debate more energetically and positively.

The British were more relaxed on many of the issues of institutional and constitutional debate in the EU. In contrast, in security and defence policy field, the British were among the strongest and most engaged advocates of developing a 'grown-up' collective policy.¹³⁹ To sum up while British were more in favour of a loose bonded union with more economic and strategic function and less political integration, in contrast to the

¹³⁹<http://www.jeanmonnetprogram.org/papers/00/00f0701.html>

“old Europe” consisted of France and Germany; the enlargement was seen as an effective mean of establishing such an organization.

In a report published on 23 November 2006, the House of Lords European Union Committee stated that the process of enlargement has long been an integral part of the development of the EU and brings tangible benefits to both new and existing members. The Committee dismissed fears that further enlargement of the EU was a threat to current Member States, pointing out that the effect on the EU 15 of previous enlargements eastwards has been broadly positive and that the predicted institutional gridlock in policy making has not materialised. The Committee branded the current debate on 'absorption capacity' unhelpful and suggested that the increasing use of 'variable geometry' would show pro-Europeans that widening and deepening can proceed in parallel.¹⁴⁰

The Nations of Western Balkans are identified as countries that could benefit significantly from further involvement with, and eventual membership of, the EU. The Committee described these countries as 'fragile and fractious' and asserted that the prospect of EU membership could help them avoid a return to sectarian violence as well as encouraging them to tackle crime and corruption.

The Committee recommended that the EU Member States should strive to maintain a more consistent and coherent line as regards the possible accession of Turkey. The Committee argued that it was in both Turkey's and the EU's best interests that negotiations be pursued in good faith and with a will to bring them to a successful conclusion.

¹⁴⁰http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/lords_press_notices/pn231106eu.cfm

The report made clear that immigration into Britain from the new member states in Eastern Europe has been beneficial for the UK economy. It argued that the influx of a high skilled, low cost workforce has helped British companies cope better with the growing competitive pressures from Asia leaving the UK economy better placed for the challenges of globalization. The Committee also pointed out that in those countries that have retained quotas and work-permit requirements, Central and Eastern Europeans had often found work in the black economy.

The Committee also recognized that a larger EU will require institutional change to function effectively. In the report the Committee called on politicians in Western Europe to do more to engage the public on the benefits of EU expansion and to challenge the negative media portrayal of an enlarged EU. The report pointed out that expert opinion was far more positive towards further EU expansion than the public opinion, and stressed that politicians in Britain and other established Member States must rise to the challenge and put forward the case for further expansion.¹⁴¹

In an article written by former Secretary of State Jack Straw, he said there were two options; a Europe turned inward on itself or a Europe looking outward to the rest of the world; one that expanded its boundaries to build a wider community of stable, prosperous democracies or one that closed the door to its neighbors.

“We live in a world of global challenges and global competition. A static Europe will not face either with confidence. Stopping enlargement would weaken Europe's ability to compete with emerging Asian economies”, he said.

According to Straw enlargement has been good for new member states and the EU as a whole. For Spain, Portugal and Greece in the 1970s and 80s, for East European countries

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

in the 1990s, both the prospect of membership and then its reality have acted as a powerful motor for change. When some of these new members began their talks they were far short of the membership standards. They transformed during that process, just as Turkey will have done by the time it joins the Union. So enlargement has not diluted the stability and prosperity of current member states; it has enhanced it. It has peacefully united much of Europe after generations of division and conflict. It has increased the influence of the EU in the wider world.¹⁴²

5.3 BRITISH POSITION ON TURKISH ACCESSION

5.3.1 Position of Major Political Forces

Britain, economically and politically, is one of the most influential members of the EU. That is why examining the attitudes of the British public and the factors that create and guide this public opinion is crucial in obtaining a general perspective about the public opinion of the EU.

The major center-left and center-right political parties and their statements are of the best tools for the analysis of the factors influencing the British public. Britain is a unique case since almost all major political parties and media show a relatively high amount of support for Turkish membership to the EU. For British politicians, Europe was a political project rather than a Christian club and it had to act according to its future

¹⁴²<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/09/07/opinion/edstraw.php>

goals. For the foreseeable future, Turkey appeared to be at the core strategic interest for the UK to sustain a reliable military force in the Union, along with NATO.

The difference between the other member states and the UK, from the British perspective, was the UK's wish to create a pro-European ideology. As in Blair's own words; Europe and the European leaders should change their visions as soon as possible if they are seeking a peaceful world. For this reason, UK suggested the reason why Turkey had to be part of Europe was because Europe needed a revision in order to prevent it from falling into nationalism and xenophobia back again. For Britain, Turkey's accession had a vital importance both for Turkey and Europe herself, particularly in the security matters. As indicated by the British Foreign Minister Jack Straw; "a strong, more democratic and a stable Turkey is for both sides' interests."¹⁴³

Britain, being a cosmopolitan and a multi-cultural state with a more critical stance for EU becoming a full integrationist political union, has always posed a more welcoming attitude towards the prospect of Turkish membership to the EU. As British politicians saw Turkey as a vital NATO ally, a role model for both the Muslim within and outside the EU and a vivid market for new capital and investment flows and for cheaper labour options, the country became one of the stronger supporters of Turkish membership, provided that Turkey fulfills the necessary criteria with a broad range of reforms.

In addition to that although issues such as Cyprus and Turkey's fair record on human rights can be seen as a deal breaker in British-Turkish relations, the notion that EU is a Christian unity has never been an issue of concern as Britain did not attain any importance to that notion. Similarly Britain has never dealt with the problem of establishing the geographical borders of Europe and whether Turkey should be a

¹⁴³Burcu Sahiner, "Why is the UK supporting Turkey's membership bid", JTW - EU Relations , <http://www.turkishweekly.net/eurtf.php?id=18>

geographical part of Europe or not. That is also another important point that separates Britain from France and Germany. Tony Blair initially used terms such as 'celebrating cultural diversity' in reference to Turkey's potential contribution to EU identity. In the wake of atrocities by home grown terrorists in the UK, this rhetoric has been dropped. Instead, the emphasis was then on facilitating an understanding of democracy and moderation by a predominantly Muslim state and the promotion of this model to neighbouring states that remain part of the 'axis of evil'.¹⁴⁴

During the Copenhagen Summit in 2002 Prime Minister Tony Blair had stepped up pressure on the EU to set a clear date for Turkey's accession to the community, saying "I believe we have an historic opportunity to set a firm date for the opening of accession negotiations for Turkey, and to send the clearest possible signal that the European Union wants Turkey inside the European family as a full partner", at the opening speech of the summit.¹⁴⁵

Blair was reported as saying there were two reasons why he supported Turkey's membership of the EU. "First, Europe will benefit from opening up, not from being introverted, the second reason is that Turkey is a country that can become a bridge between Europe and the Arab world," Blair said.¹⁴⁶

"Turkey is placed right between the Middle East and Europe and if we needed no other reminder of the strategic importance of Turkey to the EU, it is what is happening in the Middle East today," Blair told reporters in Ankara in 15 December 2006.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴<http://www.articlesbase.com/politics-articles/tony-blair-turkey-eu-and-cyprus-87664.html>

¹⁴⁵ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2567451.stm

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/09/30/news/eu.php>

¹⁴⁷http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2006/12/18/feature-01

In an interview with the BBC Radio, Douglas Alexander, Britain's former Europe minister, said that Turkey's membership in the EU would be of enormous strategic importance. Successfully integrating Turkey in the EU would be beneficial to tackle most of the many difficult problems that are faced in the modern world.¹⁴⁸

Former Foreign Secretary of the Blair government, Jack Straw, told BBC One's Politics Show: "We need to see Turkey in the European Union and not pushed the other way", about Turkish accession. Straw said giving Turkey membership was a way of "binding" Europe and keeping a membership promise made to the country in 1963. EU nations risk driving Christians and Muslims apart if Turkey is not brought into the fold, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has predicted.¹⁴⁹

Turkey's accession to the European Union was a question of paramount importance for the whole international community, according to British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. Outlining Britain's position, once again, backing Turkey becoming a full member of the EU in due course, Straw said that it was the most important internal issue facing the EU, stating, "If we make the wrong decisions we could find that we have a crisis on our own doorstep."

Straw reasoned that the political rationale behind the decision to open talks with the largely Muslim Turkey, particularly in a time of mass international terrorism in the name of Islam, is powerfully poignant.¹⁵⁰ It would show how diversity of culture and religion was compatible with a unity of purpose. A stable, prosperous Turkey, a secular nation with a majority Muslim population, anchored in the European Union, would be a powerful symbol.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4302358.stm

¹⁵⁰ http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0WDP/is_/ai_n15403356

In addition to Blair's and Straw's emphasis on Turkey's strategic importance, the British left had taken some other supportive steps for Turkish membership. The Labour Party had launched a lobby group for members in a bid to boost good relations with Turkey. "Labour Friends of Turkey" was chaired by Haringey councillor, Nilgün Canver following its official launch at the House of Commons in February 2007. The lobby group was aiming to help promote bilateral relations between Britain and Turkey and to work with the Government, Parliamentarians, advisers, and activists within the Labour movement. It also aimed to support the process of Turkey's accession to the European Union.¹⁵¹

The new leader of the Labour Party after Tony Blair had also been showing a big support for Turkish membership. Sharing the common British perspective that the EU should be a more economic union than the political, he had some contrasting ideas with French President Nicolas Sarkozy on the future of the Union. The leaders of Britain and France clashed over the role of a powerful group set up by the 27 nations in December 2007 to define the EU's long-term goals.

The British Prime Minister insisted that there would be no more institutional reform that would mean the "deepening" of the political aspect of the union, for a decade; with a focus instead on the economy, security and environmental issues. The French President, speaking after an EU summit in Brussels, said that he had a dream of a Europe that was more "politically integrated", a phrase that suggested a desire for further national powers to be handed to Brussels.

There was no agreement between two leaders over a plan to establish a ten-member European "reflection group". The body was based on an idea from Nicolas Sarkozy, who had wanted a forum to draw the EU's future borders to exclude Turkey from membership. Britain, objected to an explicit instruction to the group to draw the EU's

¹⁵¹ <http://www.politic.co.uk/labour/5472-labour-party-launches-turkey-lobby-group.html>

final frontier and the agenda was instead kept broad; “to identify the key issues and developments which the Union is likely to face and to analyze how these might be addressed”.¹⁵²

Indicating that British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government will continue existing policy towards Turkey, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said that Turkey, a large NATO ally on the borders of the Middle East, had much to offer Europe in the areas of energy and security and was particularly well-placed to help in stabilizing Iraq. He said, "We want the EU to be a shared institution of which Britain and Turkey are full and equal members". He stated that there were big gains for Britain, Europe and Turkey from a process of closer and closer collaboration on issues ranging from security, energy to cultural exchange.¹⁵³

In contrast to French and German conservatives, the British Conservative party is also in favour of a EU including Turkey. At the Movement for European Reform conference in Brussels on March 6, 2007, David Cameron, the leader of the British Conservative Party, made a statement. In his speech he said that the prospect of eventual Turkish membership is hugely important not just for Turkey itself, but to demonstrate to the Muslim world that the EU is not an exclusive Christian club. He noted that the prospect of further enlargement should not disappear and a real prospect of membership to Turkey should be given. He also repeated a common point shared by most of the British politicians that only a decentralized political system would be able to hold countries like Ireland and Turkey, Italy and Estonia in any sort of community.

In a press release about the European Summit in Brussels on 14 December 2007, a conservative member of the British Parliament, Mark Francois said "Britain's goal

¹⁵²<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article3054469.ece>

¹⁵³<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6980019.stm>

should be an open, broad, flexible Europe fit for the 21st century. Today marks a move to a narrow, inward-looking Europe, fearful of globalization and on course for the ever greater centralization of power in Brussels”. He criticized the Labour Party’s new leader Gordon Brown for being too pasifist about the British concerns on the future of the EU and on especially Turkish accession. He noted that, “Gordon Brown has failed to stop France watering down the EU's commitment to Turkey's eventual membership.”¹⁵⁴

The conservatives were also keen on Turkey’s strategic importance in terms of both British and European interests. Dr Liam Fox, a Conservative party member stressed the strategic importance of Turkey, that NATO, for example, could deal with the issue of energy security much more effectively than the EU could if only because it has Turkey as a member and that non-EU NATO members such as Norway or Turkey would be discriminated against in the development of any new European security identity. Discrimination has indeed been visited on NATO member Turkey's application to join the EU according to Fox.¹⁵⁵

In an interview with Daily Telegraph on 3 September 2006, Fox emphasized the military and geopolitical importance of Turkey in the modern world, a major player in NATO, Turkey's half-million strong army as the second largest in the alliance after America's, dwarfing the forces of Britain and France. He reminded that it has twice commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and played a large role in the country's redevelopment.

Politically, Turkey was considered a bridge to the Islamic world. It showed that prosperity, democracy and security are possible in a constructive partnership with the

¹⁵⁴http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.press.release.page&bp=1&obj_id=141277

¹⁵⁵http://www.conservative-party.org.uk/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=130478&speeches=1

developed world. If Turkey were part of the EU, it would be its eighth largest economy. Its constitution and educational system ensured women's rights and that they played a full role in the economic and political life of the nation. He also mentioned the threat that there were many in the fundamentalist shadows who believed such rights threaten the power and influence of the clerics and that the emancipation of women was incompatible with their interpretation of Islam. Also in terms of energy security, Turkey was important for both oil pipelines and maritime transport. As new oilfields were developed in the central Asian states, Turkey would become an ever more important transit and supply centre for Europe's fuel needs.

For those reasons Fox argued that for Europe, the admission of Turkey to the EU was the primary test of whether the union can adapt to a changing world or whether it will become an increasingly introspective and redundant body. For European politicians, rejecting Turkey carried the risk of pushing this vitally important country into the arms of the political and religious extremists.¹⁵⁶

In a speech called "To Open Europe" by Wiliam Hague, a conservative MP, offering EU membership was described as the best incentive to persuade countries to make the hard political decisions that mark the road to that end. And the likely cost of refusing entry to the EU in Turkey could be either a nationalist authoritarianism or a rise in fundamentalism. That was why the conservatives were in favour of sustaining the EU's enlargement and strongly support Turkey's membership, when she met fully the necessary criteria.

To Hague, those who tried to explain away the results as being not a 'no' to the Constitution or further integration but as 'noes' to Turkey or globalization were not being honest with themselves. Subsequent polling analysis showed that Turkey was not a

¹⁵⁶ http://www.conservativeparty.org.uk/tile.do?def=news.show.article.page&obj_id=131786

leading issue in either France or the Netherlands. He argued that the French vote was in part a protest against that country's current domestic ills and a register of a fear of economic liberalization, but the Dutch vote was a clear rejection of an EU that is too powerful, too unaccountable and too wasteful of European taxpayers' money.¹⁵⁷

In a speech by Timothy Kirkhope MEP, Leader of the Conservatives in the European Parliament, during the Debate in Strasbourg on Preparation of the European Council in December 2004, Kirkhope renewed his party's belief in the positive attributes of Turkish membership, that in the right circumstances Turkish membership of the Union could be good for Europe, good for Turkey and good for relations with the Islamic world and security in European societies. However he also noted that the negotiations with Turkey were likely to be lengthy and at times difficult and like any other applicant country, Turkey must satisfy all the criteria required in terms of human rights and economic and political reform.

In a speech by Jonathan Evans MEP, Leader of the Conservatives in the European Parliament, to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 1st July 2003, the welcoming attitudes towards Turkey were confirmed once again, provided that Turkey would comply with the necessary criteria. "While we accept there is more work to be done with the Turkish Government, the underlying commitment of the Union, as expressed at the Copenhagen Council December 2002, should be adhered to", said Evans.

About Turkey being the most populated country in the EU, Richard Balfe once a member of the labour party but currently a MEP of Conservatives, and a member of the Committee on Development and Cooperation said; "Seats can be found, budgets can be changed and immigration into Europe can be accepted if necessary. The UK population

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2006/jun/07/uk.eu>

is increasing, do we join the UK Independence Party , and say we want to leave the EU, because Britain has moved down the rank in terms of voting? Of course not!”¹⁵⁸.

The president of the third biggest party (Liberal Democrats) Simon Huges indicated that proposals of a privileged partnership or any obstruction of the negotiations by the objection of one third of EU Commission members were unjust to Turkey.

He claimed that the reasons for British support to the Turkish bid laid in some historical facts. As seen in his statements Britain had always been a cosmopolitan state, where people with various origins came to live. In addition to that, different from the cases in France and Germany; there had never been extreme nationalists and far right present in the parliamentary. Even the Independence party that defended the ideal of Britain walking away from the EU path did not establish an opposition to the Turkish case according to Huges. That was why Turkey was never considered as a threat to the national culture and identity.

The economic case for Turkish accession was even more powerful. According to the estimates were that Turkey's economy will grow more than any of the economies of the current European Union. Half of Turkey's trade was already with the EU, and it was already a major market for British and EU exporters.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸“Turkey And The European Union: Just Another Enlargement? Exploring The Implications Of Turkish Accession”. On the occasion of the “Turkey’s EU end game?” Hughes, Kirsty. *European Policy Summit* of 17 June 2004.

<<http://www.friendsofeurope.org/pdfs/TurkeyandtheEuropeanUnionWorkingPaperFoE.pdf#search=%22TURKEY%20AND%20THE%20EUROPEAN%20UNION%3A%20JUST%20ANOTHER%20ENLARGEMENT%3F%22>>

¹⁵⁹<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/09/07/opinion/edstraw.php>

In a speech at the Centre for European Reform Bosphorus Conference, in Istanbul, on 15 September 2006, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson argued that Turkey risks becoming "the projected image of everything Europe fears about a changing world". He said in the EU many of the dissenting voices on Turkish membership were the same voices raised against globalization. They reflected wider questions in European society; unemployment, migration, social tensions. Mandelson said:

"The economic costs of the failure to make the case for enlargement and globalization will be felt first in Europe, in relative economic decline and a shrinking fiscal base for our welfare states. But the political repercussions will also be felt in Turkey, in the rising argument against Turkey's place in the EU. Europe's responsibility is to ensure that does not happen".

Mandelson insisted that Turkey also had "the power to shape the perceptions and defy the prejudices". He called on Turkey to press on with economic and legal reforms and to ratify and implement the Ankara protocol, arguing that the current refusal to do so "played into the hands of those who have reservations about Turkish accession and created a justification for pushing the whole membership process into a siding". Mandelson said that Turkey needed to "convince European companies that Turkey was a reliable and profitable place to do business, a hub for the Mediterranean and a logical gateway to the single market for key goods like textiles".

Arguing that Turkey's "place should in due course be in the European Union" Mandelson concluded; "the strongest argument Turkey can offer to those who seek to slow down its accession process is an unwavering commitment to the responsibilities of membership not as an obligation but as a choice and a European vocation".¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/ashton/speeches_articles/sppm113_en.htm

The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was quoted in Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper in September 30, 2005, as saying that EU membership lay in Turkey's future, although he said the date it would join the Union depended on the speed of reforms in Turkey. "We shall work toward achieving that," the prime minister added.¹⁶¹

Turkey's reformation process and its adaptation to EU standards in terms of law, democracy and human rights are essential for its membership. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair has given strong backing to Ankara and praised the country's reform efforts: "Britain wants to see Turkey in the EU and supports its membership. If it complies with the Copenhagen criteria, there can be no other obstacles to Turkey's membership of the EU," Blair said during the first visit of a British leader to Ankara in 2004 since Margaret Thatcher.¹⁶²

According to Blair there was a huge and important reform process going on in Turkey and it was time to show faith in that reform process and to make sure Turkey is given a firm and clear date. But his comments put him at odds with French President Jacques Chirac, who has been less supportive of early succession for Turkey.¹⁶³

The only issue that required immediate solution other than the ongoing reform process was the still-unsettled issue of the divided island of Cyprus. The relationship between the UK and Cyprus went back a long way. In 1997, it was Britain that took the lead in arguing that the absence of a settlement should not be a barrier to Cyprus joining the EU. The UK championed the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. About the Cyprus issue Straw stressed the importance of mutual compromise saying, both the EU and Turkey have responsibilities which have to be fulfilled. Turkey has to apply the Ankara

¹⁶¹<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/09/30/news/eu.php>

¹⁶²<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/blair-backs-turkey-eu-bid/article-117907>

¹⁶³http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2567451.stm

protocol fully to all member states and normalize relations with them as soon as possible. Both states have to find ways of ending the isolation of the North Cyprus".¹⁶⁴

After Britain has taken the term presidency of the EU, Britain has started to play a vital role both for the Cyprus issue and for the opening of the accession talks with Turkey, in 2005. During the 17 December session meeting which gave the date for the start of accession negotiations with Turkey, Britain has almost solved the dead lock points and perceived the other European leaders in settling the disagreed points along with the recognition of Cyprus by the Turkish government.

While urging Turkey to honour the 2005 Protocol that expanded Turkey's customs union with the EU to all its members, Britain also called on the EU to end the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community. Blair also suggested that Britain was considering the launch of direct flights to the island's Turkish part.¹⁶⁵

In a way confirming the Blair's words about Cyprus, Straw said that the only route to reunification is negotiation and compromise. Only a negotiated settlement will command the support of both communities. He mentioned the issue of those Cypriots who long to return to their property and the need for progress on missing persons in his statement in Nicosia on January 2006. He renewed the claim of Britain's neutral position, so he met with Mehmet Ali Talat, Turkish Cypriot president; however indicated that did not imply recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus or upgrading of the relations.

He also stated that opening the EU accession negotiations with Turkey was a priority for British Presidency, not a UK initiative, but something the whole EU regarded as important. Failure would have been a disaster for Cyprus. The prospect of Turkey

¹⁶⁴http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_kmaf/is_200601/ai_n16029456?tag=rel.res3

¹⁶⁵http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2006/12/18/feature-01

joining the EU was something on which the interests of the UK and Cyprus converge, rather than diverge. He emphasized a common interest in a democratic Turkey that is a force for stability and prosperity in the region and which was a dynamic partner for the whole European Union. Moreover, Turkey's accession process created a new impetus for normalizing relations between Cyprus and Turkey and for achieving a just settlement for Cyprus as a whole.¹⁶⁶

The announcement that membership negotiations with Turkey on eight of the thirty-five negotiating chapters between the EU and Turkey should be suspended because of Turkey's refusal to open its ports to Greek Cypriot ships, had been branded as a disproportionate over-reaction by Richard Howitt MEP, Labour's Foreign Affairs Spokesperson in the European Parliament and a key member of the European Parliament's Joint Committee with Turkey.

"The Commission had stated that they would only suspend chapters that held a direct relationship to trade problems with Cyprus, instead they have taken a scattergun approach to suspending negotiations hitting eight areas, many of which have no relationship to the Cyprus ports issue. This approach is disproportionate and damaging to Turkish-EU relations. Any decision not allowing chapters to be closed removes any incentive for Turkey to make further reforms", he said.¹⁶⁷

Howitt stated that, Turkey had jumped forward, acted positively and jammed its foot into an EU door which was due to close. The EU must build on this significant and positive step to end the Cypriot stalemate. And Turkey must open up all ports and airports in line with the Ankara Protocol. Meanwhile European Council Ministers should

¹⁶⁶<http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/?L1=0&L2=0&a=40851&d=0&i=41066&pv=1>

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.eurolabour.org.uk/printversion/2091.html>

honour their promise to open up direct trade with Northern Cyprus, even if these two issues are not officially linked.¹⁶⁸

The Conservative party members also took an interest to the issue of Cyprus, in terms of its effects on British-Greek-Turkish relations and their reflection to the NATO. David Cameron, had given a speech entitled '*Crossroads for NATO - How the Atlantic Alliance Should Work in the 21st Century*' to Chatham House on 1 April 2008. In his speech, he mentioned the importance of cooperation and coordination of NATO and EU in dealing with conflicts such as Cyprus. He said;

The two institutions must work out how they can work seamlessly together in common cause, both in Brussels and in the field. If that is to happen, we need to resolve the dispute between Turkey and Greece and the Republic of Cyprus which is paralyzing relations between NATO and the EU. That is something on which a Conservative Government would take a lead, just as we would argue powerfully for Turkey's eventual membership of the EU.¹⁶⁹

Despite there was a strong Labour party support for Turkey to further implement the necessities of the accession process, there was also some concern if things did not work out the way either Turkey or the EU had hoped. "Turkey must implement its obligations to all EU member states. If it fails to do so, the EU must act," said former Britain's Minister for Europe, Geoff Hoon.¹⁷⁰

In addition to that not all the conservatives were in favour of Turkish membership despite a dominant support from the fraction. For example Richard Ashworth, a MEP of the conservatives approached the issue in a more sceptic way. "I am in favour of their

¹⁶⁸http://www.eurolabour.org.uk/news/index_browse.jsp?viewBy=International&&bc=1&cp=2

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.europeanreform.eu/the-eu-a-new-agenda-for-the-21st-century/>

¹⁷⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6135406.stm>

membership provided it's a different kind of Turkey entering a different kind of EU", he said. ¹⁷¹There are also some arguments from the conservatives that the EU should not be changing itself to adopt and digest the Turkish membership, instead Turkey should wait until it is ready to adopt itself fully to the EU, although admitting the fact that what kind of an EU and Turkey will be prevailing in 10-15 years was still an "unknown".

But MEP Camiel Eurlings feared the relations between Turkey and Europe could suffer unpredictable damage in such a case "with a Europe increasingly worried about enlargement and a Turkey which is becoming increasingly nationalistic". ¹⁷²

5.3.2 The Media's Impact on British Public Opinion

British media was heavily occupied by the prospect and possible implications of Turkish membership. The issues that were elaborated in the British media were heavily concentrated in Turkey's reformation process, debates on Cyprus, Turkey's human rights practices and the impacts of a populated Muslim country such as Turkey in the EU. In addition to that the politicians' emphasis on Turkey's strategic alliance in NATO and the dynamic character of Turkish markets were also mentioned. But the most noteworthy examples of opinions can be seen as the debates on Turkey's capacity to adapt itself to EU standards in terms of democracy and human rights occupying the agenda of British media.

¹⁷¹ <http://conservativehome.blogs.com/goldlist/2008/02/are-you-in-favo.html>

¹⁷² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6135406.stm>

Quentin Peel, an editor in Financial Times, emphasized the point that Turkey was seen as a good ally of the NATO and also because Turkey did not have close borders to Britain, British were not worried about an influx of immigrants, as happened in Germany. He also stated that accomplishments of Turkish armed forces and Turkish reforms were appreciated. “Kemal Atatürk is a subject of admiration”, he said.

And about the Cyprus issue, Peel commented that for many years Cyprus Turks were considered uncompromising for any solution on the island. But with the Greek Cyprus’s refusal to the Annan Plan in 2004 that perspective had been affected deeply. Peel stated that British politicians experienced a disappointment when they failed to pursue the island’s Greeks to vote yes on the referendum.¹⁷³

Dr Andrew Mango, the former chief of BBC Southeast Europe Department, explained the reason of British support with the point that Turkey would dilute the EU. As most of the British were against a “Super State”, an EU with strong bonds, the involvement of Turkey in such a body was seen as an “agent provocateur” by Mango.

Another reason, according to Mango was, the Common Agriculture Policy. Although Britain was not such an agricultural state, the expenses of the policy are heavily covered by the British budget. If in the future the subvention system prevailed as it was today, then the CAP would collapse eventually. Mango suggested that Turkish membership, a heavily agricultural state, would accelerate this collapse, making Britain pleased.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ <http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=2558>

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Jonathan Power, a commentator on foreign affairs, interpreted his vision of Turkey in his article, "EU expansion: Now it's Turkey's turn", in International Herald Tribune on October 2, 2003. He said that if Turkey were just Istanbul, union with Europe would probably have happened already as it sat astride two continents, the meeting place of East and West, Europe and Asia, Christianity and Islam. However he criticized the delay in much-needed judicial and political reform and the practice of torture, capital punishment, severe prison sentences, and the way of dealing with the minority Kurdish population. Although he made strict criticisms about the economic and democratic proceedings and its human records, he also praised Turkey for making serious efforts to alter the conditions that might obstruct its membership.

He also suggested that Turkish membership in the EU would indeed be a great leap forward, but not as a Trojan horse of Islamic militancy. On the contrary, many Turks, looking back to the Ottoman Empire, which bestowed so much tolerance and freedom on its constituent parts, instinctively felt at ease with the notion of a political entity that was not homogeneous. Moreover, Turkish Muslim influence should, if anything, exert a pacifying effect on the 12 million or so Muslims who lived within Europe's present boundaries.¹⁷⁵

A more general and critical analysis was made by Caroline Brothers in her article called "Setting a Higher Bar for Turkey?" in International Herald Tribune on January 5, 2007. She compared the current political and economic situation to those two newest members of the EU, saying that, its people were richer than those in Romania, its economic growth outpaced that of Bulgaria and its goods were moving freely within the European Union when the two Eastern European countries were still emerging from communism. Turkey, by several economic measures, such as unemployment rates, was already doing better than Bulgaria and Romania before accession talks for all three countries began.

¹⁷⁵http://www.iht.com/articles/2003/10/02/edpower_ed3_.php

But she stressed that although those two somehow managed to become EU members, Turkey's accession would be pending for a long time in the years ahead. She also identified the challenges Turkey has to face such as transforming itself into a broad-based economy that can meet the demands of a youthful population hungry for opportunity and overcoming the regional differences within the country like the income and education gap between the west and the southeast.

Nevertheless, she said, the controversy over Turkish admittance into the EU went beyond economic issues. But based on the broad membership criteria, the Turks could be forgiven for thinking that a double standard applied to them; as Spain and Portugal did not have to meet strict criteria on environmental or financial sector regulation when they joined 20 years ago. Nor did they have to reach such exacting standards in areas like their legal system and internal security, even though the criteria have changed over the years.

Brothers defended the idea that Turkey got little credit for its economic advances, its achievements overshadowed by political debate over the refusal by Ankara to allow Greek Cypriot ships to dock at Turkish ports, which led to the EU punishing Turkey by suspending eight accession chapters in December 2006. After all Fiscal and monetary policies implemented have begun to normalize an economy once considered heavily distorted. That economy already was well anchored in Europe as Turkey did about 53 percent of its trade with the European Union.¹⁷⁶

Boris Johnson, author and the current mayor of London, argued in his article "Why are we so afraid of Turkey?" published in Daily Telegraph on 26 February 2007 that, in so far as there was a problem with the Turkish application, it was little to do with economics. Turkish per capita GDP was bigger than some previous EU entrants'. It was

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/01/05/business/wbturk.php>

not about Cyprus, or poverty, or population. It was not even that the Turks have sallow skin, thick eyebrows, or low foreheads, or whatever other prejudices. The reason was all about "values" and the value was Islam in that case.

Deep in the European subconscious was the memory of a war with the Muslims; how Sicily was lost, how half of Spain was conquered and finally how Constantinople was sacked on Tuesday, May 29, 1453. So in a way according to Johnson the main obstacle for Turkish membership was solely religious.¹⁷⁷

The harmony within and outside Europe would never happen as long as Muslims felt demonized, as long as their very sense of identity and belonging was created by a sense of rejection and inferiority. So he suggested that instead of alienating Turkey for cultural and religious reasons it should be welcomed as a partner regardless of how long and how hard it would be.

He said the French objected to the Turks because of the Armenian massacres, as though France were guiltless herself. Brussels occasionally launched another of its sermons about gender equality, though it should be remembered that Turkey gave women the vote before Belgium.

Far more important was the Turkish record on human rights, and this was very far from perfect. But then neither was the Greek human rights record when she was admitted to the EEC; and it was one of the most important reasons for keeping the Turks on the tram-tracks to EU membership, that the EU integration process helped the progressive forces in Turkey, and stop the country drifting backwards, according to Johnson.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/portal/main.jhtml?xml=/portal/2007/02/26/nosplit/ftturkey26.xml>

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Geoffrey Wheatcroft from The Guardian, wrote an article “Despite the chorus of pious hope, Turkey is not going to join the EU called” on December 18 2006, which can be set as a distinctive and critical example of the reflection of the issue on British media. He claimed that Turkey is not going to join the EU; "not" did not mean "never" but in any foreseeable future, and the most profound for that reason was geographical. Other serious objections were the Turkish record on human rights. According to him Turkey did not enjoy what other European countries consider a true rule of law or freedom of speech, and had not come to terms with its history, with the Armenians. Even the continual European hesitancy and changing of the tune might suggest bad faith. He used the metaphor of a man with a mistress he did not want to lose, but did not want to marry, either.

He suggested that for their part, the worst mistake the Turks have made was invoking US support. But another way of putting it was that Europe was being asked to make a huge sacrifice to gratify American strategic interests. And despite Blair may think the opposite, this did not meet with universal favour and was a question on which Europeans might want to have some saying themselves.

He argued that neither Blair nor Americans had noticed that the Turkish sensitivity about being excluded from a "Christian club" was quite misplaced. Europe was not a Christian anything, and even fear of radical Islamism was not the main factor. More important was the hangover from previous EU expansion and the Turkish question also illustrated the gulf between "the elites" and the actual peoples of Europe.

Building bridges between the west and Islam, and sapping the roots of terrorism, were doubtless worthy objectives, but he questioned, since when did they become the purpose of the EU? In the end, the problem was less cultural or economic or religious than simply geographical. This was how he explained why Turkey will not join for a very

long time, if ever; saying that many ordinary Europeans seem to know the answer to that better than their rulers.¹⁷⁹

As seen from some examples above about the British media and how it elaborated the prospect of Turkish membership to the EU can be reflected with various arguments. Although there are many different, even contrasting ideas and differing arguments on subject, the conclusion that generally a more positive and supporting attitude can be drawn from these examples. A common ground from all these examples can be named as the argument that they all stood for the notion that Turkey should be given a fair chance of candidacy and integration.

5.3.3 Other Actors Who Have A Role On The Shaping Of British Public Opinion

There are many think-tanks, NGOs and research institutions in Britain including people with various backgrounds that are dealing with the impacts and issues of Turkish accession to the EU. That can be considered as a bigger interest than the one the British media has.

Most of the comments and analysis are centered around the idea that Britain is multi-cultural Pro-European state with a positive stance toward Turkey. The British preference of a globally strong EU with looser political ties and stronger economic bonds makes Turkey a potential member of this unity according to many researchers. That is why many studies examine the economic and political dynamics of Turkey, as well as the social and cultural fundamentals.

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/dec/18/turkey.eu>

Anthony Giddens, who has been described as one of Britain's best known social scientists, argued in his paper in the publication called *Progressive Politics Vol 4.2* that a Europe, that wanted a role in global governance cannot retreat into a regional backwater. The EU must not turn its back on Turkey. Bringing together economic reform with a renewed expansion of the EU would demand formidable powers of leadership. And Britain, therefore, had a critical role in realizing that, according to Giddens.¹⁸⁰

According to Dr Müge Kınacıoğlu, who was a research fellow at the European Institute of Economic and Social Sciences Faculty in London, the British support for Turkey mainly came from the pro-enlargement perspective of Britain in the EU. In addition to that, Turkey's multi-cultural, democratic and laic structure as a Muslim state was considered inspiring for other Muslim states, as well as the Muslims in the EU.

According to Kınacıoğlu, Britain was distinguished from other members, especially with France and Germany on the issue of Iraq. In that sense she found the argument that Britain intended to build up its own sphere with the new 12 members and plus Turkey, as an alternative to the "old Europe" led by Germany and France.¹⁸¹

The other point of Kınacıoğlu, was more strategic, as stated many times by former Prime Minister Tony Blair, former Foreign Secretary of State Jack Straw and former Minister of State for Europe Denis MacShane as well, that involved Turkey's role in combating organized crime, trafficking and contribute to stabilizing the Caucasians, Middle East and Balkans, as well as contributing to NATO. According to her the British authorities were concerned that in case of a failure of full membership, the consequences of Turkey's attempts to get closer to radical Islamists would be catastrophic for the whole Europe.

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.policy-network.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/Publications/Giddens-final.pdf>, pp 105

¹⁸¹ <http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=2558>

There are many think-tanks that are interested in the nature and the future of the EU-Turkey relations. According to Kirsty Hughes from Center for European Reform, a think-tank and a forum for people with ideas from Britain and across the continent to discuss the many political, economic and social challenges facing Europe, British and Americans did have a lot of common foreign policy perspectives, especially about Iraq. However Britain had its own ideas about the geopolitics, stabilization and security of Europe. But different from France and Germany, Britain was not as concerned as them about the membership of a Muslim Turkey. This was partly because British are used to living in a multi-cultural environment and partly because issues like secularism did not occupy the public and governmental agenda as they did in France and Germany. Furthermore British were not so concerned about “building up” a European identity as these two. That was why Britain had never been troubled deeply by the consequences of a Turkish membership on “Europeanness”.¹⁸²

Professor Philip Robins from Oxford University St. Anthony’s College suggested the reason of British optimism came from the fact that Turkey was a crucial and developing market for both the EU and Britain. The British labour market was in full-employment status according to Robins and different from the high unemployment rates in France and Germany, Britain did not experience a fear of job loss by the cheap immigrant labour. That ensured a more positive attitude towards Turkish membership. Besides, similar to the Simon Huges’s perspective, Robbins noted that Britain being a crossroad of different cultures, had contributed the British attitude.

Another point, according to Robins, was the skepticisms in Britain about the EU usually came from the ideas of a European Constitution that would be establishing a tighter bond in the union. But as the British officials and media kept the issues of the

¹⁸² Ibid

constitution and Turkish membership completely apart from each other, thus in a way protecting the Turkish issue from the wide-spread Euroskeptisizm in Britain.

Robins believed that the Turkish membership would be achieved someday. That was why the British public should be more aware of the issue, so the subject should be objectively debated and understood by all layers of the society instead of saying a direct no to Turkey as a shortcut, as did Valery Giscard d'Estaing.¹⁸³

Fadi Hakura from Chatham House, a research institute and the home of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, suggested that privileged partnership was not a legitimate alternative to membership. The Germans and especially French tried to use that arguement as a public relations tool to ease the concerns of European public, but the British politicians and public never approved the partial inclusion of Turkey to the EU. He argued that the clear choice was only between approving and rejecting Turkey's EU accession, not the artificial choice between membership and privileged partnership. Such a partnership could lead to a potentially irreversible and dramatic rupture in EU–Turkey relations, detrimental to European strategic interests. It would burden Turkey with onerous EU obligations while denying the advantages concomitant with accession, namely increased foreign investment flows, free movement of Turkish workers to EU labour markets, and access to EU agricultural subsidies and structural policies.¹⁸⁴

İzzet Suner, former manager of the Turkish Bank UK LTD in London, said that the concerns about Turkish membership came from political and social actors, but the business partners of Turkey in Britain were very welcoming of the membership as a more secure flow of capital would be established and the activities of Turkish-British

¹⁸³Ibid

¹⁸⁴http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/3275_bpturkeyeu.pdf, p.8

Chamber of Commerce and Industry would grow more, as the volume of trade increased.

Mina Toksöz, head of the National Risk Department of the Standard Bank in London, also mentioned the positive attributes of British Business, as was in the government. The prime reason for that was that the membership would make Turkey a much safer zone to invest in as the regulations got closer to the EU standards.¹⁸⁵

One of the main arguments of the Britain officials about Turkish membership was that Turkey should be treated no different from any other candidate and should be given a fair chance for membership. Britain has a traditional foreign policy of championing the Turkish cause, under both Conservative and Labour governments. A staunch NATO ally in the region is certainly in the security interests of this country. Establishing a common Security and Defense Policy in the EU was also one of the top priorities of Britain. That is why a strong defense power, located in a very strategic point is also a big plus for supporting Turkey. Also being in the middle of some very crucial energy routes made Turkey a source of attraction for Britain.

Turkey being a big, strong and newly emerging market also made Turkey a vital station for British trade. Of course the cultural arguments especially cited by Tony Blair were equally important in Turkish case a secular Muslim country would be the pioneer for improving the dialogue between the east and west, that is also why Britain also believed in the stabilizing effect of the reform process in Turkey. These arguments are distinguishing Britain from France and Germany in many aspects but probably the most important ones that separate Britain from other are relatively law fear of immigration and the influx of low-price labour and the British defense of the notion that EU is not a Christian club.

¹⁸⁵<http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=2558>

The British economy had never experienced very high unemployment rates, that is why British are not so disturbed by the possibility of “guest workers”. Plus there is always the multicultural character of Britain history. Besides Britain is in favour of a loose bonded union instead of “Super State”, that is why there have never been a British concern of establishing a “Christian European identity” that can easily be disturbed by a crowded Muslim member.

So it is hard to sustain the argument that it is, so far never defined, geographical limits. The accession negotiations that opened in October 2005 must overcome considerable technical obstacles, as well as political problems over human rights and over Cyprus. But as Britain also confirms there will also be great opportunities, both strategically and economically, for the Union in accepting a Muslim country which is a secular state, in extending the Single Market to include a large and rapidly expanding economy and in harnessing to the Common Foreign and Security Policy a new player with some formidable assets.¹⁸⁶

And that so far Tony Blair had stated clearly that he tried to make a serious attempt on the issue. However, whether the successive Gordon Brown government would pursue the same goal as effective as Blair, although they renounced their dedication to supporting Turkey’s membership, is an enigma, that time will tell.

When it comes to the British public, consistent with the other parts of Europe there is again a fall of support compared with the official perspective. However whether this was because there is a lack of trust or knowledge about Turkey is still not so clear. Even so, British public is usually more supportive of Turkish membership, compared with the most of the EU states.

¹⁸⁶<http://www.euromove.org.uk/index.php?id=6502>

A Financial Times/Harris opinion poll, was conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 6,169 adults in Britain in June 2007. The respondents envisage the Europe of 2057 as encompassing Turkey. With the issue of Turkish membership a political debate in a Europe respondents from Britain (46 percent), said they believe Turkey will join.

These results are "surprisingly revealing," said Timothy Garton Ash, professor of European studies at Oxford University. "It's fascinating because it reveals some deep assumptions people make." Many Europeans "say Europe shouldn't expand to include Turkey," he said, "but deep down they believe it will." ¹⁸⁷

The Eurobarometer results about the prospect of Turkish membership are also very revealing. To see the changing level of support for Turkey in the British public, it is beneficial to examine briefly some data obtained from the results of some recent surveys.

As seen in Table 5.1 below, the Eurobarometer of Fall 2005 revealed the fact that other than the 20 percent of British who have not made up their mind about the prospect of Turkish membership, 42 percent of British people, which, is higher than the percentage of the ones that support the cause, are against the membership of Turkey. Although this average is slightly higher than most of the EU-15, such as Germany, France and Austria, it is still striking too see the negative attitude towards Turkey.

¹⁸⁷ www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2007/03/23/poll_paints_picture_of_future_eu/

Table 5.1. *Net support for Turkey's membership of the EU in Britain (supporters minus contesters)*

Britain

For	Against	Net support
38	42	-4

Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

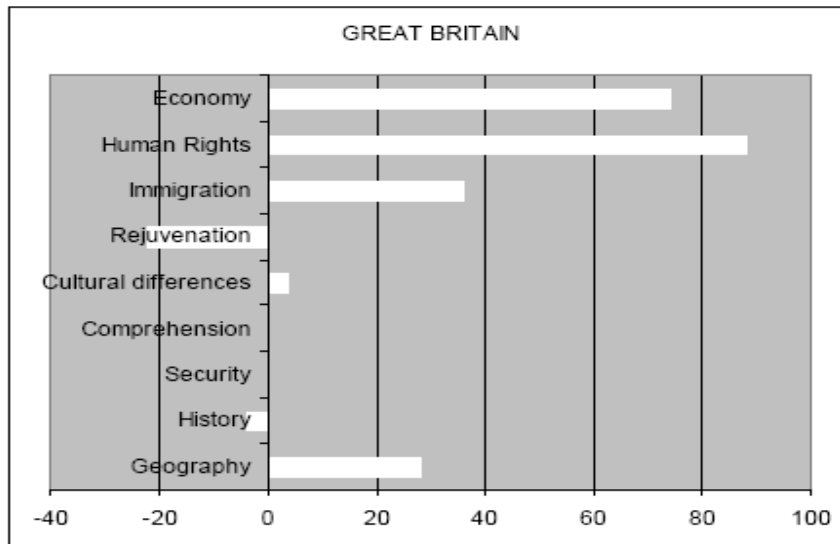
In table 5.2, we see the fluctuation of the net support for Turkish membership in Britain between the years 2000 and 2002. As seen in the table there is a slight increase in the net support for Turkey, however this increase seems not to be constant as well as sufficient to prove a strong support for Turkey in the British public.

Table 5.2 *Historical trends: Net support for Turkey's membership in Britain*

	EB 54.1(2000)	EB 56.2(2001)	EB 57.1(2002)	EB 58.1(2002)
Britain	-2	7	1	4

Sources: Eurobarometer surveys 54.1 (2000), 56.2 (2001), 57.1 (2002) and 58.1 (2002).

The table A.2 is also very enlightening in comprehending the most important points of concern in the eyes of British people concerning the Turkish membership. The economic and democratic factors are the leading effects that shape the image of Turkey, where as cultural and historical values play almost no role for Turkey's membership.



Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

Figure 5.1 Net importance of single items of attitude towards Turkey's membership (Supporters minus Contestors) in Great Britain

To sum up so far, it can be seen from the analyses above, Britain officials and elites, as well as the British media pose a more supportive stand for Turkey, when compared with France and Germany. This is partly because Britain has a more flexible and loose-bonded understanding of the enlargement process, emphasizing the economic benefits of the Union and also partly because Britain is a multi-cultural state that experiences a comparatively small rates of immigration and religion fears. That is why a Muslim Turkey which is not a “threat” for the British understanding of the European values.

However as seen in the various opinion polls, British public has not yet adopted such a warm and doubtless attitude towards Turkey, contrary to the official stance. There can still be observed some concerns about the economic benefits of Turkey and the level of Turkish authorities' respect for human rights. That is why gaining a much higher level of support from the British public is as important as sustaining a good level of dialogue with the British officials for Turkey.

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

To sum up so far, differing attitudes of public opinion in France, Britain and Germany towards the issue of Turkish Accession to the EU and their affect on the official policies of their states have been examined. All had different and various points of concern on the subject as well as some supporting arguments, as seen and obtained from the most influential actors for constructing and shaping a public perspective. These actors can be classified as major political and economic figures, plus representatives from academics and media.

France, Britain and Germany are significant examples of leading actors in EU decision making authorities and influential actors with very effective public spheres. That is why building up a sample group of those three states for obtaining a more general understanding of European public opinion on Turkish Accession to the EU was feasible. In addition to that, making a more compact analysis with a sample group of countries as an inductive method was also more feasible in order to stay loyal to the core of the research.

Although there are many differences among the public opinion of those three countries in arguments concerning the Turkish membership, it is possible to draw some general conclusions. Hence, these common points will be very enlightening for identifying some aspects that might shape the future relations between Turkey and the EU. This identification of problematic areas would be beneficial for building up a road map that might ease the potential tensions that could occur during the negotiation process. That is why an overall evaluation of the future prospects for Turkey as an EU candidate state is

vital. In accordance with those analyses a negotiation and diplomacy strategy can also be developed.

As can be seen from the previous pages specific arguments for and against Turkey's membership to EU exist in public opinions of all the studied countries. But as mentioned above some general points about the perspectives of the public opinion can be derived from those studies, in the light of some Europe-wide statistical survey data and political analysis.

The ones that support the prospect of Turkish membership have a common ground of a set of political and economic reasons. Those who already think that Turkey is culturally and geographically European are also more likely to agree that Turkey will add to the EU's economic growth and security.

Turkey can be seen as an anchor and even exporter of stability and democracy in the most unstable and troubled regions of the world, whether on Iran, Iraq, Middle East, the energy crisis or the overall dialogue with the Muslim world, Turkey can play a special role and enhance the capacity of the European Union to contribute to stabilizing the region. Economic interdependence is another key force driving EU-Turkey relations. The EU is by far Turkey's main trading partner and Turkey on the other hand ranks seventh in the list of the EU's trading partners. Turkey is an essential partner for the EU in dealing with drugs and human trafficking, organized crime and illegal migration.”¹⁸⁸

Ankara's accession would also promote multiculturalism as an integral part of the EU's identity. This would put the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in a different

¹⁸⁸<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/07/28&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

light. On the other hand, inclusion of the 800,000-strong Turkish army—Europe’s largest—would strengthen the EU’s defense capabilities.

Some optimists have argued that the decision to open negotiations with Turkey was motivated by visionary thinking and will be accompanied by equally visionary political leadership to convince voters that this is the right course. Others have argued that Turkish accession will so dilute the European project that the EU might become altogether irrelevant.¹⁸⁹

There is a fractural line between the academia/political elite/media, who favour Turkey’s accession and the public opinion who is against the accession. The support is lowest in countries with high Turkish immigration. The negative attitude towards Turkey’s EU membership among the EU public is due to the insufficient integration of Turkish migrants in EU member states during the last decades.

There are also other reasons for the low levels of public support for the prospect of Turkey’s accession to the EU. Media and political discourses tend to point at different factors. Sometimes, they cite religious or cultural elements (having to do with Christian values, the compatibility of Islam and democracy, etc.). On other occasions, they concentrate on demographic factors (either difficulties of accommodating a country as large as Turkey in the EU’s institutions or fears of immigration stemming from Turkey’s booming population). Often, too, we hear arguments framed in economic terms (stressing how the EU’s common structural and agricultural policies would collapse should a country as poor as Turkey get in). Frequently, we also hear arguments dealing with security and stability (either in favour of or against Turkey’s membership). Lastly, some argue that further political integration along federalist lines would be impossible if the EU overstretches to Turkey, just to mention a few of the most common arguments.

¹⁸⁹ http://www.yale.edu/yjia/articles/Vol_1_Iss_2_Spring2006/akcaparchaibi217.pdf

In the view of the above considerations, it is also useful to consider the specific cases of public opinion elaborated in the previous chapters. France, as being one of Turkey's oldest allies and one of its biggest trading partners, has a very significant place in determining the level of support and opposition from the European public opinion. As it is one of the most influential actors of the EU decision making mechanisms, the view point of its public opinion on the issue of Turkish accession to the EU becomes a very vital data.

From what has been dealt with, it is understood that the French public opinion is showing a great opposition and skepticism towards the prospect of Turkish membership. As seen from the major sources that influence the public opinion such as the major political parties, mass media and other non-governmental actors of economy and academia, there are many negative stimuli concerning the Turkish accession.

France has always been known as a keen protector of its national interest vis-à-vis international matters; this pattern fits its relations with the EU as well. Concerning the issue of Turkish accession to the EU, a fear of immigration from a populous country such as Turkey could create the anxiety about the loss of jobs of the French in favour of Turks that may be willing to become a cheaper work force. In addition to that French emphasis on the "European values" including Christianity could be threatened by the "oriental, Muslim Turks", a diluting factor for the French people.

Especially in the recent years, as the discussions about the borders of the EU spread along, the geographical location of Turkey has been a constraint for the French public. Arguments of the extent to which Turkey could become a "truly European" in terms of both geography and values such as democracy, rule of law and human and minority rights started to dominate the public. Allegations of Armenian Genocide and the law that recognized it and penalized its denial has also increased the doubt about Turkish human

rights record in the minds of French. Also the unresolved issues of Cyprus and Kurds are cutting in favour of the opposition towards Turkey.

With the election of Nicolas Sarkozy, a known adversary of Turkey and the French rejection of European Constitution also created a base for a strong opposition towards Turkey. Although Turkey was not the primary reason for the French negativity for the constitution, it still was an effective factor for the objection. Furthermore Sarkozy's support for a referendum, concerning the Turkish membership, following the footsteps of Chirac also strengthens the anti-Turkish atmosphere prevailing in France.

Another debate took place when Sarkozy proposed Turkey's active involvement in a Mediterranean Union, which to some extent would replace Turkey's full membership to the EU. That issue also divided the public opinion in terms of support and opposition to Sarkozy's alternative plan.

Finally French's concern about the institutional adequacy and preparedness for such a big state as Turkey has created the arguments about the need for an institutional reformation before EU would be ready for another round of enlargement. So the notion of "deepening before any more widening" is also creating the cold attitude towards the membership of Turkey. French are doubtful about the economic and social consequences of having Turkey as a member, as well as its potential threat for France as one of the biggest actors in EU decision making in terms of demography.

As the second case, today Germany constitutes a very significant place in Turkey's foreign affairs. The economic and political relations between the two countries are also developed with the presence of 2.5 million Turkish immigrants in Germany. Germany is demographically biggest member of the EU, making it a very influential actor in the EU's decision making process.

Especially with the government of the conservative Angela Merkel, the tone of the German public has become even more doubtful towards Turkey. The arguments about the absorption capacity of the union also started to prevail in Germany as well as in France. That is why the proposals of a “privileged membership” started to gain ground.

Contrary to Schröder era, Merkel’s election also heated the debates about Turkey’s location as a European state. But different than what has been suggested in France, Germans were divided about the positive and negative impacts of the geographical properties of Turkey. Some, especially the CDU electives were in favour of the argument that Turkey does not belong to Europe in terms of geography, whereas SPD and Green supporters were more in favour of Turkey’s contribution to European security as a strategic bridge between east and west.

Similar divisions can be seen in terms of religion and “European values”, which center right was suggesting Turkey does not culturally belong to Europe and has a totally different historical, cultural, social and religious background and center left fraction of the German public supported the idea that Turkey could be a channel of dialogue between the Muslims and Christians within and outside Europe.

A more US friendly environment eased the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate state in Germany when compared to France. However nearly all of the German public opinion, similar to the French, is concerned about the financial burden it might bring to the union. Also, a fear of a mass immigration from Turkey is a common concern between French and German.

Another common point of concern prevailing in the German public opinion is about Turkey’s human rights issues. Especially minority rights and Cyprus and very recently Armenian Genocide allegations took a lot of criticisms from German citizens. All these issues and the influence of political and economic actors have built a deep skepticism in

German public opinion, similar to France that might possess a potential obstacle for the future of EU-Turkish relations.

Lastly, when the British public opinion is analyzed a relatively different picture can be obtained, although there are many similarities between the points of concern in all three states' public. Just like the other two communities, the British are also concerned about Turkey's economic atmosphere and human rights record. Also the Armenian Genocide allegations, issues such as Cyprus and Kurds constitute an obstacle for Turkish membership.

However, Turkey role in European security as a NATO member is quite appreciated in the British public. In addition to that British public is not occupied with the geography of Turkey, as well as its alleged potential as a source of an influx of immigration. As British are more skeptic to the political side of the EU and prefer a more economically bonded EU, Turkey is seen as a vivid market for trade and investment.

Furthermore British are not so much engaged in the historical and religious character of the EU and that created a warmer attitude towards Turkey. But this support has decreased dramatically in the post 9/11 period. When an overall examination is made for British public opinion a slightly higher percentage of support can be seen. However when compared with the official stance in Britain the public backing is still very low for Turkey to accomplish a tangible boost on its way to full membership.

In general, the public opinion in three states that are mentioned above are still very insufficient for creating a positive atmosphere for Turkish membership. Issues such as economy, human rights and respect for democracy, Armenian Genocide allegations, Cyprus and Kurds are still needed to be resolved to obtain a more supportive climate. Also there is a consensus in all three communities that Turkey must be continuous with

the reformation process it has started and work on complying with the necessary criteria before anticipating a clear vision of full membership.

When a more EU-wide analysis is made about the overall EU public opinion on the issue of Turkish accession to the EU, it can be observed that, although there are more supportive results in some members when compared to others, the general level of support for Turkish membership is still very low to create a positive boost for the negotiation and membership process.

Support for enlargement began to drop substantially in 2004, as the accession of 10 new member states became imminent, and further enlargement of the Union has since been amply rejected by citizens in a large number of countries. But whereas opposition to further enlargement has been confined to a few of the older member states, which had also been opposed to the 2004 enlargement, European public opinion is overwhelmingly negative regarding the specific accession of Turkey.

In late 2005, Eurobarometer asked EU citizens about the prospects of Turkish membership, and found that 31 percent were in favour of accession and 55 per cent were against. As the EU economy started to recover in 2006, enlargement fears abated. In the spring of 2007, the share of those in favour of further enlargement rose to 49 per cent (from 45 percent a year earlier), while the share of opponents dropped to 39 per cent (from 42 percent).¹⁹⁰ However, the spring 2006 survey shows a significant negative development in opinion in Turkey, where the percentage of people with a positive image of the European Union has fallen from 60% to 43%.¹⁹¹ As it can be seen from the Figure 1 below, although there is a slight increase in the support for Turkish membership in

¹⁹⁰ http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/briefing_kb_turkey_24aug07.pdf

¹⁹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb65/eb65_highlights_en.pdf, p.15

year 2001, there is a dramatic fall of support in the period between 2002-2005, when major enlargements took place and Turkey was granted a candidate status and negotiations were initiated.

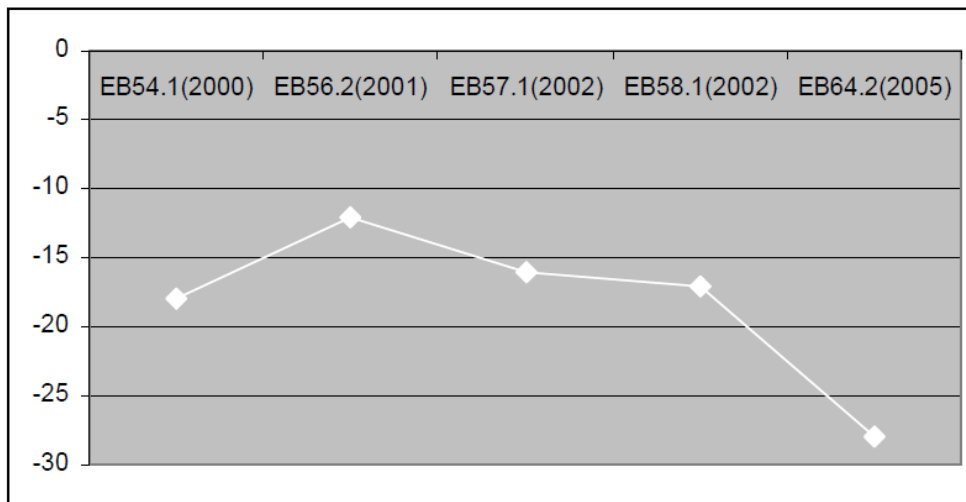


Figure 6.1 Evolution of “net” support for Turkey’s membership among the EU-15 member states (supporters minus contestors, mean for the EU-15)

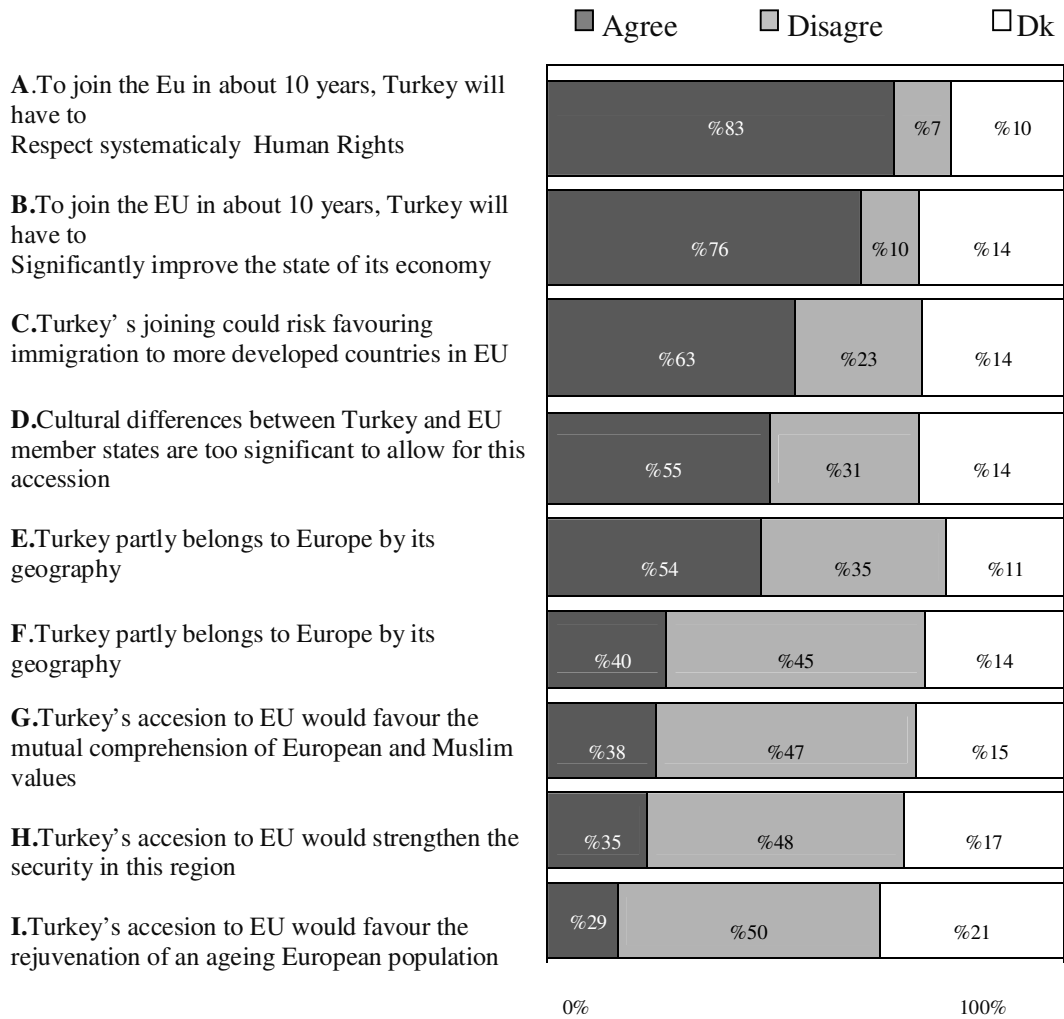
As seen in the charts below, according to European Union citizens in the Eurobarometer survey conducted in October-November 2005, Turkish membership of the Europe Union must absolutely be subject to two conditions: the systematic respect for human rights (83%) and a significant improvement in its economic level (76%).

More than six out of ten persons interviewed fear that Turkish membership would encourage immigration to the most developed countries in the European Union (63%). Some 54% of respondents consider that Turkey partly belongs to Europe by its geography, while 40% of respondents consider that Turkey partly belongs to Europe by its history.

According to 55% of the persons interviewed in the European Union, the cultural differences between Turkey and the Member States are too important to allow its accession. However, 38% of respondents consider that Turkish membership would favour the mutual comprehension of European and Muslim values, while 47% think the opposite.

Finally, 48% of European Union citizens do not think that Turkish membership would strengthen security in the region, while 35% agree with that proposal. One respondent out of two is skeptical about the beneficial effects of Turkish membership in terms of decreasing the average age of the European population (50%).

Table 6.1 Eurobarometer 64, question 45: For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree.



Source EB-64, pp139

Table 6.2: Net percentage of the EU members' agreement to the Eurobarometer 64, question 45.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
EU	83%	76%	63%	55%	54%	40%	38%	35%	29%
BE	96%	90%	67%	62%	56%	41%	40%	34%	34%
CZ	89%	80%	73%	60%	61%	41%	34%	33%	21%
DK	96%	83%	71%	58%	53%	32%	39%	44%	38%
DE	91%	84%	75%	71%	54%	35%	37%	30%	30%
EE	81%	74%	77%	65%	60%	45%	35%	42%	29%
EL	95%	92%	80%	73%	40%	13%	22%	30%	24%
ES	67%	61%	56%	42%	45%	40%	38%	32%	38%
FR	89%	78%	65%	63%	44%	32%	33%	32%	28%
IE	75%	67%	50%	42%	57%	45%	34%	29%	27%
IT	74%	73%	53%	56%	53%	43%	35%	38%	26%
CY	61%	75%	82%	66%	34%	11%	29%	32%	23%
LV	77%	73%	70%	58%	52%	34%	29%	33%	23%
LT	69%	66%	51%	53%	52%	36%	28%	28%	17%
LU	94%	85%	48%	71%	56%	32%	32%	25%	20%
HU	80%	75%	64%	48%	69%	69%	39%	31%	25%
MT	75%	73%	52%	49%	48%	37%	32%	30%	19%
NL	95%	83%	61%	46%	58%	31%	46%	42%	31%
AT	86%	84%	76%	78%	51%	39%	22%	19%	25%
PL	81%	75%	65%	43%	74%	62%	48%	45%	29%
PT	71%	67%	54%	48%	50%	36%	39%	38%	33%
SI	87%	84%	69%	53%	60%	50%	39%	39%	33%
SK	84%	76%	64%	57%	67%	53%	32%	31%	16%
FI	95%	90%	81%	61%	64%	51%	46%	34%	30%
SE	96%	78%	61%	51%	78%	59%	57%	59%	29%
UK	81%	70%	52%	40%	53%	37%	37%	38%	25%
CY(tcc)	77%	78%	67%	64%	61%	58%	64%	70%	83%
BG	78%	64%	58%	48%	69%	44%	45%	43%	25%
HR	79%	74%	61%	42%	65%	61%	52%	49%	36%
RO	64%	61%	42%	25%	59%	56%	49%	51%	25%
TR	69%	70%	56%	46%	59%	49%	61%	61%	69%

Source: EB-64 pp.140

As seen in the table below, the public policy discourses taking place within the national societies of the EU differ from one another. For, if we assume the existence of not only a cultural divergence between the individual societies of the present EU, but above all a differing understanding on the nature of the European Union as such. If we compare, even if superficially, the public debates in Germany and England, we see that the differences those two nations have in the basic principles of their respective understandings of European integration as such are also reflected in how they discuss the issue of Turkey. Whereas the English see the answer to this issue from the perspective of transatlantic relationship and the intergovernmental cooperation within the EU, at least parts of the political and public argumentations in Germany remain obligated to a cultural perspective.¹⁹²

Countries that face similar issues do not necessarily arrive at the same conclusions about Turkey. Some Poles, Czechs and Germans argue that Turkey does not have a place in an EU that they see as a Christian club. But for predominantly Christian Spaniards, this does not seem to be a problem. While some Austrians and Hungarians are wary because of their country's historical experience with Ottoman occupation, this does not seem to play a role in Slovenia or Italy. A large Muslim immigrant community has turned French people against Turkish accession. But the same has not happened in Britain. Many people in Belgium, France, Germany and Italy fear that including Turkey would spell the end of the federalists' dream of a political union.¹⁹³

¹⁹² <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/SozWiss/fg-soz/ag-wis/JSVersion/mitarbeit/giannakopoulos/EU/sammelband/sammelband-en.htm>

¹⁹³ http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/briefing_kb_turkey_24aug07.pdf

Table 6.3. *Net support for Turkey's membership of the EU by country (supporters minus contesters)*

	For	Against	Net support
EU-25	31	55	-24
EU-15	29	57	-28
NMS-10	38	44	-6
Sweden	48	41	7
Spain	40	33	7
Poland	42	37	5
Portugal	40	38	2
Malta	39	40	-1
Hungary	41	43	-2
United Kingdom	38	42	-4
Slovenia	49	55	-6
Ireland	33	40	-7
Netherlands	41	52	-11
Latvia	31	51	-20
Lithuania	27	50	-23
Belgium	36	60	-24
Estonia	27	53	-26
Denmark	33	59	-26
Czech Republic	30	57	-27
Slovakia	28	56	-28
Italy	27	57	-30
Finland	31	64	-33
France	21	68	-47
Greece	29	79	-50
Germany	21	74	-53
Luxembourg	19	74	-55
Cyprus	16	80	-64
Austria	11	80	-69

Note: The difference between the percentages for and against is those persons who did not answer or did not know.

Source: Eurobarometer 64.2 (2005).

Given that public opinion remains structured along national lines, it does not easily allow for the emergence of a much-needed EU-wide debate. The debate about Turkey's accession is and will continue to be a constitutive debate about European identity and values. Yet the weakness of the European public sphere implies that consensus on Turkey's membership will be difficult to reach. A strategy to 'Europeanise' the national debates on Turkey's membership may thus be crucial for both those in favour and those against. But because accession will be dealt with by unanimity, and taking into account that negative sentiments prevail in a good number of countries, this strategy is more critical for the former than for the latter.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ http://www.epin.org/pdf/WP16_RuizJimenez_Torreblanca.pdf

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In this thesis the public opinion in the EU on Turkey's accession process was analyzed through a comparative analysis of arguments and reasons cited against or for Turkish membership in France, Germany and Britain. Through those analyses the interaction of the official stance and the public opinion and how they determine the positioning of those members and the lessons that Turkey should derive from those points were elaborated.

For that purpose in the first chapter, a brief history of Turkey-EU Relations was given as a chronological exposition of major events and cornerstones, in the period beginning with the Ankara Agreement and until the dates of a status of candidacy was given to Turkey with Helsinki summit of 1999 and the Commission's decision to initiate negotiations with Turkey in 2005 and the analysis of the changing nature of relations and general arguments and reasons cited against and for Turkish membership afterwards were also given.

In this chapter the concept of public opinion and the ways of communication it uses are also elaborated in order to discover the role of public opinion as a foreign policy tool. And finally the conjunction and the issues of the contemporary EU and the enlargement rhetorics are examined.

In the following chapter that examined the public opinion in France, of the analysis of some influential factors that contribute the creation of a public opinion was elaborated. In this respect the policies and comments made by two major formations in French

politics, “Union for a Popular Movement” and “Socialist Party” and the recent reports, articles and debates from major publications such as “Le Monde Diplomatique” and “Le Figaro” were given. In addition to that the assessments and comments of some major economic and academic actors from French NGOs and research institutions were also mentioned.

In the chapter that examined the public opinion in Germany the analysis of the policies and comments made by major center-left and center-right formations in German politics, The Alliance of “Christian Democratic Union (CDU)” and Christian Social Union (CSU); “Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and Greens” and the recent reports, articles and debates from major publications such as “Deutsche Welle”, “Financial Times Deutschland” and “Bild” were given. In addition to that the assessments and comments of some major economic and academic actors from German NGOs and research institutions were also mentioned.

In the chapter that examined the public opinion in Britain the analysis of the policies and comments made by two major center-left and center-right formations in British politics, “The Labour Party” and “The Conservative Party” and the recent reports, articles and debates from major publications such as “International Herald Tribune”, “Financial Times”, “The Guardian”, “The Independent” and “BBC” were given. In addition to that the assessments and comments of some major economic and academic actors from British NGOs and research institutions were also mentioned.

In the General Assessment section the overall examination of the points of concern obtained from the French, German and British cases were elaborated. In addition to that assessments of Eurobarometers (1999-2006) in both national and Europe-wide level were evaluated, so that a more general interpretation of the arguments and reasons cited against or for the Turkish Accession could be reached.

At their December 2004 summit, the 25 current member-states have set a date for Turkey to start accession talks. The European Commission confirmed in October that the Turkish government has enacted most of the reforms demanded by the EU as a precondition for starting negotiations. However, in order to qualify for EU membership, Turkey will now have to continue to comply with the other exacting criteria for accession, known as the 'Copenhagen conditions' and adopt and implement the EU's rule book, *acquis communautaire*.¹⁹⁵

The Commission's "yes" had warnings and conditions attached. Among others, it raised the possibility of the suspension of talks in case of serious and persistent breach of democracy. It also stated that the negotiations were open-ended and said that the EU could introduce 'permanent safeguards' against the free movement of Turkish labour.¹⁹⁶

To become a candidate for membership, Turkey had to meet three basic conditions, the Copenhagen Criteria, which it now has to improve their implementation for further integration. On the political level, Turkey must create stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for minorities. Economically, the EU expects Turkey to create a functioning market economy. Turkey must also adopt the entire body of EU laws, known as the *acquis communautaire*, and adhere to the various political, economic, and monetary aims of the European Union. This third criterion will require Turkey to reform itself drastically to adopt, implement, and enforce the EU's values and legislation.¹⁹⁷

In 2005, the Commission set out in detail those other conditions for entry – particularly those that concern economic reform and the implementation of the 'acquis

¹⁹⁵http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay_turkey_hg_nov04.pdf

¹⁹⁶<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/turkey-eu-bid-third-way-looming/article-132381>

¹⁹⁷ http://www.yale.edu/yjia/articles/Vol_1_Iss_2_Spring2006/akcaparchaibi217.pdf

communautaire'. EU accession requires an enormous range of changes, from environmental policy to financial services. The accession process is always long and complex. Turkey will have to complete 31 'chapters' in the negotiations, covering every area of EU policy from fisheries to defence. It will have to write 80,000 pages of EU rules into national law.

Many of these reforms will be difficult for Turkey because they will entail significant costs, as well as deep restructuring of the public administration over a long period. Accession negotiations could take a decade to complete. Even for Turkey, which is a much bigger and more complicated candidate, negotiations could be completed in eight to ten years if the whole country is galvanised by the objective of accession.

The EU now has well-established accession criteria and a standard procedure which it uses with every candidate, including Turkey. However, the conditions may be interpreted particularly strictly in Turkey's case, mainly because of the problems the Union experienced in previous enlargements. In the past decade, the Union has learned that it is not enough for a candidate country to change its legislation, because EU policies do not function properly without implementation and enforcement. In the case of Turkey, the EU will take this lesson very seriously, not least because Turkey is such a big country and weaknesses in implementation would significantly affect the rule of law in the enlarged EU. For this reason, Turkey will have to prove it is enforcing the relevant EU laws before it can 'close' each chapter.¹⁹⁸

Yet it is painfully obvious that the accession talks will not be immune to distracting influences. Already, France and Austria have promised to hold referenda on the question of Turkey's accession. Even after EU governments agree on the terms of Turkey's membership, the European people will be consulted, either through parliamentary

¹⁹⁸http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay_turkey_hg_nov04.pdf

ratification or public referenda. ¹⁹⁹Turkey has shown an impressive ability to transform itself, and the forthcoming negotiations with the EU will be an important catalyst for further change. However, the accession preparations will prove much harder than Turkey's political and business establishment is expecting.

EU membership requirements reach much further into a country's political system and economy than those of any other international organisation. EU decisions affect most areas of a member's political life. The member states pool their sovereignty when they draw up laws and policies together. The EU will intrude into the most sensitive areas of Turkish life, such as rights for the Kurdish minority and relations with neighbouring countries.

Perhaps the thorniest issue in the negotiations will not be religion or history but the EU's capacity to absorb Turkey. Financially, Turkey's integration can only happen after an overhaul of the EU's redistribution mechanisms. The more fundamental changes would be institutional. Turkey is likely to have the largest population in the EU by 2010, which would be reflected in its representation in the European Parliament and its votes in the European Council.

There is also the issue of employment. There are already more than three million ethnic Turks living in Europe. Some politicians have warned of an influx of cheap labor as a few million Turks head west. The only way for politicians to assuage similar fears of an influx of Turkish workers is to start making the case why negotiations with Turkey are so important for the security and stability of Europe. At the same time, Turkey will have to win the hearts and minds of EU citizens.

¹⁹⁹ http://www.yale.edu/yjia/articles/Vol_1_Iss_2_Spring2006/akcaparchaibi217.pdf

It should always be considered that EU accession is partly a public relations exercise. At the latest since the negative outcome of the referenda on the EU constitutional treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005 and the "inner crisis" in which the EU finds itself since then - large public support is highly important when it comes to far-reaching European developments such as the accession of Turkey.

After the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 that granted Turkey the candidate status and 3 October 2005 that marked the initiation of the accession negotiations for Turkish membership to the EU, both the European and the Turkish publics have been strictly interested in the integration process of Turkey to the EU. The two centuries of Turkey's Westernization process has showed an enormous transformation with the realization of a prospect for future membership to the EU. Turkey has gone through a rapid and broad reformation process in terms of democratization, human rights and transparency.²⁰⁰

That interaction between the parties has also gone beyond the legal and political ground between the governments and has become a civil society dialogue as well. This engagement between the publics, politicians and business elites and the intense involvement of medias in that sense have also enabled the Turkish authorities and public to figure out the heterogeneous structure of the EU. What is meant by that is EU is consisted of various nationalities, regions and even ethno-cultural groups with different expectations, interests and sensitivities. Understanding these differences would be beneficial for Turkey to materialize the different strategies for different states to realize the membership prospect.

Turkey should persuade the people, not just the EU institutions. The Turkish government will have to spend a lot of time explaining why its accession is good for the

²⁰⁰Ayhan Kaya, "AB Ülkelerinin Kamuoylarında Türkiye Algıları", May 05 2008.
<http://www.euractiv.com.tr/yazici-sayfasi/analize/ab-ulkelerinin-kamuoylarinda-turkiye-algilari>

EU in the 25 member-states' capitals. It will need to spend even more time explaining the process to the Turkish people, because they need to consent to the terms of accession.²⁰¹

There is the need to recognize that the domestic as well as European public plays an important role in this process. In addition, the Turkish communities living within the EU should be included in the membership strategy, as they characterize the image of Turkey in the eyes of most Europeans and thereby contribute to Turkey's membership chances.

EU leaders have to do much of the job of persuading the public, but Turkey must play its part too. Turkey needs to present itself as a country where women and minorities are treated well, and where diversity is respected.

The Turkish and EU governments also have to persuade the European public and the Turkish people that accession will benefit them in the long run. EU leaders have to support their decision to start negotiations with a public campaign on why Turkey should eventually join.²⁰²

Public opinion is a challenge for Turkish accession, but it does not appear to be an insurmountable obstacle. It can be turned around – provided Turkish politicians do not descend into gloom and instead continue to reform and to highlight their country's modern and appealing aspects; and provided EU politicians pluck up the courage to lead public opinion rather than follow it.²⁰³

²⁰¹ http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay_turkey_hg_nov04.pdf

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/briefing_kb_turkey_24aug07.pdf

While most Europeans remain undecided about Turkish accession, beyond the historical unease in European minds regarding Turkey, there is hope that, if amply informed, enlightened Europeans will tread the path of support for Turkish accession. While Turkey will have to promote its case with the EU publics, European leaders and intellectuals should also join in the effort. Europe's leaders need to work hard to make the EU fit for Turkey, but the Turkish government also needs to make its country fit for the EU. By 2015 both the EU and Turkey may have changed beyond recognition.²⁰⁴

The support for Turkish membership can only be obtained if the EU citizens can rely on the EU's common political values and move away from nationalism. In other words the public opinion needed for Turkey's membership can only be realized when the EU citizens retreat from nationalism, culturalism and the prevailing "Clash of Civilizations" argument.

The values of the European Union are not tied to one specific religion or culture, but are universal. They are set out in Article 6 paragraph 1 of the EU treaty: "The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States." What is crucial is that member states share these fundamental values, not what culture they belong to.²⁰⁵

Even though most of the official stance of the EU members, are currently in favour of the opening and continuation of the negotiation process for Turkey, there are still many different assumptions and expectations for a prospect of Turkish membership. The most important decisive step for Turkish accession will be taken by the publics of the EU

²⁰⁴ http://www.yale.edu/yjia/articles/Vol_1_Iss_2_Spring2006/akcaparchaibi217.pdf

²⁰⁵ [http://www.auswaertiges-
amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index_html?bereich_id=17&type_id=0&archiv_id=4012&detail=1](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index_html?bereich_id=17&type_id=0&archiv_id=4012&detail=1)

members. That is why it is very crucial for Turkey to analyze the general perspectives of the European people and work on creating a positive argument for its inclusion.

The general idea from this work can be summarized as that, the support and opposition for Turkish membership varies from one member to another. This shift of positions, depend on many different arguments both in favour and opposite to a Turkey within Europe. These reasons rise also from the inner dynamics of the EU, as well as, from arguments based on Turkey.

Especially after the last two rounds of enlargements that ended up with 12 new members, EU became an enlargement fatigue organization that expressed a need for restructuring. That is also why the accession of Turkey is a challenge for both parties. So wining the hearts of European people becomes a vital step for Turkey.

The fact that the concept of public opinion is not given and can be changed with influential political actors, enables us to see that EU public opinion can be turned around positively by European political and civil society leaders that support the cause of Turkish membership. That is why Turkey should work on resting its case in the eyes of EU public by working in harmony and cooperation with the key institutions in creating a public perspective such as the EU Parliament; while continuing the structural and democratic reforms that will change the perceptions of EU publics about Turkey and explore the ways of building a political, economic, beyond civilization argument for its cause.

However a long road taken and a long road ahead should remind the authorities of both parties that they have a great responsibility and commitment to fulfill. As Turkey should improve itself for a better integration to Europe and work on creating a bridge of dialogue between the two parties' citizens, that would enable a climate of mutual understanding and a positive boost for Turkey's EU membership, the EU should also take on its responsibilities towards Turkey for an equal partnership under fair and

objective conditions and work on promoting the Turkish case in the publics of the EU. EU's commitments vis-à-vis Turkey, or any other country, should not depend on shifting political moods following an election victory in a member state or some given prejudices in the minds of citizens. Instead, it should be based on improving the conditions for both party to benefit. *Pacta sunt servanda* is a principle of European law and a matter of credibility for the EU's positioning as a global actor and an ally of Turkey.

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