

EUROPEANIZATION AND TURKEY'S REGIONAL POLICY: 1999-2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EUROPEANIZATION AND TURKEY'S REGIONAL POLICY: 1999-2015**

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This thesis seeks to explore the role of the Europeanization process in Turkey's regional policy since the Helsinki Summit of the European Union (EU) in 1999 when Turkey was accepted as a candidate country for the membership in the EU. Contrary to the views of some experts who claim that the Europeanization process involves a comprehensive transformation of the institutions and policies of the candidate countries in line with the expectations of the EU, Turkey's regional policy between 1999 and 2015 demonstrates that such a comprehensive transformation may not always be realized as Turkey's regional policy has not been substantially harmonised with the principles and institutional framework of the EU's overall regional policy, as well as met EU's expectations as a candidate country. This is partly related to the reluctance of the EU during Turkey's accession negotiations, but also to Turkey's continuing adherence to centralisation principle in its policy towards the regions despite its stated objective of Europeanization of its regional policy. The thesis has six chapters: The introductory first chapter is followed by a chapter on the evolution of the EU's regional policy. The subsequent third and fourth chapters deal with the characteristics of Turkey's regional policy before and after 1999. The fifth chapter analysing the key issues in Turkey's regional policy precedes the conclusion.

Keywords: Europeanization, Turkey, European Union, Regional Policy, Structural Funds

## ÖZ

AVRUPALILAŞMA VE TÜRKİYE’NİN BÖLGESEL POLİTİKASI: 1999-2015

Tanrısever, Nazlı Hezar  
Yüksek Lisans, Avrupa Çalışmaları Bölümü  
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Bu tez, Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliğine (AB) üyelik için adaylık statüsü kazandığı 1999 yılındaki Helsinki Zirvesinden itibaren, Avrupalılaşma sürecinin, Türkiye’nin bölgesel politikası üzerinde yarattığı etkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Avrupalılaşma sürecinin, AB üyeliğine aday ülkelerin kurumları ve politikaları üzerinde AB’nin beklentileri doğrultusunda kapsamlı bir dönüşüm yarattığını savunan bazı uzmanların görüşlerinin aksine, Türkiye’nin 1999 ve 2015 yılları arasında uyguladığı bölgesel politikalar, böyle bir dönüşümün her zaman gerçekleştirilemeyebileceğini göstermiştir; zira Türkiye’nin izlediği bölgesel politika, AB’nin genel bölgesel politikasının ilkeleri ve kurumsal çerçevesi ile büyük ölçüde uyumlaştırılmamış ve AB’nin Türkiye’den bir aday ülke olarak beklentilerini karşılamamıştır. Bu durum, kısmen AB’nin Türkiye ile sürdürdüğü üyelik müzakerelerine yeterince önem vermemesi ile, kısmen de bölgesel politikasını Avrupalılaştırma konusunda dile getirdiği amacına rağmen, Türkiye’nin bölgelere dönük politikasında merkezîyetçi yaklaşımını muhafaza etmeyi sürdürmesi ile ilişkilidir. Tez altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünü, AB’nin bölgesel politikasının gelişimine yer veren bir bölüm takip etmektedir. Sonraki üçüncü ve dördüncü bölümler, Türkiye’nin 1999 yılı öncesi ve sonrası dönemlerde bölgesel politikasının özelliklerine yer vermektedir. Beşinci bölümde Türkiye’nin

bölgesel politikasındaki önemli konular irdelenmekte ve tez, sonuç bölümü ile tamamlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupalılařma, Türkiye, Avrupa Birlięi, Bölgesel Politika, Yapısal Fonlar

*To My Family*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Accession Partnership
CBC	Cross-border Cooperation
CSF	Community Support Framework
DA	Development Agency
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
GAP	South-eastern Anatolia Project
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation
MEDA	Mediterranean Economic Development Area
MLG	Multi-level Governance
NAP	National Action Plan
NP	National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSRD	National Strategy for Regional Development
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OP	Operational Programme
pNDP	Preliminary National Development Plan
RDP	Regional Development Plan
RPR	Regular Progress Report
SF	Structural Funds
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SPO	State Planning Organisation (currently Ministry of Development)
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UK	United Kingdom

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

**The main objective of this thesis** is to analyse the role of the Europeanization process in Turkey's regional policy since the Helsinki Summit of the European Union (EU) in 1999 when Turkey was accepted as a candidate country for the membership in the EU.

**The scope of this thesis** is the alignment efforts in Turkey's regional policy with the EU regional policies. The thesis is going to try to find out to what extent harmonisation efforts of Turkey in regional policy area are in line with the EU regional policy requirements.

The study of this topic is very important due to the significance of regional policy in the EU accession process. In fact, the EU has been marked by deep cleavages of development among its regions. In spite of the fact that economic growth has been observed in the EU member states compared to their pre-accession process, the developmental imbalances continued to prevail among the regions of these member states. Therefore, structural funds were allocated for the EU member states whose regions may lag behind as a result of becoming a part of a comprehensive single market.

Turkey has also been marked by large development disparities among its western and eastern parts. According to the explanations of the Ministry of Development, the income gap is eleven times bigger among the provinces with highest and lowest incomes.<sup>1</sup> Albeit Turkey has designed and partially implemented regional development plans in the past, the EU accession process of Turkey has brought a

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Development. *Draft Law on Establishment of Development Agencies*, September 2005, pp. 13-25, p. 14, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem22/yil01/ss920m.htm> (Accessed on 15 May 2015).

renewed impetus to the regional policy design. In accordance with the EU guidance documents, such as accession partnerships and progress reports, Turkey has started out to shape its regional policy priorities to conform with the EU practices, so that once the EU membership becomes a close reality, Turkey could be able to benefit from the EU structural funds to improve the developmental disparities among its regions. As it can be observed in the EU progress reports on Turkey, a number of accomplishments can be cited in terms of alignment with the EU regional policy. Adoption of the NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) classification in three levels; establishment of development agencies at NUTS 2 level; establishment and functioning of operating structures for EU pre-accession aid, which are considered to be precursors for the future managing authorities for the use of the structural funds; and recently adopted National Strategy for Regional Development together with the regional developments plans at NUTS 2 levels present concrete developments in this area.

For a country like Turkey with a population and territory much larger than most of the EU countries, the structural funds allocations would not possibly make concrete impact for alleviating the regional development disparities. However, as being part of the whole accession process, the preparations for the future use of EU structural funds would create a renewed focus on the less developed regions of the country and blended with national resources, EU structural funds would help some improvements to the regional developmental imbalances in the country.

**The main research question of this thesis** is as follows: why and how Turkey's own regional policy has continued to differ substantially from the EU regional policy despite the fact that Turkey's EU accession process that started in 1999 envisaged a comprehensive harmonization of Turkey's institutions and policies, including the regional policy?

**The review of the academic literature** on the nature of the Europeanization process and Turkey's regional policy is essential for understanding the academic debates on

the relationship between the process of Europeanization and the characteristics of Turkey's regional policy.

Generally speaking, the process of Europeanization implies that becoming a member of the EU requires a country to align its institutions and policies in all the fields in line with the norms and standards of the EU. In other words, "Europeanization" is essential for a state in order to be a member of the EU. According to Claudio Radaelli, Europeanization entails "institutionalisation of formal and informal rules and procedures in the EU policy process and incorporate them into domestic political structure and public policies" by the candidate and member states.<sup>2</sup> In this regard, European policies have an important impact on the domestic policies of the member and candidate states. "Goodness of fit" and "adaptational pressures" are the concepts of the Europeanization approach to define the compelling effects of the candidacy status for EU membership.<sup>3</sup> In Turkey's accession process, the adaptational pressure is tried to be created by the EU through publishing regular progress reports about the EU *acquis* harmonisation-related developments in Turkey. In this thesis, Europeanization of the regional policy is going to be understood as the harmonisation of Turkey's regional policy with the principles and institutional requirements of the EU's regional policy. On the other hand, as the Europeanization entails institutionalisation of the EU rules and their actual enforcement, it was also argued that some formal rules that were put in place in accession countries are actually not implemented. In this regard, the behaviours may "decouple" from the rules, that is, implementation may not comply with institutional rules and practices that were put in place by the EU harmonisation process.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Claudio Radaelli. "Whither Europeanization? Concept stretching and substantive change", *European Integration Online Papers*, 4(8), 28, 2000, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/pdf/2000-008.pdf> Cited in John Bachtler, Carlos Mendez and Hildegard Oraže. "From Conditionality to Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe: Administrative performance and Capacity in Cohesion Policy", *European Planning Studies*, Vol.22, No. 4, 735-757, 2013, p. 737.

<sup>3</sup> H. Tolga Bolukbasi, Ebru Ertugal and Saime Özçürümez. "The Impact of the EU on Turkey: Toward Streamlining Europeanization as a Research Programme", *European Political Science*: 9, pp. 464-480, 2010, p. 469.

<sup>4</sup> Tanja A. Börzel and Diğdem Soyaltın. "Europeanization in Turkey Stretching a Concept to its Limits?", *KFG Working Paper No. 36*, February 2012, p.10, [http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/en/v/transforeurope/publications/working\\_paper/WP\\_36\\_Boerzel\\_Soyaltin\\_neu.pdf](http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/en/v/transforeurope/publications/working_paper/WP_36_Boerzel_Soyaltin_neu.pdf). (Accessed on 7 August 2015)

EU regional policy is a policy area out of the thirty three policy areas and negotiation chapters which Turkey needs to make progress to meet the EU's accession criteria. Usually used interchangeably with the cohesion policy or structural policy in the EU context, EU's regional policy is based on the principle of decreasing the economic and social developmental disparities among European regions. In order to achieve this goal, almost one third of the EU budget is allocated to the EU structural funds and these funds are distributed among the member states' regions according to pre-determined principles.

The word "region" has different meanings. In the European context, there are at least two definitions. The Charter for Regionalisation defines a "region" as a "territory which constitutes, from a geographical point of view, a clear-cut entity or a similar grouping of territories where there is continuity and whose population possesses certain shared features and wishes to safeguard the resulting specific identity and to develop it with the object of stimulating cultural, social and economic progress".<sup>5</sup>

In the Declaration of the Assembly of European Regions on Regionalism in Europe, on the other hand, a political administrative context is added to the word and a region is defined as "the territorial body of public law established at the level immediately below that of the State and endowed with political self-government." And it is stated that "the region shall be recognised in the national constitution or in legislation which guarantees its autonomy, identity, powers and organisational structures".<sup>6</sup> However, in this thesis, in order to explain the EU regional policy the word "region" is going to denote the statistical regions mentioned under NUTS classification. The political connotation of the word "region" is not going to be dealt with in this thesis.

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<sup>5</sup> European Parliament. *Resolution on Community regional policy and the role of the regions and Annexed Community Charter for Regionalisation minutes of the Sitting of 18 November 1988*, Official Journal C 326, 19 December 1988, p. 296,

[http://aei.pitt.edu/1758/1/ep\\_resolution\\_regional\\_11\\_88.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/1758/1/ep_resolution_regional_11_88.pdf) (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Assembly of European Regions. *Declaration on Regionalism in Europe*, 1996, p.4, [http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PressComm/Publications/DeclarationRegionalism/DR\\_GB.pdf](http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PressComm/Publications/DeclarationRegionalism/DR_GB.pdf) (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

EU regional policy has mainly been shaped starting from 1988, when main principles were set to establish a European-wide cohesion policy. Later on after 2000, a regional competitiveness aspect was incorporated to the regional policy priorities which arguably have counter-working nature with the aim of reducing developmental disparities. In fact, it may not be so easy to bring forward a competitive capacity in the least developed regions. From the theoretical perspectives, this dichotomy was identified as exogenous (classical) and endogenous growth (new regionalism) theories. The traditional approach, namely exogenous growth was based on attracting foreign capital to regions in order to foster economic growth and increase employment. In classical development theory, public investments and incentives are transferred to less developed regions in order to redistribute the national wealth.<sup>7</sup> This means that material assets, namely money is essential for the regional development.<sup>8</sup> Endogenous growth theory, i.e. new regionalism, which emerged as a result of globalism, argues that “at the regional level firms can establish networks as a result of enterprise support facilities, human capital training and trust relations; hence, investment could be attracted”. It is argued that “regional economic activity is a major source of economic growth in modern economies”.<sup>9</sup> Current EU perspective on regional development is based on the premises of the endogenous growth.

There are two main theoretical approaches that were applied to analyse the policy processes in the EU regional policy. Mark Pollack and Gary Marks, later together with Liesbeth Hooghe have produced work applying each of these approaches – intergovernmentalist approach and multi-level governance (MLG) approach-, to this policy area.

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<sup>7</sup> Ebru Ertugal. “Europeanization of Regional Policy and Regional Governance: The Case of Turkey”, *European Political Economy Review*, Vol.3, No.1 (Spring 2005), pp. 18-53, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Anna Michalski and Saraceno, Elena. *Regions in the Enlarged European Union* (Budapest: Forward Studies Unit, European Commission, 2000). Cited in Ebru Ertugal. *Strategies for Regional Development: Challenges Facing Turkey on the Road to EU Membership*, p.4, [http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi\\_turkey\\_tpq\\_id\\_40.pdf](http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_id_40.pdf). (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>9</sup> European Commission. *White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities), 1993. Cited in Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal (2004), “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, p.4, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf>. (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

Mark Pollack argues that “the analysis of both EU structural policymaking and implementation of the EU structural funds should begin, but not necessarily end, with an intergovernmental analysis of the preferences of and bargaining among member governments and the institutions they create, which in turn structure subsequent bargaining and its outcomes. Member states, in other words, establish the institutional context, within which both the Commission and regional governments act, and it is within this intergovernmental context that the precise roles and influence of supranational and subnational actors can best be specified.”<sup>10</sup>

Pollack maintains that all major redistributive decisions in the Union history can be considered as “side payments in major intergovernmental bargains, such as market liberalisation, economic and monetary union, enlargement and budgetary reform”. On the other hand, he also accepts that “the Commission has played an important “agenda setting” role in the 1988 reforms”; however, he further claims that similar reform attempts by the Commission were rejected in the past by the member states, but the 1988 reforms were accepted by member states as a result of “changing national interests and dynamics of bargaining in the EU”.<sup>11</sup>

The core assumption of state-centric governance is that “European integration does not challenge the autonomy of nation-states; instead state sovereignty is strengthened through EU membership. European integration is driven by bargains among member state governments. Bargains depend on the lowest common denominator of all the states. Supranational actors only help member states to facilitate agreements by providing information. Policy outcomes are not against the interests of the member states and effect of supranational actors on the outcomes is rather limited”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mark Pollack. “Regional Actors in an Intergovernmental Play: The Making and Implementation of EC Structural Policy” in Rhodes C. and S. Mazey, *The State of the European Union Vol.3 Building a European Polity*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 361-390, 1995, p.362.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Gary Marks, Liesbeth Hooghe and Kermit Blank. “European Integration from the 1980s: State-centric v. Multi-level Governance”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34:3, pp. 341-378, 1996, p.342.

As the founding person of the multi-level governance approach in regional policy, Gary Marks points out to the “debate between supranational and national conceptions of two pictures, namely the increasing importance of subnational levels of decision making and their myriad connections with other levels”. He describes this phenomena, as “multi-level governance”, which is a “system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers- supranational, national, regional and local- as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decisional reallocation that has pulled some previously centralised functions of the state up to the supranational level and some down to the local/regional level”.<sup>13</sup>

Intergovernmentalist scholars defend side-payment argument for the increasing budgetary share of the structural funds allocated to European regions. These funds are regarded as side payment for the least developed regions in less developed member states as a result of their acceptance of the single market and the economic and monetary union and new rounds of enlargement.<sup>14</sup> Weaker economies, such as Ireland, Portugal, Spain, southern Italy and Greece were vulnerable to liberalised competition with other main industrialist member states. In fact, Gary Marks argues that “these countries in fact benefited from the functioning of the internal market and their GDPs have increased”.<sup>15</sup> He further argues that “side payments can be also regarded as forced spill-overs, whereby regional structural funds are used to develop innovative economies”.<sup>16</sup>

In MLG approach it is claimed that in a number of EU policy areas no one actor has complete competence, instead there exist “overlapping competencies among multiple

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<sup>13</sup> Gary Marks. “Structural Policy and Multilevel Governance in the EC”, in Alan W. Cafruny and Glenda G. Rosenthal (eds.), *The State of the European Community*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 391-409, 1993, p. 392.

<sup>14</sup> David Allen. “The Structural Funds and Cohesion Policy: Extending the Bargain to Meet New Challenges”, in Hellen Wallace, Mark A. Pollack and Alaistair. R. Young (eds.), *Policy-Making in the European Union. Sixth Edition.*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 229-252.

<sup>15</sup> Gary Marks. “Structural Policy in the European Community”, in Alberta M. Sbragia (ed) *Euro-Politics Institutions and Policy Making in the “New” European Community*, Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, pp. 191-224, 1992, p. 195.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

levels of government. Decision making competencies are shared among different actors at varying vertical (territorial) and horizontal (economic and social) levels rather than monopolised by national governments”.<sup>17</sup>

MLG especially puts emphasis on the mobilisation of sub-national actors (regional and local administrations) and their increasing significance in the EU policy making and implementation process. This approach also lays stress on increasing involvement of economic and social actors together with regional and local public authorities. MLG does not disregard the importance of states as authoritative actors but rather claims that states do not monopolize the European policy process. States are regarded as one of the many actors in the policy process. MLG further argues that sub-national actors may interact with supranational actors and may pursue their interests at the European level. Hence, the state is no longer seen as the sole channel for domestic political actors to seek their interests.<sup>18</sup>

The critical international political economy is another approach that seeks to explain development of the EU’s regional policy. This perspective observes that in the post-Keynesian European economy governments tend to compete in providing a national regulatory climate that mobile factors of production find attractive. However, the idea of regional policy has been very much dependent on the idea of regulated capitalism which focused on reducing economic and social disparities.<sup>19</sup> Especially after the 2000s the main focus of the EU regional policy has shifted to achieving competitiveness which was at the same time the goal of the Lisbon Strategy 2000 and this idea is defended by neo-liberalist thought. Neo-liberals want that markets are insulated from political interference by combining European-wide market integration and national governments should have the regulatory powers. According to neo-liberals, governments should compete with each other in order to provide for a

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<sup>17</sup> Liesbeth Hooghe, and Gary Marks. *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*, Lanham: Rowman Littlefield, 2001, p.3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Liesbeth Hooghe. “EU Cohesion Policy and Competing Models of European Capitalism”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 36:4, 1998, 457-477.

national regulatory climate that mobile factors of production find attractive. They consider that the EU regional policy is distorting competition<sup>20</sup>.

The political economy approach notes that neo-liberalist forces urge regional policy makers to reshape regional policy by placing competitiveness rather than social goals such as equality or solidarity to the core of the policy and ensure that only economically productive actors have access to partnership.<sup>21</sup> The political economy perspective puts forward that redistributive policies empower weaker actors; so that they can compete in a liberalised market.<sup>22</sup> Liesbeth Hooghe notes that the neoliberal ideology and the neoliberals themselves were unable to block the EU regional policy expansion in 1988 and 1993. However, from 2000 onwards, the picture has changed and the emphasis on competitiveness has dominated in the EU regional policy.<sup>23</sup>

In Turkish context, intergovernmentalist approach may help us understand how the EU financial aid is used to keep Turkey firmly anchored with the EU and hence transform its administrative structures and implementation. However, the transformation itself has limitations depending on the Turkish political priorities. On the other hand, MLG is rather a novelty for Turkey where multi-level administrative and implementation structures are yet to be established and function. In the current conditions, subnational actors are too weak to impose their will in the transnational arena.

**The main argument of the thesis** is as follows: Contrary to the views of some experts who claim that the Europeanization process involves a comprehensive transformation of the institutions and policies of the candidate countries in line with the expectations of the EU, Turkey's regional policy between 1999 and 2015 demonstrates that such a comprehensive transformation may not always be realized as Turkey's regional policy has not been substantially harmonised with the principles and institutional framework of the EU's overall regional policy, as well as met EU's

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pp. 457-477.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. pp. 458-459.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. pp. 458-459.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. pp.457-477.

expectations as a candidate country. This is partly related to the reluctance of the EU during Turkey's accession negotiations, but also to Turkey's continuing adherence to centralisation principle in its policy towards its regions despite its stated objective of Europeanization of its regional policy.

It could be argued that even though various developments have been achieved in the field of regional policy in Turkey since the 1999 Helsinki summit, which gained an impetus with the EU membership perspective, the lack of accession perspective for Turkey and lack of political commitment on the EU side makes difficult the full compliance of Turkey with the EU regional policy at the time being.

**The theoretical framework of the thesis** is intergovernmentalism in European studies. Assumptions of this approach are rooted in political realist approach to social science. According to the political realists, politics, both domestic and international, is mainly about the uses of power. It is the struggles for gaining more power domestically and internationally that motivate the actions of political actors. The intergovernmentalist approach to regional policy is discussed in detail in the second chapter. In this discussion characteristics of this approach are outlined in relation to the multi-level governance approach which could be considered as a version of liberal approach to social science. This thesis assumes that political realist approach to regional policy is more explanatory than alternative approaches such as liberal multi-level governance approach.

**The methodology of the thesis** consists of the use of both primary and secondary sources. As primary sources, EU documents, in the form of regular reports, documents of the Council of the Union, such as accession partnerships and screening report, as well as other Commission and Council documents related to the EU regional policy were used. In terms of secondary resources, a number of articles and books were used. In order to retrieve these sources, mainly the METU library and its online database were used. Other various webpages, including that of the Ministry for EU Affairs were also consulted. In addition, some interviews were conducted

with two EU officials responsible for EU's regional policy and two Turkish bureaucrats responsible for Turkey's regional policy.

**The main chapters of the thesis**, that follow this introductory chapter, examine the topic of this thesis in a very detailed way. In the second chapter of the thesis, EU regional policies are analysed by giving special emphasis to the changes they have experienced until present. Regional policy, a national policy area in its essence, has been transferred to the European level with the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1974. In fact, the EU's founding treaties entail provisions on ensuring economic and social cohesion across the EU regions. Consequently, EU regional policy dynamics have also evolved with the changing mentality on the requirements for economic development in years, including the phasing out process of industrial development in favour of phasing in innovation, competitiveness and regions becoming the stimulator of national economic development.

In the third chapter regional policy developments of Turkey before the EU accession process will be provided. Since the establishment of the Republic, considerable importance was attached for development of poor regions, however, development work was designed and carried out by the central administration and local administrations or any other political authority were not granted any powers to design and implement regional policies. In this regard, regional policy was handled rather centrally in the pre-Helsinki (1999) period and mainly shaped by the five year development plans prepared by the central administration. Arguably, this may be a result of national territorial integrity and national security concerns of the government, which prevented development of governing bodies at the regional level.

Fourth chapter focuses on the developments in the regional policy area, after Turkey was accepted as a candidate country for the EU membership. In the chapter it is argued that, even though a stimulus has been created in the harmonisation efforts in the field of regional policy with the candidacy of the country, the chapter negotiation closing benchmarks attest to the fact that there are more to be done for achieving the

EU compliance. In this chapter, the EU documents on Turkey, including the screening report, regular reports, accession partnerships and also Turkey's policy documents will be examined. In addition, accession negotiations' closing benchmarks for regional policy will also be analysed.

In the fifth chapter, with a view to the EU regional policy requirements, the accomplishments of Turkey in the framework of the EU accession process are analysed by focusing on the degree of alignment with the main EU regional policy principles (concentration, programming, partnership and additionality) and the required administrative capacity to be able to benefit from the structural funds. In this regard, the pre-accession financial instruments provided to Turkey by the EU, especially implementation of Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA) programme will be evaluated.

The thesis will be concluded by summarising and discussing the main findings of this research.

## CHAPTER II

### EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S REGIONAL POLICY

#### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the evolution of the EU regional policy. Regional policy is one of the key policies of the EU in promoting European integration among its member states. The main focus of the EU regional policy is to remove the differences among the development levels of European regions.

The chapter examines the evolution of the EU's regional policy by focusing on its key turning points. First of all, it will be discussed that a transition occurred from a practice mainly supporting individual member states whose regions will arguably suffer from the completion of the EU internal market to a financial support policy by allocating structural funds to less developed regions of the EU. In this regard, starting with the main reform period of 1988 and 1993, subsequent changes in the principles and implementation of the EU regional policy in individual financial framework periods will be examined. In this chapter these main changes in the EU regional policy will also be evaluated. The chapter will be concluded by discussing the main elements discussed in this chapter.

#### 2.2. Regional Policy from the Establishment to 1988

Regional policy is one of the most important policy fields in the EU, whose objective is both to “achieve economic and social cohesion within the EU and ensure territorial cohesion”.<sup>24</sup> EU regional policy has been evolving since the establishment of the

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<sup>24</sup> European Commission. *Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion A New Partnership for Cohesion: convergence, competitiveness, co-operation* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities), 2004.

European Economic Community with the Rome Treaty in 1957. “Cohesion”, which has economic, social and territorial aspects, is stipulated as a distinctive objective in the founding treaties, in order to ensure harmonious development (currently Article 174 TFEU). The EU’s regional/cohesion policy aims to reduce development disparities between the various EU regions. EU is to support achievement of these objectives by the action it takes through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, Guidance Section, the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Investment Bank (Article 175 TFEU).<sup>25</sup> These financial instruments are generally called as structural funds (SF). The EU’s regional/cohesion policy constitutes the second biggest budget item and constitutes the one third of total EU expenditure. For 2014-2020 periods it amounts to 325 billion Euros.<sup>26</sup> Regional policy is used interchangeably with the “cohesion policy” and “structural policy” at the European context.

Reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various EU regions is especially emphasised as a target for the European integration. However, the corresponding EU financial tools could be streamlined in 1974 with the first enlargement, when the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark became member states. Hence, in principle SF are redistributing financial resources from some member states and regions to others through the EU budget.<sup>27</sup>

In the EU fostering economic and social cohesion has been an issue since the establishment of the Union. There have been four arguments to justify this objective. Firstly, “EU regional policy can improve efficiency in the use of funds, by targeting spending and by imposing discipline on the policies of the member states”. Secondly, “the coordination of member states’ regional policies can reduce the scope for costly

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<sup>25</sup> *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN> (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Claire Dhéret. “What next for EU Cohesion Policy? Going ‘beyond GDP’ to deliver greater well-being”, *European Policy Centre*, Policy Brief March 2011, [http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub\\_1243\\_what\\_next\\_for\\_eu\\_cohesion\\_policy.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1243_what_next_for_eu_cohesion_policy.pdf) (Accessed on 9 January 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Mark Pollack. “Regional Actors in an Intergovernmental Play: The Making and Implementation of EC Structural Policy”, in Rhodes C. and S. Mazey, *The State of the European Union Vol.3 Building a European Polity*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 361-390, 1995, p.361.

and inefficient competition for mobile investments between nations and regions”. Thirdly, “there exists an interest of the Union that regional disparities cannot be considered acceptable on grounds of social equity”. And lastly, “existing regional disparities can pose a threat to further integration purposes”.<sup>28</sup>

EU regional policy, together with its financial means (ERDF and ESF), has facilitated both internalisation of the European integration process and provision of input from the diverse European regions to Brussels, which paved the way for the policy to gain solid ground. In fact, Eurobarometer survey points out that the informed citizens mostly have positive opinion about the projects that were carried out by the support of EU SF.<sup>29</sup>

Reduction of regional disparities between the different regions in the EU territory is the stated aim. However, various studies show divergent accounts of the effects of the funds used for the less developed regions up to this time. In the EU, regional development means to cope with regional inequalities, by mobilizing regional resources in an optimal way. The entire EU regional policy aims at the organization of institutional set-up for EU assistance to decrease regional inequalities. However, studies have found that even though the living standards and per capita income has increased in less developed member states, the gap between rich and poor regions within individual member states and among different regions of different member states are widening.<sup>30</sup>

Until the 1980s separate funds were allocated mainly to the service of the member states in order to be able to compensate the lesser development of some of their

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<sup>28</sup> Harvey Armstrong. “Community Regional Policy”, in Juliet Lodge (ed.), *The European Community and the Challenge of the Future*, London: Pinter, 1989. Cited in Christos J. Paraskevopoulos. *Interpreting Convergence in the European Union Patterns of Collective Action, Social Learning and Europeanization*, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001, p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> European Commission. “Citizen’s Awareness and Perceptions of EU Regional Policy Report”, *Flash Eurobarometer* 384, 2013, [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_384\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_384_en.pdf). (Accessed on 16 May 2015).

<sup>30</sup> David Allen. “The Structural Funds and Cohesion Policy: Extending the Bargain to Meet New Challenges”, in H. Wallace, Mark A. Pollack and Alaistair. R. Young (eds.), *Policy-Making in the European Union. Sixth Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 229-252.

regions by using the collected funds of the Union. In fact, there were a few less developed regions of then six member states, and funds were given to the central governments of the member states, instead of individual regions. Two main structural development funds were for regional and social development, ESF and ERDF were established respectively in 1958 and 1974. Member states used these funds for their regional and social development project, in the regions which are lagging behind compared to developed industrial regions. However, the 1988 reform of the SF introduced novelties for procedures and methods for using the funds, which has created a transformative effect.<sup>31</sup>

### **2.3. 1988 Reform: 1989-1993 Period**

The current shape of the regional policy was constituted via the 1988 reform,<sup>32</sup> as a result of the Single European Act (1985), which is the precursor of the political move to the completion of the European single market (internal market). Programming in SF is composed of four stages, after the decision is taken on allocation of funds to individual states.<sup>33</sup> In the first stage national and regional development plans are prepared by member state governments. These plans constitute the basis for negotiations with the Commission. Depending on the political culture of member states, regional actors are varyingly involved in this process.<sup>34</sup> In the second stage, regional development plans are linked with the Commission's work on Community Support Frameworks (CSF), which are formal contracts for committing EU resources. These negotiations take place between member state governments and the Commission. At this stage roles of subnational actors are rather diminished.<sup>35</sup> At

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Council of the European Community. *Council Regulation (EEC) No 2052/88 of 24 June 1988 on the tasks of the Structural Funds and their effectiveness and on coordination of their activities between themselves and with the operations of the European Investment Bank and the other existing financial instruments*, 1988.

<sup>33</sup> Gary Marks. "Exploring and Explaining Variation in EU Cohesion Policy", in Liesbeth Hooghe (ed.), *Cohesion Policy and European Integration: Building Multi-Level Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.388-422, 1996, pp. 400-405.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 400.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 401.

stage three, CSFs are negotiated into operational programmes (OPs), which include detailed projects to be funded along the general priorities set forth in CSFs.<sup>36</sup> Fourth stage is about implementation and monitoring of OPs. Diverse projects are carried out in regions, such as infrastructural development projects, including communication and transport networks. Projects are also carried out to develop economic capacity by transformation of declining industries, developing job-training facilities, which necessitate involvement of public, private, central and regional actors in implementation phases.<sup>37</sup> Subnational actors are involved in these four stages depending on the administrative characteristics of the member states, from purely centralised style of Greece to rather decentralised versions of Belgium and Germany.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, main principles for the implementation of the EU regional policy were set up in the 1988 reform process. Concentration, programming, partnership and additionality are four main principles for the governance of the regional policy that still constitute its basis.<sup>39</sup>

Concentration is about allocating funds to less developed regions with pre-identified objectives and priorities. In 1988, main part of the funds (64%) was allocated to promote economic development in regions with per capita GDP is less than 75 % of the EU average. In 1988, these regions were mainly in Northern Ireland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Greece, composing one fifth of the EU total population. Other regions, either in industrial decline or suffering from long-term or youth unemployment also benefited from the funds (12% of funds). Regions in industrial decline were mainly in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Some other regions were also

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 403.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 405.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp. 400-405.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. pp. 400-405.

supported to adjust their agricultural structures for marketing and processing and rural development initiatives (11% of funds).<sup>40</sup>

Programming principle was a novelty which was strongly advocated by the Commission. It introduced a strategic and long-term approach to the regional policy. It requires preparation of multi-annual programmes which necessitates linking the development projects to a coherent national developmental strategy. These programmes are drawn up by member states in line with the EU objectives and priorities and approved by the Commission<sup>41</sup>. Application of programming principle has affected the domestic regional policy of the member states. In contrast to direct financial transfers in the forms of grants to individual projects, as it was the case before 1988, preparation of medium term regional development plans were required in order to make use of the funds by the EU member states.<sup>42</sup>

Partnership principle was a much emphasised element of all through the EU regional policy process. Partnership is about “involvement of regional and local bodies with the Union and the national authorities in the planning, formulation, and implementation of the SF”<sup>43</sup>. In fact, this is a kind of modality used among the EU, national and regional levels, and with social and economic partners, in order to ensure their participation to the allocation and use of funds in the regions. The roles of the regional authorities have increased and trilateral partnerships were established by the Commission, member states and regional authorities. Through these partnerships, strategic documents for the use of the SF are drawn up; consequently,

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<sup>40</sup> Gian Paolo Manzella and Carlos Mendez. *The Turning Points of EU Cohesion Policy*, Report Working Paper, 2009, p.15, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8\\_manzella\\_final-formatted.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8_manzella_final-formatted.pdf). (Accessed 17 May 2015).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Gary Marks. “Structural Policy in the European Community”, in Alberta M. Sbragia (ed) *Euro-Politics Institutions and Policy Making in the “New” European Community*, Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, pp. 191-224, 1992, p. 208.

<sup>43</sup> Ebru Ertugal. *Strategies for Regional Development: Challenges Facing Turkey on the Road to EU Membership*, pp.5-6, [http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi\\_turkey\\_tpq\\_id\\_40.pdf](http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_id_40.pdf). (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

operations are financed and monitored.<sup>44</sup> According to Gary Marks, the Commission tried to increase funds allocated directly to regional authorities by reducing the weight of large-scale infrastructural projects in favour of increasing support to local development-oriented operations, such as training and direct support to local business.<sup>45</sup>

Partnership principle is represented as the main tool to operate multi-level governance. Existence of this principle led some scholars to describe the EU regional policy governance as “multi-level”<sup>46</sup> in which not only “authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government – subnational, national, and supranational,”<sup>47</sup> but also “an increasing range of policy actors get opportunity to participate and have influence on EU policies”.<sup>48</sup>

Principle of additionality denotes that “regional development programmes receiving funds are supported and co-funded in addition to and not as a substitute for, existing nationally planned public expenditure”.<sup>49</sup> This means EU funds will not be used to substitute for the formerly allocated national funds. Hence, the main aim is to ensure that EU SF complement but not replace existing public expenditure of the member states that were supposed to be allocated to EU regions.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Gary Marks. “Structural Policy in the European Community”, in Alberta M. Sbragia (ed) *Euro-Politics Institutions and Policy Making in the “New” European Community*, Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992, pp. 191-224, p. 211.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Gary Marks, Liesbeth Hooghe and Kermit Blank. “European Integration from the 1980s: State-centric v. Multi-level Governance”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34:3, 1996, pp. 341-378.

<sup>47</sup> Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks. *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration* (New York and London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> Enrico Gualini. “Challenges to multi-level governance: contradictions and conflicts in the Europeanization of Italian regional policy,” *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.10, No.4 (August 2003), pp.616-636.

<sup>49</sup> Gary Marks. “Structural Policy in the European Community”, in Alberta M. Sbragia (ed) *Euro-Politics Institutions and Policy Making in the “New” European Community*, Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992, pp. 191-224, p. 211.

<sup>50</sup> Additionality, <http://insideurope.eu/node/493> (Accessed on 10 June 2015).

These four principles still constitute the backbone of EU regional policy implementation. Candidate countries for EU membership are also evaluated by the level of implementation of these principles, in addition to the member states.

As a result, 1988 regional policy reforms strengthened the Commission by creating links between the use of SF and regional authorities and challenged the central decision-making status of member states.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, regional authorities and subnational governments directly get into touch with the Commission and their voice is heard more strongly at the Union level. In a sense, regional governments build up coalitions with the Commission and the European Parliament in bargaining with member state governments.<sup>52</sup> Gary Marks considered this complete overhaul of the regional policy in 1988 as a clear example of “an emerging complex, multi-layered decision-making process involving both supra- and sub level political entities, meaning the multi-level governance”.<sup>53</sup>

Regarding the 1988 reforms Mark Pollack presents a counter argument. He argues that the interests of net contributor member states, such as Britain, France and Germany have changed as a result of the accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal. The consequent increase in amount and redistributive effect of the funds changed the preferences of the former member states. Enlargement has caused the regions of “net contributor” members to lose their share of funds to the regions of new comer states, hence the Commission oversight for the funds going to “new poor” member states was regarded preferable. Commission’s increasing powers on setting principles and overseeing the implementation of programmes for the use of the EU SF also fitted to the national interests of wealthy member states for preventing wasteful use of EU resources.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, Pollack accepts that regional mobilisation has

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<sup>51</sup> Gary Marks. “Structural Policy in the European Community”, in Alberta M. Sbragia (ed) *Euro-Politics Institutions and Policy Making in the “New” European Community*, Washington, D.C. The Brookings Institution, 1992, pp. 191-224, p. 212.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 218.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 221.

<sup>54</sup> Gary Marks. *Regional Actors in an Intergovernmental Play: The Making and Implementation of EC Structural Policy* in Rhodes C. and S. Mazey, *The State of the European Union Vol.3 Building a European Polity*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995, 361-390, p.372.

increased, but claims that this mobilization has varied across regions and member states. Degree and form participation of regional actors varied according to national characteristics. Pollack pinpoints the “pre-existing distribution of power resources and resource dependencies among central, regional and local governments in member states, the democratic legitimacy of certain regions accruing from popularly elected regional governments and varying economic importance and political skills of different regions allowing them to lobby Brussels directly and effectively”.<sup>55</sup> He further claims that despite the principles of partnership and additionality, fund regulations adopted by the Council keep the power of the member states intact. Maps of eligible regions for funds are identified in intergovernmental bargaining, followed by the bilateral bargaining between the Commission and each member state.<sup>56</sup> Later on these eligible regions and central government prepare support frameworks in partnership. In this process, instead of the Commission, member states decide on which regions participate in the planning and implementation of the CSFs.<sup>57</sup>

As a result, 1988 reform of the EU regional policy is a complete overhaul of the EU regional policy. The reform paved the way for a full-fledged regional policy. Main principles for funds allocations, namely, concentration, programming, partnership and additionality has affected the programming and implementation of the EU SF in the EU member states.

#### **2.4. 1993 Reform: 1994-1999 Period**

Main novelty of the 1993 reform was the creation of a cohesion fund with the Maastricht Treaty. The fund was used to finance mainly infrastructural projects related to environment and communication in member states whose per capita GDP is lower than 90% of the EU average. Initially Spain, Greece, Ireland and Portugal benefited from the fund. All the territories of the eligible countries started to benefit

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p. 376.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p. 376.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 377.

from the fund and the member states themselves decide on the amount of funds allocated to individual regions.<sup>58</sup>

Establishment of cohesion fund was regarded as a “side-payment” for the consent of economically weaker member states for the completion of the single market and the economic and monetary union, which is the prominent argument of the state-centric view. The reform of 1993 brought forward some new objectives as well. A fisheries guidance fund and two new priorities were introduced. These were workers adaptation to industrial changes and changes in production system and support for sparsely populated Nordic areas (in Sweden and Finland).<sup>59</sup>Inclusion of these two new priorities are very much linked with the further enlargement of the EU, when Finland, Sweden, Austria became member states of the EU. Regions of these states had to benefit from the SF somehow, and as the per capita GDP of their regions were higher than the %75 of the EU average, those could be eligible for the EU SF only by introducing new priorities for the regional policy.

With regard to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SF in member states, Commission was to supervise the expenditures in order to ensure “value for money”.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, the designation of eligible regions for allocation of funds on support for regions in industrial decline and rural development objectives were left to the member states. Another issue is that the wording on additionality principle was changed. It was loosened by providing exceptions on the macroeconomic circumstances. Pollack argues that “this amendment appears to leave member states more room to decrease structural expenditure”.<sup>61</sup> Partnership principle was also slightly amended so that “economic and social partners would also be

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<sup>58</sup> Gian Paolo Manzella, Carlos Mendez. *The Turning Points of EU Cohesion Policy*, Report Working Paper, 2009, pp.15-16,  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8\\_manzella\\_final-formatted.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8_manzella_final-formatted.pdf).  
(Accessed on 17 May 2015).

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Mark Pollack. “Regional Actors in an Intergovernmental Play: The Making and Implementation of EC Structural Policy” in Rhodes C. and S. Mazey, *The State of the European Union Vol.3 Building a European Polity*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995, 361-390, p.382.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p. 383.

included depending on the framework of each member state's national rules and current practices".<sup>62</sup>

Pollack further claims that "1993 reforms responded largely to the concerns of the member states. Member states asked for efficiency and value for money in the implementation of funds and regained their control over key aspects of implementation which was given to the Commission by 1988 reform".<sup>63</sup> He thinks that interests of member states and institutional rules they established are still the determining factors in all aspects of EU regional policy, including redistributive bargains, and adoption and implementation of EU SF reforms.<sup>64</sup> However, member states' commitments to the principles of concentration, programming, partnership and additionality continued, albeit those were watered down to a certain extent. At least, with the partnership principle, the role of subnational actors in implementation of regional policy was maintained.

## 2.5. 2000-2006 Period

Four main aims have underpinned the implementation of the EU SF in 2000-2006. These aims were shaped as a result of hard economic conditions, fiscal pressures and growing unemployment.<sup>65</sup> The first was to increase concentration of support. This led to a reduction in the number of objectives, namely "(1) development of disadvantaged regions with an average per capita GDP less than 75% of the EU average, (2) economic and social conversion of regions with declining industrial and rural areas, and (3) human resource training outside the less developed regions".<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p.384.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p.385.

<sup>65</sup> Gian Paolo Manzella and Carlos Mendez. *The Turning Points of EU Cohesion Policy*, Report Working Paper, 2009, p.16, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8\\_manzella\\_final-formatted.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8_manzella_final-formatted.pdf). (Accessed 17 May 2015).

<sup>66</sup> Dermott Hodson. "Regional and Structural Funds", in Erik Jones, Anand Menon and Stephen Weatherill, *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p.498.

EU initiatives were also reduced to four (INTERREG, EQUAL, LEADER and URBAN). Commission published guidelines to steer member state priorities for programming of the EU SF. Secondly, implementation was left to member states by assigning them the core responsibility for programme content, management, monitoring, evaluation and control. The third aim was to simplify programming and implementation. OPs would specify only priority axes, while details of the measures would be developed later in a separate programme complement after OPs are approved. However, in order to reinforce the effectiveness and control of expenditure, monitoring and reporting requirements, evaluations of programmes at different stages and “performance reserves” in the form of extra funding for regions successfully using fund were created.<sup>67</sup>

In this financial period historically the largest enlargement of the EU took place. EU15 became EU27 with the accession of 12 new states during this process. Commission’s role started to increase together with the differing capabilities of regional governments in the new member states. In fact, budgetary bargaining would become much harsher in the upcoming periods. During this and subsequent periods, the budgetary share of the SF did not increase very much. In fact, arguably as a result of deteriorating economic conditions in the EU regions, net payer states do no longer want to increase the amount of cohesion allocation to the less developed member states.

## **2.6. 2007-2013 Period**

In this period, a novelty was that all EU regions were made eligible for the EU SF. Objectives were identified as (1) convergence, (2) regional competitiveness and employment and (3) European territorial cooperation. Number of eligible member states for the cohesion fund has increased due to the recent Eastern enlargement. In fact, enlargement with twelve new member states was a strategic political

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<sup>67</sup> Gian Paolo Manzella and Carlos Mendez. *The Turning Points of EU Cohesion Policy*, Report Working Paper, 2009, pp.17-18, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8\\_manzella\\_final-formatted.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8_manzella_final-formatted.pdf). (Accessed on 17 May 2015).

development which has an inevitable and politically sensitive consequence of budgetary shift in regional policy resources from the EU15 towards the new member states in the EU27.<sup>68</sup> In this period a more strategic approach was adopted for targeting EU priorities, in line with the Lisbon strategy focusing on full employment and competitiveness. Member states agreed to focus the available resources on specific categories of expenditure directly related to the objectives of Lisbon strategy.<sup>69</sup>

Most resources were targeted on the convergence objective (80%, including the cohesion fund), the majority of which continued to focus on less-developed regions with a GDP per head less than 75% of the EU average. Only INTERREG continued to be implemented as the Union initiative within the new territorial cooperation objective. The previous instruments linked to rural development and fisheries were integrated into the common agricultural policy, and were left out of the scope of the EU SF.<sup>70</sup>

All regions outside the convergence objective became also eligible for the EU SF support. Full autonomy was granted to the member states to decide which regions are to be included for the objectives of competitiveness and employment. Cohesion fund was also integrated into programming, in order to avoid duplications and strengthen its effectiveness. Procedures related to programmes and use of funds was simplified.<sup>71</sup> This would facilitate procedures for less developed regions in the new member states whose administrative capacities are weak.

## **2.7. 2014-2020 Period**

In the current period of the EU regional policy definition of objectives and eligibility of the EU regions for funds did not change. However, there is a strong link established between the Europe 2020 strategy and the use of SF. The main focus of

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 19

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

the SF would be to invest in operations that would bring economic growth and decrease unemployment. Europe 2020 strategy aims to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Its targets are to “achieve 75% employment, allocate 3% of the EU's GDP to R&D (innovation), create 20% of energy consumption from renewable resources, increase energy efficiency by 20%, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, reduce early school leavers to under 10%, increase university graduates to 40% and reduce number of poor people by 20 million”.<sup>72</sup>

EU SF are allocated to regions according to three categories, in which all EU regions are eligible for the funds. These are “(1) less developed regions, whose GDP per capita is less than 75% of the EU average; (2) transition regions, whose GDP per capita is between 75% and 90% of the EU average; and (3) more developed regions, whose GDP per capita is above 90% of the EU average”<sup>73</sup>. Less developed regions will use 53% of the SF resources. Transition regions will use 10% and developed regions 15% of the total funds. The share of the cohesion fund will be 21% of the total SF allocations.<sup>74</sup> As a result of the devastating economic crisis in Europe starting from 2008, the budgetary allocation for the EU SF did not increase much for the current period. It could also be argued that the regional development focus for less developed regions is rather disappearing in the EU since there is an increasing emphasis on the Europe-wide “competitiveness” strategies.

As a result, reforms of 1988 introduced a unique multi-level governance model, involving collective participation of vertical partners (EU, national, regional and local authorities) and horizontal stakeholders (business representatives, trade unions, NGOs, etc.) in the formulation and delivery of the EU SF programmes. Organisational and operational systems for implementation of the EU SF differed among member states due to their institutional and cultural characteristics. However, implementation of the SF was to a certain extent uniformed in member states by the common rules of multi-annual planning, concentration, partnership, additionality and

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<sup>72</sup> Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy. *Cohesion Policy and the Europe 2020 Strategy*, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/eu2020\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/eu2020_en.htm) (Accessed on 16 May 2015).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

administrative capacity.<sup>75</sup> And application of these uniform rules can be considered as evidences of Europeanization of the regional policies in the member states. Especially partnership principle is very much emphasised while allocating funds to the European regions by incorporating subnational (regional and local) authorities in preparation of regional development programmes. According to Gary Marks, “allocation of budget for objectives and regions is determined by bargaining between central government and Commission officials, in that some subnational governments could exert some degree of influence over both of them”.<sup>76</sup>

All in all, EU member states have been using the EU SF for almost fifty years. The existing academic literature does not agree on the impact of these funds on less developed regions. For example, the research done by Michele Boldrin and Fabio Canova as well as Andres Rodriguez-Pose and Ugo Fratesi put forward that there was not any substantial improvement in the social and economic conditions of the less developed regions.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, the academic works of John Bachtler and Grzegorz Gorzelak show that use of EU SF produced positive effects on the development of lagging regions and increased per capita income for citizens.<sup>78</sup> Table 1 provides an overview of the development levels of most and least developed regions in the EU member states. It shows that there are varying degrees of regional

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<sup>75</sup> Gian Paolo Manzella and Carlos Mendez. *The Turning Points of EU Cohesion Policy*, Report Working Paper, 2009, p.22, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8\\_manzella\\_final-formatted.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8_manzella_final-formatted.pdf) (Accessed on 17 May 2015).

<sup>76</sup> Gary Marks. “Exploring and Explaining Variation in EU Cohesion Policy”, in Liesbeth Hooghe (ed.), *Cohesion Policy and European Integration: Building Multi-Level Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp.388-422, p. 392.

<sup>77</sup> Michele Boldrin and Fabio Canova. “Inequality and Convergence in Europe’s Regions: Reconsidering European Regional Policies”, *Economic Policy*, Vol. 16 (32), 2001, pp. 207-253; Andres Rodriguez-Pose, and Ugo Fratesi. “Between Development and Social Policies: the Impact of European Structural Funds in Objective 1 Regions”, *European Economy Group Working Papers*, (28/2003), 2003. Cited in Adnan Çimen. “Türkiye’nin Bölgesel Kalkınma Politikalarının Avrupalılaşması”, *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Sayı 38, 2013, pp. 67-85. <http://ideas.repec.org/p/eeg/euroeg/28.html> (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>78</sup> John Bachtler, and Grzegorz Gorzelak. “Reforming EU Cohesion Policy a Reappraisal of the Performance of the Structural Funds”, *Policy Studies*, Vol.28 (4), 2007, pp. 309-326; Robert Barro and Xavier Sala-i-Martin. “Convergence Across States and Regions”, *The Brooking Institution*, Vol. 22 (1), 1991, pp. 107-182. Cited in Adnan Çimen. “Türkiye’nin Bölgesel Kalkınma Politikalarının Avrupalılaşması”, *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Sayı 38, 2013, pp. 67-85, <http://ideas.repec.org/p/eeg/euroeg/28.html> (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

disparities among the regions of the EU member states. Hence, it could be said that the use of the EU SF could not totally eliminate these disparities until now. Transformation of the EU regional policy objectives and principles usually took place in order to ensure efficiency of funds and increase competitiveness of the EU market integration, rather than redistribution of the European wealth.

**Table 1: Per capita GDP of EU Member States' Richest and Poorest NUTS 2 regions (2011) (Euro)**

	<b>Richest region</b>	<b>Per capita GDP</b>	<b>Poorest region</b>	<b>Per capita GDP</b>	<b>Ratio between two regions (%)</b>
<b>EU-28</b>	-	25,100	-	25,100	-
<b>Belgium</b>	Capital Brussels (BE10)	62,000	Hainaut (BE32)	22,100	35.6
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Yugozapaden (BG41)	8,800	Severozapaden (BG31)	3,200	36.3
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Praha (CZ01)	31,200	Severozápad(CZ04)	11,500	36.8
<b>Denmark</b>	Hovedstaden (DK01)	52,500	Sjælland(DK02)	30,200	57.5
<b>Germany</b>	Hamburg (DE60)	52,500	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	21,800	41.5
	<b>Richest region</b>	<b>Per capita GDP</b>	<b>Poorest region</b>	<b>Per capita GDP</b>	<b>Ratio between two regions (%)</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	Southern and Eastern (IE02)	35,500	Border, Midland and Western(IE01)	23,700	66.7
<b>Greece</b>	Attiki (EL30)	24,800	Ipeiros (EL21)	12,800	51.6
<b>Spain</b>	País Vasco (ES21)	30,500	Extremadura (ES43)	15,700	51.4
<b>France</b>	Ile de France (FR10)	51,200	Guyane (FR93)	14,800	28.9
<b>Croatia</b>	Kontinentalna Hrvatska (HR04)	10,600	Jadranska Hrvatska (HR03)	10,000	94.3
<b>Italy</b>	Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano/Bozen (ITH1)	37,700	Campania (ITF3)	16,000	42.4
<b>Hungary</b>	Közép-Magyarország (HU10)	16,200	Észak-Magyarország (HU31)	5,900	36.4
<b>Netherlands</b>	Gröningen (NL11)	50,400	Flevoland(NL23)	26,100	51.7
<b>Austria</b>	Wien	45,600	Burgenland	24,000	52.6
<b>Poland</b>	Mazowieckie (PL12)	15,700	Lubelskie(PL31)	6,500	41.4
<b>Portugal</b>	Lisboa (PT17)	22,500	Norte (PT11)	13,000	57.7
<b>Romania</b>	București - Ilfov (RO32)	15,500	Nord-Est (RO21)	3,600	23.2
<b>Slovenia</b>	Zahodna Slovenija (SI02)	20,900	Vzhodna Slovenija (SI01)	14,700	70.3
<b>Slovakia</b>	Bratislavský kraj (SK01)	31,500	Východné Slovensko (SK04)	8,700	27.6

continued

	<b>Richest region</b>	<b>Per capita GDP</b>	<b>Poorest region</b>	<b>Per capita GDP</b>	<b>Ratio between two regions (%)</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	Stockholm (SE11)	56,200	Norra Mellansverige(SE12)	34,400	61.2
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Inner London (UKI1)	86,000	West Wales and the Walleys (UKL1)	17,200	20
<b>Turkey</b>	Istanbul	11,300	Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkari	2,900	25.6

Source: Eurostat, [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=nama\\_r\\_e2gdp&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=nama_r_e2gdp&lang=en). Accessed on 5 June 2015 and own calculations.

Note: At the last column, the bigger the ratio between the richest and poorest regions, the smaller the regional development disparity.

The regional policy in the EU is streamlined every seven years with the renewal of the EU multi-annual financial framework setting up the budget for the upcoming seven years. In the most-recent regional policy period (2014-2020), all of the regions of the EU will somehow benefit from the SF (totalling 351.8 billion Euros) with varying amounts of funds. In this regard, convergence regions, which are the less developed regions (covering 119 million people) in the EU having GDP less than 75% of the EU average, will use 182.2 billion Euro (68% of the SF budget). Transition regions (covering 72.4 million people), with a GDP between 75%-90% of the EU average will be able to use 35.4 billion Euros (11.6% of SF budget). Competitiveness regions (307 million people) with a GDP more than 90% of the EU average will be allocated 54.3 billion Euros (15.8% of the SF budget). In addition, cohesion fund, which provides funds for infrastructural development to the EU member states whose GDP per capita is less than 75% of the EU average, will amount to 63.4 billion Euros, where for the development of the territorial cooperation among the neighbouring EU member states, a total of 10,2 billion Euro will be allocated.<sup>79</sup> While using the EU SF in 2014-2020 member states will focus on the achievement of the Europe 2020 agenda goals. Europe 2020 agenda aims to stimulate economic growth in the EU by emphasising “investments in education,

<sup>79</sup> European Commission. An Introduction to EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, 2014, p. 7 [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/basic/basic\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/basic/basic_2014_en.pdf).

research and innovation, low-carbon economy, job creation and poverty reduction”<sup>80</sup>. Thematic objectives related to the Europe 2020 are “research, technological development and innovation; information and communication technology; competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises (SME); low carbon economy; climate change adaptation; environment and resource efficiency; sustainable transport and network infrastructures; sustainable and quality employment and labour mobility; social inclusion, combating poverty and anti-discrimination; education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning; institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration”.<sup>81</sup>

Consequently, the 2013 Regulation on the EU SF also sets out investment priorities and ex-ante conditionalities related to the thematic objectives, latter of which need to be fulfilled before a member state’s regions are entitled to benefit from the EU SF.<sup>82</sup> These conditionalities in general foresee that member states have to prepare or already own various multi-annual plans, strategies and established infrastructures for the use of funds in line with the Europe 2020 thematic priorities. In this regard, the SF are planned to create an “added value” in line with the EU “objectives”, instead of a massive support for the less developed regions in the member states. This “added value” concept was introduced by the Commission in order to increase the impact of the SF. This means that the EU SF should be allocated to fully realise European integration, since it appeared that it is beyond the capacity of the EU SF to bring less developed regions of the EU to the level of the developed regions.

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<sup>80</sup> European Commission. An Introduction to EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, 2014, p. 7 [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/basic/basic\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/basic/basic_2014_en.pdf); Council of the European Union. *Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006*, OJ L 347, p. 321, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0320:0469:EN:PDF>. (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

## 2.8. Evaluation of the Changes in the EU's Regional Policy

The EU regulations on SF adopted in 2013 set forth that the EU will work towards achieving the targets of Europe 2020 development strategy. It will focus on investment on key areas for growth.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, the EU funds will be used to support investments in every region for increasing competitiveness, expanding employment, improving social inclusion and protecting environment. All regions and member states would be eligible for the funds and support would be differentiated between regions based on their level of economic development measured by GDP per capita. Due to the impacts of global economic crisis started in 2008 on the EU member states, the EU budget was not increased for the current period. Therefore, concentration of funds is regarded crucial to achieve visible and sound development.<sup>84</sup> Existing resources will be transferred to key growth sectors, innovation and research, digital agenda, support for SMEs and low-carbon economy (energy efficiency and renewable energies). Trans-European transport links and key environmental infrastructure projects will continue to be financed through the cohesion fund. In the field of employment, training and life-long learning, education and social inclusion (at least 20% of the ESF) will be the priorities. Youth employment will be a key target by supporting employment guarantees.<sup>85</sup> Another novelty is the encouragement for the use of financial instruments to give SMEs more support and access to credit. Loans, guarantees and equity/venture capital will be supported by EU funds.<sup>86</sup>

As it was observed throughout the years of implementation of EU regional policy some transformations could be discerned with regard to the change in mentality to approach to concepts of “regional disparities”, “efficiency” and “equity”. A novel concept was introduced with the EU 2000 Lisbon Strategy called as “competitiveness”, which has rather a larger implementation area than regional

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<sup>83</sup> Regional Policy Inforegio. *Cohesion Policy and the Europe 2020 strategy*, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/eu2020\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/eu2020_en.htm) (Accessed on 19 June 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

development and may in fact work against the benefit of least developed regions. Policies of promoting competitiveness of regions and states may prioritize investments in certain economically advanced regions in order to realize economic growth in a short period of time. Economically disadvantaged regions may not be able to attract funds when global economic crisis prioritizes economic growth through promoting competitiveness rather than reducing regional discrepancies which requires extra funds at the EU and/or national levels. This fact is also attested by the debates among the EU member states who are net contributors and net beneficiaries of the EU budget. Hence, helping lagging regions to catch up the developed ones is losing its prominence. While net beneficiaries claim that EU cohesion spending is necessary to support the development of poorer regions, net contributors maintain that efficiency is important. This argument can be regarded as a retreat from the initial goals of regional policy by reducing the concept of effectiveness solely to the economic objective of efficiency.<sup>87</sup>

There are also concerns whether progress in enhancing growth and boosting competitiveness in the EU as a whole helps to achieve the equity objective. Claire Dhéret argues that “benefits of growth and increased competitiveness at EU level are not shared equally between regions and reducing disparities in per capita GDP between regions does not necessarily bring about more social inclusion and reduced inequality within regions”. Gaps between regions may narrow down but income inequalities may continue at sub-regional level, which cannot be detected by the per capita GDP indicators.<sup>88</sup>

## 2.9. Conclusion

In this chapter the transformation of the EU’s regional policy, which is also called as cohesion policy or structural policy was discussed. Regional policy, being a key

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<sup>87</sup> Claire Dhéret. “What next for EU Cohesion Policy? Going ‘beyond GDP’ to deliver greater well-being”, *European Policy Centre*, Policy Brief March 2011, p.3, 2011, [http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub\\_1243\\_what\\_next\\_for\\_eu\\_cohesion\\_policy.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1243_what_next_for_eu_cohesion_policy.pdf) (Accessed on 9 January 2014).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

policy area in the EU, aims to reduce disparities between levels of development of European regions and backwardness of less developed regions. In this regard, European regions whose per capita income is less than the European average were supported in varying degrees by the EU SF. The main principles of the EU regional policy, namely, partnership, concentration, additionality and programming constitute the main elements of implementation of the EU SF. These principles are important in the sense that during the accession process and upon accession, Turkey has to adopt these principles while using the EU SF. In addition, even though the regions which benefit from the funds and the allocation of funds differ in individual financing periods, the main objective of removing regional developmental disparities remained, albeit the main concepts regarding regional development evolved from “redistribution” to “competitiveness”. In the next chapter, a short synopsis of the historical background of development efforts including the regional ones in Turkey will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **TURKEY'S REGIONAL POLICY BEFORE 1999**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Regional policy in its essence is not a novelty for Turkey that was introduced by the EU accession process. In fact, Turkish development efforts focusing on the least developed regions date back to the establishment of the Republic.

Turkey has been marked by great economic and social discrepancies among its regions, although there has not been any concrete differentiation in terms of governing regions in the territorial context. Various efforts have been given by the central government since the establishment of the Republic and a modest level of development has been achieved throughout these years. Regional policy has been one tool of the government which could not be effectively used due to various political concerns, albeit various policy measures were taken to promote economic growth in less developed regions. National development programmes, rural development projects and provincial development plans were prepared. Priority development areas (provinces) were designated and supported by infrastructure establishment and through investment incentives to the private capital. These developments are important in order to grasp the current regional development efforts taking place in the EU accession process.

In this chapter, a short overview of the regional policy development in Turkey will be provided. This chapter is divided into four parts, consisting of the pre-planned period before 1960; the planned period in the 1960s, the period between 1970 and 1983; the period between 1983 and 1999 and Turkey's EU perspective in the 1990s, which represent itself with the implementation of regional development plans.

### 3.2. Pre-planned Period before 1960

Turkey's economic and social development efforts date back to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 after a long and devastating war which has deeply affected economic and social bases of the country. The territories of the Turkish Republic have been much smaller than its predecessor the Ottoman Empire and the economic resources were also very limited. Industrialisation as an economical tool was considered to be the main vehicle for the empowerment of the state, which is unitary in its structuring. Since no strong private capital was available in the country, centralisation and public investments were seen as the primary tools for ensuring economic growth.

Territorial organisation of the Turkish state during the period of state-led and then later on in the period of import-substitution based industrialisation was unitary. Both state norms and approaches to economic development resulted in a centralised governing system.<sup>89</sup> According to Ebru Ertugal, this was due to the “anxiety in maintaining national unity against political Islam and ethnic separatism”<sup>90</sup>

The territorial administrative system consisted of two levels; central and local, which is still in force today. The local administration has three levels: provinces, municipalities and villages. Provincial administrations are governed by the appointed governors. Municipalities exist both in cities and districts. Village administrations are in the rural areas. “There is no governing relationship between these local units and activities of the local administrations are not coordinated”.<sup>91</sup> Nor any regional

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<sup>89</sup> Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal. “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, p. 9. <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf>. (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

<sup>90</sup> Ebru Ertugal. “Europeanization and multi-level governance in Turkey”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 10:1, 2010, pp.97-110, p. 98.

<sup>91</sup> Birgül A. Güler. *Yerel Yönetimler: Liberal Açıklamalara Eleştirel Yaklaşım (Local Governments: A critical Approach to Liberal Explanations)* (Ankara: Türkiye ve Orta Doğu Amme İdaresi Enstitüsü, 1998) p. 197. Cited in Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal. “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf>. (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

government was established then and now, due to the fears that ethnic problems may erupt and the unitary nature of the state and security of the nation may come into danger.<sup>92</sup> Consequently, centralisation was legitimated due to external and internal threats to the state and its borders.<sup>93</sup>

In this period, all infrastructural investments were financed by the state budget and also economic enterprises were established by the state, in order to develop a national economy.<sup>94</sup> Moving of the capital from Istanbul to Ankara and establishment of state-led industrial enterprises in Central Anatolia and inner western regions and continuing efforts to build a railroad system connecting various regions of the country were a few reflections of the regional policy efforts at that period.<sup>95</sup> State-led economic investments at that time helped some cities gradually become centres of growth, such as Kayseri, Eskişehir, Zonguldak and Karabük.<sup>96</sup>

In addition to state investments, newly emerging private sector also started to make investments, but those were concentrated mostly in Istanbul and the Marmara region. Hence, the state tried to make public investments diffuse to all regions of the

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<sup>92</sup> A. Nazif Demiröz “Bölge Valiliği Üzerine” (On Regional Governorates), *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*, No. 4, Vol. 23, 1990, pp. 55-70. Cited in Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal, (2004), “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf>. (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

<sup>93</sup> Sonay Bayramoğlu. “Türkiye’de Bölgesel Politikaların Gelişimi (Development of Regional Policies in Turkey)”, in Menaf Turan (ed.), *Bölge Kalkınma Ajansları Nedir Ne Değildir? (What is (not) Regional Development Agencies)* Paragraf Yayınevi: Ankara, 2005, pp. 35-120, p. 43.

<sup>94</sup> Korel Göymen, *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p.1, [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

<sup>95</sup> Ayda Eraydın “Roles of Central Government Policies and the new forms of local governance in the emergence of industrial districts”, in Michael Taylor and Daniel Felsenstein (eds), *Promoting Local Growth*, Ashgate: Aldershot, 2001. Cited in Korel Göymen, “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi(Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p. 3, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplantı/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>96</sup> Korel Göymen, *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p.2 [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

country, especially in the East but private investments could not be effectively encouraged.<sup>97</sup>

The Second World War, another economically devastating war, has also negatively affected the socio-economic and regional development in the country. Scarce financial resources of the State urged to limit and reduce support for investments. Decreasing the regional development discrepancies was not the main motive or concern of investments for the private sector as well. As such, in the 1950s, mechanization of agricultural production reduced the demand for agricultural workers in the rural areas, and migration to the cities started. This has caused social and economic disparities increase in the urban regions in addition to the disparities among the western and eastern regions.<sup>98</sup>

The state-led industrialisation turned into industrialisation based on an import substitution model in the late 1950s, in order to assist the private capital to flourish. The idea of regional development throughout this period is centred on ‘growth centres’. This approach was suitable for the centralised nature of the administrative structure. Industrial and infrastructure investments and incentives for the private sector were made available for selected provinces to make them centres of attraction in their region and promote industrial growth.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Korel Göymen. *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p.2, [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

<sup>98</sup> Ayda Eraydın. “Roles of Central Government Policies and the new forms of local governance in the emergence of industrial districts”, in Michael Taylor and Daniel Felsenstein (eds). *Promoting Local Growth*, Ashgate: Aldershot, 2001. Cited in Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi(Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p. 4, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>99</sup> Michael N. Danielson and Ruşen Keleş. “The Politics of Rapid Urbanization: Government and Growth in Modern Turkey” (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1985) p. 210. Cited in Ebru Ertugal. “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf> (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

### 3.3. Adoption of a Planned Approach to Regional Policy in the 1960s

Starting from 1963, Turkey introduced five year development plans in order to implement policies for achieving economic and social development and also to some extent for reducing regional disparities. In line with the development plans, various regional plans were prepared to activate the capacities of regions in the country. Preparation of five year development plans and accompanying investment programmes were coordinated by the State Planning Organization (SPO), which was established in 1960. SPO was responsible for regional development as well. In these plans, reduction of regional disparities was also emphasised. However, this emphasis was carefully framed by the argument of the efficient use of national resources. The plans aimed to accelerate national economic development, especially by paying attention to indigenous potential of different regions to achieve a more balanced economy.<sup>100</sup>

In this context, in the 1960s, regional development plans were introduced for regions such as East Marmara, Antalya, Çukurova, Zonguldak and Keban (Elazığ). Leading economic sectors varied in these regional plans; industry was emphasized in Zonguldak and East Marmara; tourism in Antalya and agriculture in Çukurova and Keban. The role of local actors and administrations was rather limited while preparing these plans; instead the SPO and central government bodies have prepared and implemented the development plans.<sup>101</sup> In fact, these regions have been already at a certain level of development.<sup>102</sup> When it comes to other regions, the state provided the entrepreneurs who are planning to invest in less-developed areas with various incentives, such as reduction of income tax, credit with low interest rates; however, the central government usually was the predominant investor in these regions. All in all, except for the East Marmara, these mentioned preliminary

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<sup>100</sup> Korel Göymen. *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p.2, [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

<sup>101</sup> State Planning Organisation. Annual Programme, Ankara, 2000. Cited in Korel Göymen. *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p. 4, [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

<sup>102</sup> Korel Göymen. *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p. 4 [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

regional development plans could not be either implemented or completed, either due to lack of resources or political commitment or regional administrative capacities.<sup>103</sup>

In the planned period, regional policy has been centred on the efforts for achieving economic development of selected provinces as “growth centres”. Several regional plans and regional development projects were introduced which included public investments and support for small enterprises in these growth centres. However later on in 1968, with establishment of the priority development areas department in the SPO and consequent focus on provinces for development purposes rather than the regions, the practice of preparation of regional development plans was discontinued. In fact, in Turkish even the term “region” was refrained and instead the term “area” was used, in order to eliminate unwanted connotations.<sup>104</sup>

Provinces mainly in the eastern parts of the country were accepted as priority development areas by the decision of the Council of Ministers in 1968, and since then, investment incentives have been mainly assigned to these areas.<sup>105</sup> Korel Göymen asserts that “in this way, the emphasis in public investments shifted from growth centres to priority development areas. However, these areas were defined at provincial level instead of regional scale, and in the determination of them, political criteria rather than economic development level prevailed.”<sup>106</sup> This could be as a result of often changes of the political parties in power.

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<sup>103</sup> Sonay Bayramođlu. “Türkiye’de Bölgesel Politikaların Gelişimi (Development of Regional Policies in Turkey)”, in Menaf Turan (ed.), *Bölge Kalkınma Ajansları Nedir Ne Değildir? (What is (not) Regional Development Agencies)* Paragraf Yayınevi: Ankara, 2005, pp. 35-120, pp. 57-58.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p. 60.

<sup>105</sup> Ayda Eraydın. *Bölgesel Gelişme Sektör Raporu (Regional Development Sectoral Report)* (Ankara: DPT); 1982, p. 99. Cited in Ebru Ertugal. “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf> (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

<sup>106</sup> Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p.3, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

The main political strategy document, namely the national development plans, points out to the main line of thinking in those years. The first national development plan (1963-1967) foresaw state infrastructural investments and provision of social services for the less developed regions in order to reduce regional discrepancies. However, a condition was set to the plan that infrastructure investments to these regions should not hamper economic growth target of 7%. This meant that investments to lagging regions should be justified that those would not exceed a certain limit. This plan aimed to prevent rapid urbanisation through social development and land reform. The emphasis on regional planning was strong in this plan.<sup>107</sup>

Second national plan (1968-1972), on the other hand, aimed to encourage village group centres in rural areas and channel public investments to these centres. In addition, attracting private investments to these areas was envisaged by completing infrastructural investments from budgetary resources. In this plan period, much more emphasis was given to the urbanisation. Restructuring of urban areas by establishment of land parcelling offices and encouraging mass housing projects were planned. During this period, the practice of preparation of individual regional plans were discontinued and instead developed versus less developed region classification was made, together with designation of priority development areas.<sup>108</sup>

### **3.4. Turkey's Regional Policy between 1970 and 1983**

In the 1970s Turkey's economy has been affected by global economic imbalances, and currency shortages. These conditions have also affected the approach to the regional policy in the respective national development plans. In the third plan (1973-1977), the dominant argument was "to try to eliminate regional discrepancies in the short term would cause economically ineffective allocation of resources and slow

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<sup>107</sup> Sonay Bayramođlu. "Türkiye'de Bölgesel Politikaların Gelişimi (Development of Regional Policies in Turkey)", in Menaf Turan (ed.), *Bölge Kalkınma Ajansları Nedir Ne Değildir? (What is (not) Regional Development Agencies)* Paragraf Yayınevi: Ankara, 2005, pp. 35-120, pp.60-61.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p.60-61.

down the capital accumulation and general economic development”<sup>109</sup>. It was proposed to select places for national scale investments by using economic criteria. Therefore, incentives for private enterprise attracted wider attention than direct public investments in the development of disadvantaged areas”<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, it was also proposed to implement policies to keep rural population in place by preventing overpopulation of the urban areas.<sup>111</sup>

The results showed that the western parts of the country, especially Istanbul alone accounted for 49% of all major industrial establishments in the country in 1975. In the 1970s Istanbul received 41% of financial and physical incentives.<sup>112</sup> In 1980, 60% of all public credits were allocated to the most developed regions in the west, while Eastern Anatolia received only 4%.<sup>113</sup> Similarly, in the fourth plan (1979-1983), the idea to design different regional policies continued, however, economic efficiency criteria for investing in less developed regions was also maintained.<sup>114</sup> Hence, if the profitability of investments is not high, it would not be worth to make them.

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<sup>109</sup> State Planning Organisation. *Annual Programme*, Ankara, 2000. Cited in Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)” , in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p.3, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplantı/ab-ve-bölgesel-yönetişim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Korel Göymen. *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p.7, [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

<sup>112</sup> Birgül A. Güler (1998) *Yerel Yönetimler: Liberal Açıklamalara Eleştirel Yaklaşım (Local Governments: A critical Approach to Liberal Explanations)* (Ankara: Türkiye ve Orta Doğu Amme İdaresi Enstitüsü), p.197. Cited in Ertugal, Ebru(2004) *Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey* ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna, 24-26 June 2004, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf>. Accessed on 8 June 2015.

<sup>113</sup> Michael N. Danielson, and Ruşen Keleş. *The Politics of Rapid Urbanization: Government and Growth in Modern Turkey*, New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1985, p. 210. Cited in Ebru Ertugal. “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf> (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

<sup>114</sup> Sonay Bayramoğlu. “Türkiye’de Bölgesel Politikaların Gelişimi (Development of Regional Policies in Turkey)”, in Menaf Turan (ed.), *Bölge Kalkınma Ajansları Nedir Ne Değildir? (What is (not) Regional Development Agencies)* Paragraf Yayınevi: Ankara, 2005, pp. 35-120, pp.60-61.

Lack of administrative capacity and institution-building to implement regional plans were an important factor that decreased the importance of regional policy in this period. This weakness could be remedied in the long run by activating regional resources and strengthening local governments. This way of thinking shaped the main strategy of regional policy in the following period. Therefore, in the next planning period, “local development projects gained more importance than the special development plans imposed from the top”.<sup>115</sup>

### **3.5. Adoption of a Market-Based Approach to Regional Policy between 1983 and 1999**

In the 1980s and 1990s five year development plans have made more assertive attempts in regional policy. However, beginning of the 1980s was affected by economic and political crisis, and after the military coup, the established civilian government has changed the course of economic policies by introducing neo-liberal policies which also had a negative impact on regional policy and regional and local development.<sup>116</sup>

In the fifth national development plan (1985–1989) the priority development areas implementation continued. In addition, creation of sixteen functional regions (socio-economic regions) outside the scope of the provincial administrative zones was targeted for preparation of regional plans. And, it was decided to prepare regional plans for less developed regions and for regions having development potential for certain sectors.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Korel Göymen. *Milestones of Regional Policy in Turkey*, p.4, [http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su\\_yayinlar-2/](http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/) (Accessed on 24 October 2014).

<sup>116</sup> Didem Ergin. *Redefinition of Regional Policy of Turkey with regard to New Regional Strategies of EU*. Unpublished Ph. D thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2002, p. 64. Cited in Korel Göymen, “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p. 4, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Sonay Bayramoğlu. “Türkiye’de Bölgesel Politikaların Gelişimi (Development of Regional Policies in Turkey)”, in Menaf Turan (ed.), *Bölge Kalkınma Ajansları Nedir Ne Değildir? (What is (not) Regional Development Agencies)* Paragraf Yayınevi: Ankara, 2005, pp. 35-120, pp.80-81.

The sixth plan (1990–1994) used the terminology “regional development” instead of “regional planning”. Regional planning was to be made in priority development areas instead of in sixteen functional regions identified in the prior national plan. In order to reduce migration to metropolitan areas and decrease industrial density in developed areas, new settlement staging were to be introduced. Environmental concerns and alignment with the EU regional policies were other priorities of the plan.<sup>118</sup>

In the seventh plan (1995-2000), the aim of reducing regional discrepancies was mentioned and preparation of regional development projects was aimed for the lagging behind regions in Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia. However, it was not clear whether regional planning will be continued. Instead, urgent support programmes and action plans were introduced to solve arising problems.<sup>119</sup>

Establishment of organised industrial zones was a central aim of all these plans. These industrial regions were seen crucial to gathering the complementing industries under one area by providing required infrastructure and starting industrialisation in less developed regions.<sup>120</sup> This plan also introduced the concept of sustainable development which covers economic, social, political and cultural aspects of development. Hence several new regional development projects, mainly in Eastern and South East Anatolian regions were planned to be implemented. Action plans and immediate support programmes were introduced for the provinces in these regions.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> State Planning Organisation. *Annual Programme*, Ankara, 2000. Cited in Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p.8, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf>. (Accessed on 12 May 2015)

### 3.6. Issues in Turkey's Regional Policy at the end of the 1990s

Especially in the second half of 1990s, SPO initiated preparation of regional development plans for a number of regions. These plans were worked out with complete feasibility studies; however implementation of the plans required allocation of financial resources by the annual plans of the central government, which were in fact very limited to be able to fully realise the plans.<sup>122</sup>

Regional and rural development plans to be implemented by various projects covered (1) Zonguldak–Karabük–Bartın, (2) Eastern Anatolia, (3) Eastern Black Sea region and (4) Yeşilirmak River–Basin areas. In addition to these, the studies of East Marmara Regional Plan and the West Mediterranean Regional Development Project were introduced in this period.<sup>123</sup> Zonguldak–Karabük–Bartın regional development plan included the transformation of a declining industrial area based on coal production and later privatized steel production. Creation of new economic activity areas and investment opportunities for the private sector were aimed within the plan.<sup>124</sup>

Eastern Anatolian regional development project was introduced by the SPO in the form of a master plan for the development of an area covering 14 provinces, namely Ağrı, Ardahan, Bingöl, Bitlis, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Hakkari, Iğdır, Kars, Malatya, Muş, Tunceli and Van.<sup>125</sup> In order to ensure socio–economic development

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<sup>122</sup> Ruşen Keleş and Ayşegül Mengi, *Avrupa Birliğinin Bölge Politikaları*, Cem Yayınevi: İstanbul, 2014, p. 247.

<sup>123</sup> State Planning Organisation. *Annual Programme*, Ankara, 2000. Cited in Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p.8, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf>. (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>124</sup> State Planning Institution. *Annual Programme*, Ankara, 2008, pp.111-113. Cited in Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

in the region, required public investments were identified. For private sector investments, incentives were increased and new investment areas were brought forward. In order to encourage domestic and foreign investors, investment infrastructure projects were introduced. One peculiarity of this plan is that there was a strong emphasis on bringing regional dynamics forward and supporting regional entrepreneurship, which is in line with the dominant discourse in regional policy, - new regionalism- corresponding the endogenous growth theory. In addition, partnership was introduced between central and local governments, as well as private institutions and non-governmental organizations.<sup>126</sup>

For another less developed region, Eastern Black Sea, a regional development initiative was prepared focusing on agricultural production. An integrated regional development master plan was prepared for 7 provinces (Artvin, Bayburt, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Ordu, Rize and Trabzon). Diversification of economic structure was planned by focusing also on social and environmental concerns and by paying attention to partnership aspect during the implementation.<sup>127</sup>

The last regional programme in this period was the Yeşilirmak river basin development project (consisting of Amasya, Çorum, Samsun, Tokat and Yozgat provinces), focusing on environmental problems in the river area as a result of the irregularities in the flow of the river and causing floods. Efficient land-use planning by preserving ecological balance was planned to ensure sustainable development in the region.<sup>128</sup>

In these programmes, cooperation with civil and private sectors was emphasised in the programming stages as well as use of local resources and potentials for

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<sup>126</sup> Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20,2003, p. 7, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. pp.7-8.

<sup>128</sup> Sonay Bayramoğlu. “Türkiye’de Bölgesel Politikaların Gelişimi (Development of Regional Policies in Turkey)”, in Menaf Turan (ed.), *Bölge Kalkınma Ajansları Nedir Ne Değildir? (What is (not) Regional Development Agencies)* Paragraf Yayınevi: Ankara, 2005, pp. 35-120, p.91.

development were mentioned. However, central governing characteristics of the planned period still continued to a larger extent, maintaining the public investment programme approach.<sup>129</sup> In addition, these regional programmes constituted examples of regional planning which is different than the planned development era. At the previous period, regional planning was regarded as a tool for reducing regional discrepancies, even though there was a common regard that this effort should not hamper the national economic development. In fact, at several cases, the state undertook infrastructural investments even though it may be regarded as not economically feasible in the short run. Hence, investments that could be efficient in the long run would be created to protect the local people. Another principle was that these infrastructural investments were financed by the state budget without involving foreign capital. However, in the 1990s, foreign capital was widely invited for infrastructural projects. For example, Japanese firms were involved in infrastructural investments in Eastern Black Sea development projects and the USA has provided urban and rural infrastructural services in GAP projects. In addition, the principle that the state should make the infrastructural investments by itself in order to protect public interest and economic effectiveness was no longer valid.<sup>130</sup>

During this period, the most widespread and systematically implemented regional development plan was the South–East Anatolian Project (GAP). GAP is an integrated regional development initiative encompassing multiple sectors and aiming to ensure sustainable development. Its objectives are improving living standards; reducing poverty, ensuring social stability and economic growth by increasing productivity and employment in the region. The project area covers 9 provinces in South Eastern Turkey (Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa and Şırnak) in the basins of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers,

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<sup>129</sup> Didem Ergin. *Redefinition of Regional Policy of Turkey with regard to New Regional Strategies of EU*. Unpublished Ph. D thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2002, p. 71. Cited in Korel Göymen, “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p. 4, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplanti/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>130</sup> Sonay Bayramoğlu. “Türkiye’de Bölgesel Politikaların Gelişimi (Development of Regional Policies in Turkey)”, in Menaf Turan (ed.), *Bölge Kalkınma Ajansları Nedir Ne Değildir? (What is (not) Regional Development Agencies)* Paragraf Yayınevi: Ankara, 2005, pp. 35-120, p.92.

comprising about 10% of total area and population in Turkey.<sup>131</sup> The GAP was originally an irrigation and hydraulic energy production project on the Euphrates and Tigris, which was planned in the 1970s, but was transformed into a social and economic development programme in the 1980s, including rural and urban infrastructure, forestry, education and health. This long-lived project has introduced the idea of regional governance, in which central government started to share power and responsibilities with the local administrations, namely the municipalities.<sup>132</sup>

Metin Özaslan and others also argue that less developed regions in Turkey have the common characteristic of an economy based on mainly agricultural production. Since agricultural efficiency is low in these areas, a hidden unemployment in agricultural sector results in mass migration of capital and labour force to developed regions and migration keeps the underdeveloped nature of these regions intact. There is a need to increase the competitiveness of underdeveloped regions by mobilizing their endogenous potentials and in this manner to establish a balanced regional structure in the country. Additionally, the main objective in directing national resources should be to improve the internal potentials and increase the competitive power of these regions thereby causing them to have a sustainable regional development structure.<sup>133</sup> However, this could not be realised with the regional development projects until now.

As it was mentioned before, apart from the South-eastern Anatolia Project (GAP), the main integrated regional development programmes, namely, Eastern Marmara Planning Project, Antalya Project, Çukurova Region Project, Zonguldak-Bartın-Karabük Regional Development Project, Eastern Anatolia Project, Eastern Black Sea Regional Development Plan and Yeşilirmak Basin Development Project, however,

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<sup>131</sup> Korel Göymen. “Türkiye’de Bölge Kavramı ve Politikalarının Gelişimi (Sempozyum Bildirileri)”, in *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye’de Bölgesel Yönetişim*, Pendik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 20, 2003, p. 4, <http://erolkaya.com/wp-content/uploads/pendik-toplantı/ab-ve-bolgesel-yonetisim.pdf> (Accessed on 12 May 2015).

<sup>132</sup> Korel Göymen. “Role of Local Administration in Local Development” in *Regional Development and Rural Poverty*, Türkiye Ekonomik Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı: İstanbul, 2000, pp. 63-66.

<sup>133</sup> Metin Özaslan, Bülent Dinçer and Hüseyin Özgür. *Regional Disparities and Territorial Indicators in Turkey: Socio-Economic Development Index (SEDI)*, p.28, <http://www.sre.wu-wien.ac.at/ersa/ersaconfs/ersa06/papers/858.pdf>, (Accessed on 15 May 2015).

could not be effectively implemented.<sup>134</sup> The reasons for failure to effectively implement these plans may be due to the fact that, required financial allocations for infrastructural investments could not be earmarked for these regions in the annual investment plans. In addition, regional and local counterparts could not be effectively incorporated into the implementation of these development plans.<sup>135</sup> In fact, as it can be inferred from the general preamble of the draft law on regional agencies, “regional and local parties’ involvement is regarded crucial for the implementation of any regional development plan”.<sup>136</sup>

When it comes to the practice of the priority development areas, 50 out of 81 provinces fall under the scope of the priority development areas.<sup>137</sup> This means more and more resources need to be allocated to the development of larger territorial areas of Turkey. In fact, above-mentioned regional development plans attest to the fact that implementation of integral development plans is essential for achieving effective and sustainable results to eliminate regional developmental imbalances.

As a result, “public infrastructural investments and state aids were provided to attract private sector to these regions in order to eliminate imbalance between regions. Hence, various means such as investment incentives, priority development areas policies, organised industrial zones, small industry sites and rural development projects have been used as tools for increasing regional development”.<sup>138</sup> However,

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<sup>134</sup> Metin Özaslan, Bülent Dinçer and Hüseyin Özgür. *Regional Disparities and Territorial Indicators in Turkey: Socio-Economic Development Index (SEDI)*, p.3, <http://www.sre.wu-wien.ac.at/ersa/ersaconfs/ersa06/papers/858.pdf> (Accessed on 15 May 2015); Ministry of Development. *Draft Law on Establishment of Development Agencies*, September 2005, pp. 13-25 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem22/yil01/ss920m.htm>. (Accessed on 15 May 2015).

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ministry of Development. *Draft Law on Establishment of Development Agencies*, September 2005, pp. 13-25 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem22/yil01/ss920m.htm>. (Accessed on 15 May 2015).

<sup>137</sup> Council of Ministers, *2015 Yılı Programının Uygulanması, Koordinasyonu ve İzlenmesine Dair Karar (Decision on the Implementation, Coordination and Monitoring of 2015 Programme)*, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141017-11.htm> (Accessed on 30 June 2015).

<sup>138</sup> Metin Özaslan, Bülent Dinçer and Hüseyin Özgür. *Regional Disparities and Territorial Indicators in Turkey: Socio-Economic Development Index (SEDI)*, p.3, <http://www.sre.wu-wien.ac.at/ersa/ersaconfs/ersa06/papers/858.pdf> (Accessed on 15 May 2015).

effects of these efforts remained rather limited and the development levels of the eastern parts of the country could not be brought to the level of the western parts.

With regard to the relations with the EU, EU regional policy was not a framework that Turkey paid attention while designing its policies in this period until 1999. In this regard, Europeanization was not very much of a concern of Turkey especially in the field of regional policy, albeit some EU funded economic and social projects were implemented under the EU MEDA programme, which will be touched upon in the fifth chapter.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the national development efforts of Turkey with a special emphasis on regional development. As a unitary state developing centrally driven regional policy, Turkey has in fact prepared a number of pilot regional development plans focusing on the individual needs of Turkey's various areas/regions. However, implementation of these plans remained inconclusive as a result of lack of financial resources and political will, as well as regional and local capacity to implement them. A successful project was the GAP project which started out as an agricultural irrigation project but turned out to be a socio-economic transformation initiative in the South-eastern part of Turkey.

In the next chapter, Turkey's harmonisation efforts with the EU regional policies are going to be dealt with. In this regard, the transformation of the regional policy with the emerging European accession agenda will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF TURKEY'S REGIONAL POLICY DURING THE EUROPEAN UNION ACCESSION PROCESS**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

In the 1999 EU Helsinki Summit, Turkey was official accepted as a candidate for EU membership. Mobilisation of Turkey in terms of adoption of the EU acquis has speeded up after this period, along with the Europeanization objective. It is crucial to look into this period since main developments with regard to the regional policy in terms of adaptation of Turkish regional policy with that of the EU took place in this period. In addition, the main policy documents of the EU and Turkey have clearly set out the main objectives regarding this policy area.

This chapter is divided into four main parts by mainly focusing on the regional policy parts of the EU's and Turkey's policy documents, namely, EU's Accession Partnerships (AP) and Regular Progress Reports (RPR) and Turkey's National Programmes for the adoption of the EU Acquis (NP). Firstly Turkey's accession process before the start of the negotiations with the EU Council's decision on 3 October 2005 will be discussed. In the second part, the developments in 2005 which is marked with the screening process will be touched upon. In the third part, Turkey's EU related regional policy developments will be handled which has started in 2005 and lasted until present. In the fourth part, opening of the regional policy chapter to accession negotiations and the conditions for closing the chapter will be discussed.

## 4.2. Turkey's Accession Process before the Start of Negotiations (1999-2005)

Turkey's official candidacy for EU membership has created immense motivation to carry out significant and important political and economic reforms.<sup>139</sup> Being officially included in the enlargement process, Turkey accepted the EU accession strategy which is composed of four steps. The first step was the AP, which was a strategy document/roadmap prepared by the EU to identify the short, medium and long term priorities for Turkey to prepare herself in terms of legislative changes and implementation. The second step was the preparation of a national programme for the adoption of the *acquis* (substantial body of EU law) by Turkey, which includes the specific actions to be taken to comply with the EU accession conditionality. The third step was the financial assistance of the EU provided for Turkey to implement projects for implementation and capacity building for EU legislation. And finally, fourth step was the RPRs which are annual reports of the EU on Turkey's progress on the way of membership.

APs as being roadmaps prepared by the European Commission have summarised the priorities of the EU which Turkey needs to take them as its own priorities and fulfil their requirements accordingly. These priorities have to be responded in the NPs prepared by Turkey and set out the steps to be taken to achieve these priorities. In response to four APs (in 2001, 2003, 2006 and 2008) issued as Council Decision<sup>140</sup>, three NPs were adopted in 2001, 2004 and 2008 by the Council of Ministers'

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<sup>139</sup> Kıvanç Ulusoy. "Turkey's Reform Effort Reconsidered, 1987-2004", *Democratization*, June, 14:3, 2007, pp.472-490, p. 475.

<sup>140</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 8 March 2001 on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey (2001/235/EC)*, 2001; Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 19 May 2003 on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey (2003/398/EC)*, 2003; Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 23 January 2006 on the principles, priorities, and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey (2006/35/EC)*, 2006; Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities, and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey and repealing Decision (2006/35/EC) (2008/157/EC)*, 2008.

decision<sup>141</sup>. And further two programmes were also prepared unilaterally to keep the EU membership perspective and efforts alive.<sup>142</sup>

In addition to policy documents, projects were carried out based on annual programming and co-financed by the EU and Turkey. Consequently, RPRs were the tools of the EU to present their analysis on the level of development in Turkey's legislation and enforcement performance in line with the EU acquis.

In March 2001 the EU adopted first AP for Turkey's membership<sup>143</sup> and Turkey submitted her first national programme to the EU in March 2001.<sup>144</sup> Projects started to be implemented by the EU funds allocated to Turkey, along with other candidate countries. Finally, annual RPRs shed light to developments in the way of membership.<sup>145</sup>

APs have listed a number of priorities that Turkey could complete over the next few years. In this sense a distinction is made between short-term priorities, which are

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<sup>141</sup> Council of Ministers. *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis 2001*, Decision of the Council of Ministers Dated 2001 No. 2001/2129, 2001, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=195&l=2>. (Accessed on 18 March 2015); Council of Ministers. *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis 2003*, Decision of the Council of Ministers Dated 2003 No. 2003/5930, 2003, <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=196&l=2> (Accessed on 18 March 2015); Council of Ministers. *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis*, 2008, Decision of the Council of Ministers Dated 2008 No. 2008/14481, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=42260&l=2> (18 March 2015).

<sup>142</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Turkey's Programme for Alignment with the Acquis (2007-2013)*, <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=6&l=1> (Accessed on 18 March 2015); Ministry for EU Affairs. *National Action Plan for EU Accession Phase I (2014-2015)*, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/napisonwebeng.pdf> (Accessed on 18 March 2015); Ministry for EU Affairs. *National Action Plan for EU Accession Phase II (2015-2019)*, <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=49794&l=2> (Accessed on 18 March 2015).

<sup>143</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 8 March 2001 on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey (2001/235/EC)*.

<sup>144</sup> Council of Ministers. *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis, 2001*, Decision of the Council of Ministers Dated 2001 No. 2001/2129, pp. 393-403, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=195&l=2>. (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>145</sup> In fact, European Commission started to prepare regular reports on Turkey in 1998, shortly after the customs union decision was taken by the Association Council by the EU and Turkey. From then on, every year in October, an update of the Commission observations on Turkey with regard to the harmonisation efforts of Turkey has been issued.

expected to be accomplished within one to two years, and medium-term priorities, to be completed within three to four years. The priorities were related to both legislation and implementation. APs have put forth the requirements for regional policy under four headings; namely, “enhanced political dialogue and political criteria”, “statistics”, “reinforcement of administrative and judicial capacity” and “regional policy and coordination of structural instruments”.<sup>146</sup>

In all the four APs, under the “enhanced political dialogue and political criteria” part, the main priority is to “develop a comprehensive approach to reduce regional disparities, and in particular to improve the situation in the south-east, in order to enhance economic, social and cultural opportunities for all citizens, including those of Kurdish origin”. In addition, “return of internally displaced persons to their original settlements” was emphasised.<sup>147</sup>

In the “Statistics” part of the first three APs, “adoption and reinforcement of a strategy to develop statistics in all fields” is required, “including regional statistics”. In 2001 AP, under the “reinforcement of administrative and judicial capacity”, in the medium term it is expected that the “territorial reform is completed and the concept of regional and municipal management is developed”. “Setting up operational structures at regional level” and “reinforcing existing administrative structures dealing with regional development” was also mentioned as mid-term priority.<sup>148</sup>

The main parts “regional policy and coordination of structural instruments” in the APs, have classified harmonisation requirements basically under seven headings.

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<sup>146</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 8 March 2001 on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey (2001/235/EC)*, 2001, pp.5,6,8,9,10; Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 19 May 2003 on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey (2003/398/EC)*, 2003, pp. 5,8,10,14; Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 23 January 2006 on the principles, priorities, and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey (2006/35/EC)*, 2006, pp. 5,9,10,15; Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities, and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey and repealing Decision (2006/35/EC) (2008/157/EC)*, 2008, pp. 6, 10, 14.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

“Preparing a NUTS classification in accordance with Community rules” (AP 2001), “adopting a strategy for development of an effective regional policy” (AP 2001) and “introducing regional policy criteria in the selection of projects in Turkey's planning process” (AP 2001), as well as “developing a national policy for economic and social cohesion through a national development plan”, “establishment of regional development plans at NUTS 2 level, in order to diminish internal disparities including multiannual budgeting procedures and establishing structures for monitoring appraisal and evaluation” (AP 2001, AP 2003), “strengthening the administrative structures for managing regional development” (AP 2003) and “setting up regional branches at NUTS 2 level to implement regional development plans” (AP 2003).<sup>149</sup>

Three NPs (in 2001, 2003 and 2008) were prepared in response to the EU's APs adopted in the same years respectively. Turkey's national programmes for the adoption of EU acquis, focused mainly on the foreseen legislative changes and administrative capacity improvements.

The NP of 2001 was the first official document after the candidacy status of Turkey that sets out a limited number of measures for the acquis chapters to be negotiated in the accession process. NP of 2001 entails a condense summary of the regional policy perspective and structure of Turkey together with three basic measures to be taken in order to harmonise with the EU regional policy. The Plan foresaw some institutional changes by the year 2005, such as establishment of the administrative regional units of the SPO (currently Ministry of Development) in the provinces. Reinforcement of those regional units with qualified personnel, buildings and sufficient equipment was also planned. Identification of a system of NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) for regions of Turkey, similar to the statistical classification of the regions in the EU was a priority in the Plan. Secondly, regional state aid applications for the regions would be harmonized with the relevant EU criteria. And thirdly, “regional and local potential will be determined by the efficient participation of local

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

actors, and necessary projects will be designed to exploit this potential for development.”<sup>150</sup>

The second NP (2003) identifies the main components of the preliminary national development plan (pNDP) and regional development strategy, which will serve as a national regional development programme in which regional strategies will be developed.<sup>151</sup> A rather important progress is mentioned related to the NUTS classification for Turkey’s regions which became operational upon the Council of Ministers’ decision No. 2002/4720 (Official Gazette No. 24884 on 22 September 2002). This NUTS classification would be used to collect and develop regional statistics and to make socio-economic analysis of the respective “regions”. Depending on these analyses and taking this classification as basis, regional policies would be designed. Another measure would be transferring some competencies to the provincial administrations regarding local public investments via the public and local administration reform. In order to strengthen regional policy development and implementation at the regional level, new regional structures would be established in the form of regional development agencies in NUTS 2 regions, which would bring out “the development potential of the regions by establishing close and organic links between public administrations and the private sector and non-governmental organisations, as well as ensuring inter-provincial cooperation”<sup>152</sup>.

In 1998-2005, European Commission has issued every October a RPR, which also assessed the accomplishments with regard to the NPs. In fact, EU progress reports are regarded as a kind of “snapshot” revealing the perception of the European Commission on current situation of candidate countries, including Turkey. The accession negotiation chapter 22 on regional policy and coordination of structural instruments is one of the thirty-five chapters, under which the Commission also

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<sup>150</sup> Council of Ministers. *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis 2001*, Decision of the Council of Ministers Dated 2001 No. 2001/2129, 2001, pp. 393-403, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=195&l=2>. (Accessed on 18 March 2015).

<sup>151</sup> Council of Ministers. *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis 2003*, Decision of the Council of Ministers Dated 2003 No. 2003/5930, 2003, pp. 584-588, <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=196&l=2> (Accessed on 18 March 2015).

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

evaluates the respective developments in the field related to the requirements of the respective EU acquis.

The regional policy negotiation chapter includes requirements for administrative and legal arrangements in order to effectively use the EU SF and to make these administrative structures functional in line with the principles and mechanisms given in the regulations on structural instruments, namely the EU SF (ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund). In this regard, the acquis related to the chapter does not require transposition of a specific EU legislation, instead, work made on regional development and investments are evaluated under this chapter and this inevitably establishes a link with public procurement, competition and financial control chapters in the negotiation process. Hence, it is observed almost in all RPRs that the relevant assessment is made regarding the steps taken/not taken to meet the requirement for obtaining the capability for the use of the EU SF.

Within the regional policy context, the first report, the 1998 Regular Progress Report (RPR) asserts that there exist considerable disparities among the regions of Turkey and Turkey should work towards eliminating these development discrepancies, which will also be supported by the EU resources.<sup>153</sup> This first report also emphasises that regional demographic, socio-economic and infrastructure disparities in Turkey causes migration from Eastern rural areas to Western urban areas. The report is supportive on existing efforts of Turkey to ensure disadvantaged regions and especially the GAP project. However, Turkey's development is well behind the EU average, which has to be supported by implementing an effective structural policy.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> European Commission. *Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 1998, p. 29, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/1998/turkey\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1998/turkey_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>154</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities, and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey and repealing Decision 2006/35/EC (2008/157/EC)*, 2008, p. 50.

In the 1999 RPR, it is pointed out that regional policy implemented through a centralised planning system could not narrow down the development gap among Turkey's regions, so that in terms of GDP per capita, almost half of the population live in the lagging regions. Regional focus seems less visible in public investment priorities, in that regional indicators are not taken into account while designing infrastructural projects. Administrative capacity is low both at central and regional levels. Regions receiving public investment and subsidies could not attract private investments. Therefore, an efficient regional policy on less developed regions is considered as a requirement.<sup>155</sup>

The 2000 report points out that territorial organization, which is about NUTS classification of Turkey's regions has to be drawn out as it is important for the implementation of the EU cohesion policy. The priority development areas approach in regional policy, which is about providing subsidies for companies investing in provinces comprising half of the territories of the country, does not seem to create any concrete positive results. Similarly, allocation of public investments does not correspond to the development levels of the regions, where both developed and less developed regions receive comparable amounts of public investments. Administrative coordination of the regional policy is carried out centrally and no implementing structure exists at the regional level. The Report maintains that compilation of regional statistics at the NUTS 2 level would help more public investment is allocated to the less developed regions.<sup>156</sup> These issues are reiterated in the 2001 report, as well.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> European Commission. *Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 1999, p.40, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/1999/turkey\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1999/turkey_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>156</sup> European Commission. *Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 2000, pp. 59-60, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/2000/tu\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2000/tu_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>157</sup> European Commission. *Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 2001, pp. 77-78, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/2001/tu\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2001/tu_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

The 2002 report welcomes the establishment of NUTS classification in Turkey. However, it reasserts on the need for an efficient and modernised regional policy for the lagging behind regions in line with the EU. In relation with this aim, it was reiterated that a pNDP for 2003-2005 needs to be designed and related integrated regional development plans at lagging NUTS 2 level regions are prepared. In addition, the insertion of a regional component to the five-year development plan (2006-2010) in line with the EU acquis is further advised. Developing inter-ministerial coordination and integrating partnership principle both at central and regional level planning, by setting up regional development agencies at NUTS 2 level are also recommended.<sup>158</sup>

In the 2003 report, the Commission recommends participation of all relevant stakeholders in the preparation phase of regional development plans in 26 NUTS 2 regions. And it also calls for building up further coordination structures both between central and provincial authorities, and among line ministries, so that regional policies are integrated with sectoral economic activities.<sup>159</sup>

The 2004 report appreciates adoption of the pNDP (2004-2006) as an important step in programming of economic and social cohesion component of EU pre-accession assistance in December 2003. However, the pNDP is regarded insufficient to meet the requirements of the EU SF regulations. The RPR notes that a new department was established in the SPO in April 2004 for monitoring and evaluation of regional development programmes. The new Public Financial Management and Control Law is regarded as an important development for strengthening financial management and control regime in Turkey. The report notes the establishment of regional statistical

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<sup>158</sup> European Commission. *Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, SEC(2002) 1412, 2002, pp.109-110. [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/2002/tu\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2002/tu_en.pdf) , (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>159</sup> European Commission. *Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 2003, pp. 104-106, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/2003/rr\\_tk\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2003/rr_tk_final_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

offices in each NUTS 2 regions and of a database for collection of regional data based on the NUTS classification.<sup>160</sup>

When it comes to the comments in the RPR published in 2005, the report asserts that the identified 26 new NUTS 2 regions, which are used for statistical purposes, do not coincide with any of the administrative structures, namely, central, provincial and municipal levels. In terms of legislative developments, adoption of the Law on Municipalities, the Law on Metropolitan Municipalities, and the Law on Special Provincial Administrations in July 2005 were considered as a “sign of devolution of some powers of the central state to the local administrations”.<sup>161</sup> This could make the partnership principle effective, as it is the core basis of the EU regional policy. Arguably, decentralisation of Turkey’s public administration is regarded essential to promote this participatory approach. EU IPA is presented as a tool for mobilising the related ministries and agencies to establish and improve their administrative structures, to achieve the capacity to present and implement OPs and projects which are precursors for the EU SF. It was reiterated that permanent regional structures, namely regional development agencies, required to be established.<sup>162</sup> Hence, until 2006 the main crucial development in terms of alignment with the EU regional policy in Turkey is the establishment of NUTS classification. Other issues mentioned in the reports from 1998 to 2005 are all about the missing elements which made compliance with the EU regional policy difficult.

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<sup>160</sup> European Commission. *Regular Report on Turkey’s Progress towards Accession*, SEC (2004) 1201, (2004) pp. 130-132, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/2004/rr\\_tr\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2004/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>161</sup> European Commission. *Turkey 2005 Progress Report*, SEC (2005) 1426, 2005, p. 102, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/2005/package/sec\\_1426\\_final\\_progress\\_report\\_tr\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2005/package/sec_1426_final_progress_report_tr_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>162</sup> European Commission. *Turkey 2005 Progress Report*, SEC (2005) 1426, 2005, pp. 101-102, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key\\_documents/2005/package/sec\\_1426\\_final\\_progress\\_report\\_tr\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2005/package/sec_1426_final_progress_report_tr_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

### 4.3. The Start of Accession Negotiations and the Screening Process in 2005

The decision of the European Council in December 2004 for starting accession negotiations with Turkey and the subsequent announcement of the Negotiating Framework in October 2005 constitute the official start of accession negotiations which was followed by a screening process of legislation of Turkey by the European Commission.<sup>163</sup> The document cites names of all accession negotiation chapters and generally mentions about the need for Turkey to bring “its institutions, management capacity and administrative and judicial systems up to Union standards, both at national and regional level, with a view to implementing the *acquis* effectively ...in good time before accession”.<sup>164</sup> At the end of this process, EU has published a screening report on Turkey.<sup>165</sup>

Procedurally, the substance of accession negotiations is conducted in an intergovernmental conference with the participation of EU member states and the candidate country. However, before that stage, the European Commission carries out a formal process of explaining the relevant EU *acquis* to the candidate country authorities, and also receives information on the current status of relevant legislation in the candidate countries. This process is called “screening” and by this process it is aimed to assess the state of preparation of a candidate country for opening negotiations in specific policy areas.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> European Council. *Negotiating Framework with Turkey*, Luxembourg 3 October 2005, 2005, [http://avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/Downloads/PDF/Muzakere\\_cercevesi.pdf](http://avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/Downloads/PDF/Muzakere_cercevesi.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>165</sup> European Commission. *Screening report Turkey, Chapter22-Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, WP Enlargement+Countries Negotiating Accession to EU MD154/07*, 14.05.07, 2007, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening\\_reports/screening\\_report-22-tr\\_internet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening_reports/screening_report-22-tr_internet_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>166</sup> Council of the European Union. *Note from General Secretariat to Council, Enlargement: Accession negotiations with Turkey: General EU Position- EU Opening Statement, Negotiating Framework, External Arrangements*, Brussels, 12 October 2005, 12823/1/05, 2005, [http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/AB\\_Iliskileri/Tur\\_En\\_Realitons/NegotiatingFrameowrk/Negotiating\\_Frameowrk\\_Full.pdf](http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/AB_Iliskileri/Tur_En_Realitons/NegotiatingFrameowrk/Negotiating_Frameowrk_Full.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

Screening and subsequent negotiations are organised by splitting the EU *acquis* into thirty three chapters, each covering a specific policy area. Turkey's level of alignment with the EU *acquis* in the field of regional policy was assessed under "Chapter 22 regional policy and coordination of structural instruments" during the screening as well the negotiation process.<sup>167</sup> The screening exercise was held in the form of meetings with the Commission representatives in September and October 2006. As a result of these meetings the Commission has prepared a screening report in May 2007. The report mainly sets out the chapter content, Turkey's existing alignment and implementation capacity, in terms of "legislative, institutional and administrative framework, programming capacity, monitoring and evaluation, financial management and control and Commission's relevant assessment of the degree of alignment and implementing capacity and conclusions and recommendations".<sup>168</sup>

One could argue that the Commission does not explicitly prescribe a certain model or structure for designation and establishment of regional policy structures. Instead the main focus is centred on the creation of required administrative and institutional capacity, the specification of tasks, mandates and clear divisions of labour among the respective units. In its essence, all these structures are required for effective use of the EU SF. Therefore, especially, accountability, transparency and ability to absorb funds are key issues for mobilisation of efforts to meet the requirements of the EU *acquis*.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> European Council. *Negotiating Framework with Turkey*, Luxembourg 3 October 2005, 2005, [http://avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/Downloads/PDF/Muzakere\\_cercevesi.pdf](http://avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/Downloads/PDF/Muzakere_cercevesi.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015). pp.6-7; European Commission. *Screening report Turkey, Chapter 22-Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, WP Enlargement+ Countries Negotiating Accession to EU MD154/07, 14.05.07*, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening\\_reports/screening\\_report-22-tr\\_internet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening_reports/screening_report-22-tr_internet_en.pdf). (Accessed on 7 June 2015).

<sup>168</sup> Screening report Turkey, Chapter 22-Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, WP Enlargement Countries Negotiating Accession to EU MD154/07, 14.05.07, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening\\_reports/screening\\_report-22-tr\\_internet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening_reports/screening_report-22-tr_internet_en.pdf). (Accessed on 7 June 2015).

<sup>169</sup> Screening report Turkey, Chapter 22-Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, WP Enlargement Countries Negotiating Accession to EU MD154/07, 14.05.07, p.11, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening\\_reports/screening\\_report-22-tr\\_internet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening_reports/screening_report-22-tr_internet_en.pdf). (Accessed on 7 June 2015).

The screening report basically focuses on the establishment of necessary legal and institutional framework for enabling the use of EU SF once Turkey becomes an EU member state. From this point of view, it can be considered as a purely technical document, a roadmap that Turkey has to take into consideration while continuing with the alignment work. However, the remark on the requirement for designing and establishing a regional development strategy at the national level reflects the EU's expectations of certain policy orientations from the candidate countries.

In the assessment part of the screening report, the Commission asserts that the legal framework for multi-annual budget planning and financial management and control should be set-up, as well as other Union policies (e.g. state aid, public procurement, etc.) should be adopted. Furthermore, in order to effectively implement the regional policies via the EU IPA/SF, Turkey is required to set up appropriate institutional structures with enough number of expert staff as well as to establish management information systems.<sup>170</sup>

Multi-annual budgetary planning is essential for the use of the EU SF since the EU member states have to submit multi-annual strategic planning documents to the European Commission for the use of SF. While using the SF, member states also allocate significant amount of resources from the national budget and the EU demands that the operations/projects that are to be implemented by the SF should not fail because of delays in allocation of national funds for those projects. Apart from national resources, the capacity of regional administrations to be able to borrow from international markets is also expected to be developed.<sup>171</sup>

In addition establishment of required regional structures to manage and use of the EU SF at the NUTS 2 level are essential. The screening report points out that there exist provincial and municipal level administrative structures in Turkey, but no regional structures are available. One claim of the report is that “current legal framework of newly established development agencies (DAs) does not allow them to function as

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

either managing authorities or intermediate bodies for implementation of SF programmes”.<sup>172</sup>

As a matter of fact, management of SF funds in the member states require various procedures and systems to be established in order to ensure effective, efficient and transparent use of the SF budget. In this regard, establishment of public finance control systems are essential for ensuring accountability, so that the EU SF are used in a regular manner.<sup>173</sup>

Another issue, which is very much at the heart of the principles of the EU SF, is the partnership principle. In the planning and implementation of development programmes involvement of different partner organisations is regarded limited in Turkey, due to the centralised and concentrated nature. In this regard it is advised to establish “genuine” partnerships for regional development at national and regional levels.<sup>174</sup>

Programming documents related to the national development plans of Turkey are considered operationally limited since these plans do not sufficiently take past experiences into account. Certainly, the Ministry of Development has accumulated considerable programming capacity; however the report claims that due to overriding responsibilities of the Ministry of Development with line ministries, contribution and ownership of line ministries are limited.<sup>175</sup>

Another major issue is the lack of a comprehensive regional development strategy/plan to address regional disparities, while there is limited number of regional plans. In addition the report emphasises the need for a pipeline of good quality projects to be implemented at the regional level. When it comes to the implementation stage of the projects, ‘monitoring’ and ‘evaluation’ requirement of the programmes comes to the agenda, which in Turkey’s case needs to be further

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

developed. A linked issue is the need for a fully functioning financial management and control system to meet the requirements of the EU SF, where separation of functions and independence of key authorities are essential.<sup>176</sup>

As a result, the screening report published in 2007 concludes that Turkey was not considered to be ready in its work for negotiations. Turkey is asked to develop its institutional and administrative capacity, as well as implementation systems for the future use of the EU SF. Therefore, the Commission recommended the Council that a benchmark should be set for opening the chapter for accession negotiations. Accordingly, Turkey would “present to the Commission an action plan setting up clear objectives and a related timetable in order to meet regulatory and operational requirements of the EU cohesion policy”.<sup>177</sup>

#### **4.4. Turkey’s Accession Process after the Start of Negotiations (2006-2015)**

A stimulus achieved by the screening process paved the way for issuance of two APs in 2006 and 2008 by the EU and a NP in 2008 by Turkey. The AP issued in 2006 asserts that the strategic framework for reducing regional disparities in the form of economic and social cohesion should continue to be developed while necessary legislative and administrative framework to absorb EU pre-accession funds is established. In this regard, the need for strengthening administrative capacity for implementation of regional policy both at central and regional levels was reiterated. Furthermore, establishment of multi-annual budgeting procedures and setting out priority criteria for public investment in the regions were emphasised.<sup>178</sup> In the 2008 AP, the European Commission continued to emphasise the need for reinforcing establishment of institutional structures and strengthening administrative capacity in areas of programming, project preparation, monitoring, evaluation and financial management and control, particularly at the level of line ministries. These capacities

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>178</sup> Council of the European Union, *Council Decision of 23 January 2006 on the principles, priorities, and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey (2006/35/EC)*, 2006, pp. 5,9,10,15.

were crucial to implement EU pre-accession programmes, so as to prepare for the EU regional policy implementation at central, regional and local levels in Turkey.<sup>179</sup>

The responding third NP, adopted in 2008 by Turkey, includes amendments to the existing laws on certain public institutions that are envisaged to function in the programming, implementing, monitoring and supervision of the IPA funds.<sup>180</sup> As the current pre-accession funds help the candidate countries to prepare for the upcoming membership cohesion funds, legislative changes are regarded essential. Similarly, various capacity building activities were planned for the IPA related institutions. In this regard, apart from the central institutions, completion of the establishment of DAs in all NUTS 2 regions was planned.<sup>181</sup>

Apart from these NPs, Turkey has adopted a number of unilaterally prepared programmes related to the transposition of the EU acquis. Turkey's Programme for Alignment with the Acquis (2007-2013)<sup>182</sup> was a programme which foresaw legislative bases to establish necessary units for managing the IPA components related to the regional policy, namely, environment, regional competitiveness, transport and human resources development OPs, as it was the case with the NP of 2008. This would facilitate operation of institutions responsible for tender, contract and payment operations of the IPA, which is the pre-accession aid of the EU for Turkey. The ever emphasised aim was to "ensure the transition from pre-accession financial assistance to cohesion policy instruments once Turkey becomes an EU member state".<sup>183</sup> Similarly, for the regional development planning and

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<sup>179</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities, and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey and repealing Decision (2008/157/EC)*, 2008, pp. 6, 10, 14.

<sup>180</sup> Council of Ministers. *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis*, 2008, Decision of the Council of Ministers Dated 2008 No. 2008/14481, pp. 228-235, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=42260&l=2>. (Accessed on 18 March 2015).

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. p. 235.

<sup>182</sup> Secretariat for EU Affairs. *Turkey's Programme for Alignment With the Acquis (2007-2013)*, 2006, pp. 281-289, <http://ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=6&l=2> (Accessed on 18 March 2015).

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. p. 289.

implementation, relevant regulations were foreseen to be issued for the functioning of DAs.<sup>184</sup>

As a result of a recent attempt to reinvigorate the harmonisation programme with the EU, another National Action Plan (NAP) for EU Accession, which sets targets with the farthest time span as June 2019 and consist of two parts were adopted.<sup>185</sup> In terms of the regional policy, the first part of NAP sets the timeframe for the adoption of the National Strategy for Regional Development (NSRD) as the first half of the 2015. This Strategy is crucial for laying down the basic principles of the regional policy in Turkey, especially in order to be able to benefit from the EU SF after accession into the EU. The strategy was formally adopted in December 2014. In addition, according to the NAP, strategic planning guidelines will be prepared for the line ministries and other public institutions and capacity building actions will be taken after needs assessment study is carried out.<sup>186</sup>

The second part of the NAP also reiterates the need for enhancing institutional capacity and increasing skilled staff in charge of the local investment planning and implementation of plans and programmes in provinces, as well as in the related central administrations. Similarly, a project pipeline would be developed for full utilisation of the IPA II funds, which is the precursor of the EU SF. Capacity building efforts would continue after the needs analysis is carried out for using the EU SF.<sup>187</sup>

During the course of adoption and implementation of these programmes and plans for the alignment work of Turkey with the EU, European Commission continued to

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid. p. 287.

<sup>185</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *National Action Plan for EU Accession I (2014)*, <http://ab.gov.tr/files/napisonwebeng.pdf> (Accessed on 18 March 2015); Ministry for EU Affairs. *National Action Plan for EU Accession II (2015)* <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/pub/nap-ii-en.pdf> (Accessed on 18 March 2015).

<sup>186</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *National Action Plan for EU Accession I, 2014*, pp. 92-97 <http://ab.gov.tr/files/napisonwebeng.pdf> (Accessed on 18 March 2015)

<sup>187</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *National Action Plan for EU Accession II, 2015*, pp. 135-139, <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/pub/nap-ii-en.pdf> (Accessed on 18 March 2015).

issue annual evaluation reports presenting the progress in the respective EU acquis fields. In its regional policy section, the 2006 RPR notes the adoption of the law on DAs in February 2006, as permanent regional structures in Turkey, which would work for regional development. However, the Commission is rather concerned about the role and functions of the DAs<sup>188</sup>, but does not provide the details about these concerns.

The 2007 report acknowledges developments in the institutional framework, where special units were assigned to manage regional development and human resources development components of the IPA financial instrument, as well as OPs for these components (environment, transport, regional competitiveness and human resources development) were prepared for the 2007-2013 period.<sup>189</sup>

The 2008 progress report comments on delays in the preparation for decentralised management of IPA, as well as the slow pace of preparations for implementation systems for the EU SF. The need for building up structures and administrative capacity at regional level is also reiterated. Furthermore, in order to develop ownership and accountability on the part of various actors, responsibilities between ministries both at central and regional levels are advised to be diversified and more involvement of local and regional administrations and stakeholders to the regional policy process are ensured.<sup>190</sup>

The 2009 report welcomes the IPA Framework Agreement entering into force in December 2008, as it provides the legal basis for implementation of IPA assistance

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<sup>188</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2006 Progress Report*, SEC (2006) 1390, 2006, pp.56-57, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2006/nov/tr\\_sec\\_1390\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/nov/tr_sec_1390_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>189</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2007 Progress Report*, SEC (2007) 1436, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2007/nov/turkey\\_progress\\_reports\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2007/nov/turkey_progress_reports_en.pdf), (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>190</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2008 Progress Report*, SEC (2008) 2699, 2008, pp. 64-66, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press\\_corner/key\\_documents/reports\\_nov\\_2008/turkey\\_progress\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key_documents/reports_nov_2008/turkey_progress_report_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

in Turkey. It includes essentially the EU regional policy precursor components, regional competitiveness, environment, transport and human resources development. In addition, management bodies were established within the relevant ministries, albeit administrative capacity at regional level is considered weak. DAs were also established in 26 NUTS 2 regions; however their establishment principles and process were regarded rather unclear and non-transparent. It was also emphasised that in order to absorb the IPA funds considerable number of mature projects have to be in pipeline for immediate implementation.<sup>191</sup>

The 2010 progress report repeats the concerns about capacity of institutions to “effectively and efficiently manage IPA funds” and claims that delays in tendering procedures may risk full absorption of funds. Lack of staff, coordination among institutions and delays in the preparation of operations are considered as problems.<sup>192</sup>

The 2011 report notes the establishment of a regional development committee by the relevant institutions “to harmonize the planning, implementation and monitoring of sectoral, thematic and regional policies at national level”. The regional plans were prepared in NUTS 2 regions under coordination of the DAs. The integrated management information system became operational, which is very important to monitor the allocated EU assistance. However, functioning of operating structures are not up to a certain level which still poses risks for de-commitment of funds due to time limits for spending allocated money in 2011 and onwards.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2009 Progress Report*, SEC (2009) 1334, 2009, pp. 67-69, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2009/tr\\_rapport\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/tr_rapport_2009_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>192</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2010 Progress Report*, SEC (2010) 1327, 2010, pp. 73-74, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2010/package/tr\\_rapport\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/tr_rapport_2010_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>193</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2011 Progress Report*, SEC (2011) 1201, 2011, pp. 82- 83, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2011/package/tr\\_rapport\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/tr_rapport_2011_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

The 2012 progress report appreciates legal developments which provide a basis for establishing the units for coordination and programming, budgeting, tendering, contracting, execution, financial management and supervision of EU co-funded project activities in the relevant line ministries. Although it was recognised that some progress was made in tendering and contracting of projects, the risk for the absorption of funds still continue. Adoption of the NSRD to ensure guidance for regional and local plans is regarded essential as a general regional framework strategy. In addition regional plans have been prepared for all 26 NUTS 2 regions under the coordination of DAs. However, the report concludes that “preparations are not very advanced”.<sup>194</sup> As a matter of fact, this report is crucial, since six months after its publication, in April 2013, the EU asked Turkey to prepare its negotiating position since a decision was taken to open this chapter for accession negotiations. However, as the RPR of 2012 points out, there exist absorption risks for funds which denotes the limited capacity on the part of Turkey’s institutions to operate the EU funds. The NSRD, the main regional strategy, was not adopted at the time. Nevertheless these deficiencies did not prevent for the accession negotiations to start.

The 2013 report which summarises the developments in Turkey between October 2012 and October 2013 states that in March 2013 Turkey submitted a detailed action plan to meet the opening benchmark for the accession negotiations on chapter 22. Regarding IPA, all operating structures became functional, accredited and started to implement the relevant OPs. However, there is a continuous turnover on the part of staff working in operating structures. Overall, the report states that good progress was made in this period. Finalisation of institutional arrangements for regional development components of the IPA was appreciated, while there were concerns about administrative capacity of these IPA institutions.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2012 Progress Report*, SWD (2012) 336, 2012, pp.69-70, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2012/package/tr\\_rapport\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>195</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2013 Progress Report*, SWD (2013) 417 final, 2013, pp.43-44, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2013/package/tr\\_rapport\\_2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/tr_rapport_2013_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

One year after the negotiation chapter 22 on regional policy and coordination of structural instruments opened for accession negotiations (in November 2013); the 2014 report repeats that preparatory work on the NSRD still continues. Ministry of Development is praised about improved inter-institutional cooperation and coordination among the ministries implementing the IPA OPs. The capacity to absorb funds is still an important issue, as the contracting and disbursement rates for projects are low. This means there is a need for strengthening the capacity of procurement units in the ministries. Hence, the high risk of de-commitment for EU funds, which caused some funds to be lost in 2013, continues for the year 2014 and onwards. Overall progress is still regarded as “moderately advanced”, since the administrative capacity of the IPA institutions are still not up to the standards in order to implement OPs and avoid loss of funds.<sup>196</sup>

The RPRs issued in the past 15 years present some of the important concerns of the EU with regard to the transposition of EU regional policy by Turkey. To cite a few of them, the identified 26 new NUTS 2 regions, which are used for statistical purposes, do not coincide with any of the formal administrative structures, namely, central, provincial and municipal levels in Turkey. This is an issue since the EU funds are to be allocated on the principle of NUTS 2 regions, whereas current state investment and support mechanisms are based on provincial level, namely NUTS 3 regions<sup>197</sup>. Another point is related to the nature of DAs in 26 NUTS 2 regions. The European Commission considers that their establishment principles and process are unclear and non-transparent. Furthermore, the Commission considers that the DAs in their current condition do not fit for the future task of implementing EU SF. In addition, especially in the past four years there has been continuous warning on the part of the Commission about actual and potential loss of EU pre-accession funds (de-commitment risks), due to inability of using them on time. This fact denotes a lack of

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<sup>196</sup> European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document Turkey 2014 Progress Report*, SWD (2014) 307, 2014, pp. 42-43, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2014/20141008-turkey-progress-report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-turkey-progress-report_en.pdf) (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>197</sup> Council of the Ministers. *Decision on the State Aid for Investments No. 3305 (Yatırımlarda Devlet Yardımları Hakkında Karar, No. 3305, 2012,* <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/06/20120619-1.htm> (Accessed on 6 July 2015).

capacity of Turkish institutions to effectively and efficiently manage IPA funds. And, this lack of capacity will pose a danger for completion of closing benchmarks of the negotiating chapter 22.

#### **4.5 The Opening of the Chapter on Regional Policy and Its Closing Benchmarks<sup>198</sup>**

In 2006-2013 political hindrances have brought the EU accession negotiations almost to a stand-still. France under the President François Sarkozy has opposed, inter alia, to the opening of the accession negotiations for chapter 22 on regional policy and coordination of structural instruments. In fact, French government under Sarkozy was against the opening of any chapters that have direct bearing on the EU membership. However, change of government has affected the position of France with regard to Turkey's negotiation process, so that it could be possible to go ahead with the negotiation process for this chapter. The French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius stated in February 2013 that the French government was now favourable to resume the accession negotiations with Turkey and was prepared to lift its hold on opening the chapter 22. Germany and Southern Cyprus also did not oppose resuming the accession negotiations.<sup>199</sup>

Consequently, the benchmark regarding preparation of an action plan to design the stages for the harmonisation with the regional policy rules was fulfilled. Nilgün Arısan claims that the link of chapter 22 with public procurement, competition (state aids) and financial control chapters might have played a part in the decision of France, as Turkey refrains from fulfilling the benchmarks in these chapters, mainly

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<sup>198</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Turkey's National Action Plan for EU Accession Phase I (November 2014-June 2015)*, 2014 p. 92, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/napisonwebeng.pdf> (Accessed on 18 March 2015); Council of the European Union, *Accession Conference at Ministerial level opens negotiations with Turkey on Chapter 22- Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments*, Brussels 5 November 2013 15694/1, Presse 451, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/139337.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/139337.pdf) (Accessed on 1 July 2015).

<sup>199</sup> Vincent L. Morelli. *European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey's Accession Negotiations*, US Congress Research Centre, 2013, p.12, [http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/2\\_turkiye\\_ab\\_iliskileri/2\\_2\\_adaylik\\_sureci/2\\_2\\_8\\_diger/crs\\_eu\\_enlargement\\_tr\\_2013.pdf](http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/2_turkiye_ab_iliskileri/2_2_adaylik_sureci/2_2_8_diger/crs_eu_enlargement_tr_2013.pdf) (Accessed on 15 June 2015).

because of the blurred membership perspective. Hence, while removing the blockage and hopefully opening this chapter, France and EU would not only bring some vitality to the negotiation process but also ensure that Turkey would respect EU norms in public procurement, state aids and financial control while using EU funds for regional development.<sup>200</sup>

After conveying the afore-mentioned Action Plan by Turkey, the chapter was opened to accession negotiations on 5 November 2013 during the Lithuanian Presidency by an intergovernmental accession conference at the ministerial level. The EU has noted that Turkey could “accelerate the pace of negotiations by advancing in the fulfilment of benchmarks, by meeting the requirements of the negotiating framework and by respecting its contractual obligations towards the EU”.<sup>201</sup> As it can be inferred from this explanation, opening the chapter for negotiations is a rather small step in the accession process. In fact, the Plan, which is the subject of the opening benchmark, foresaw the measures and their timelines for especially increasing administrative capacity to implement funds. Apart from that, in general non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement, which is related to open the ports and airport to vehicles with the flag of Southern Cyprus, is regarded as the contractual obligation of Turkey. Without fulfilling this requirement it is out of question to conclude accession negotiations.

Albeit seven years have passed since the submission of the screening report for this chapter, Turkey's present state of preparations has not still been considered at the required level. Hence, it was stated that there is need for making further progress in alignment with and implementation of the EU acquis. Therefore, the EU has set out further closing benchmarks for the chapter on regional policy. These benchmarks

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<sup>200</sup> Arisan, Nilgün. “Has the Negotiation Process Become Credible Now?”, *Evaluation Note*, The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), 2013, p. 3 [http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1415958511-6.Has\\_the\\_Negotiation\\_Process\\_Become\\_Credible\\_Now.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1415958511-6.Has_the_Negotiation_Process_Become_Credible_Now.pdf). (Accessed on 15 May 2015).

<sup>201</sup> Council of the European Union, *Accession Conference at Ministerial level opens negotiations with Turkey on Chapter 22- Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments*, Brussels 5 November 2013 15694/1, Presse 451, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/139337.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/139337.pdf) (Accessed on 1 July 2015).

involve the required legislative, institutional and administrative changes in order to fully implement regional development projects to be co-funded by national budget and the EU SF. In this regard, administrative capacities are required to be improved with regard to programming, monitoring and evaluation, financial management and control functions, which are main components of project implementation.

In addition, there are seven closing benchmarks related to the negotiation chapter 22 that have to be met. Once all those benchmarks are fulfilled the EU would confirm that Turkey is ready for the implementation of the EU SF at the central and regional levels.<sup>202</sup> First, “Turkey has to fulfil its obligation of the full non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement towards all Member States”. This is a general one which is applicable for all the negotiation chapters of Turkey. Secondly, “Turkey demonstrates a satisfactory performance of the indirect management system under IPA in the regional development and human resources policy areas”. This benchmark is directly related to the effective use of currently available EU IPA funds. In this regard, administrative capacity for using the IPA funds is needed to be developed. As it is the case with the EU SF, IPA funds also have implementation and disbursement deadlines. If a fund is not disbursed within a given period of time, the EU waives its commitment for allocating these funds, in Europeak, a de-commitment risk arises. Thirdly, “Turkey adopts an institutional set-up for the implementation of EU Cohesion Policy, including the formal designation of the Managing Authorities, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority as well as the Intermediate Bodies, ensuring adequate separation of functions”. It is clear that the regional policy and regional funds in Turkey need to be structured according to the EU institutional requirements for the use of EU funds. Fourth, “Turkey submits to the Commission a capacity building plan for EU Cohesion Policy covering actions at national, regional and local levels”. Capacity

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<sup>202</sup> Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. *Accession Conference at Ministerial level opens negotiations with Turkey on Chapter 22 - Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural instruments*, November 2013, <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/accession-conference-at-ministerial-level-opens-negotiations-with-turkey-on-chapter-22-regional-policy-and-coordination-of-structural-instruments>. (Accessed on 16 May 2015); Economic Development Foundation. *The Chapter for Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments is Opened to Negotiations*, [http://oldweb.ikv.org.tr/print\\_en.asp?id=600&baslik=THE%20CHAPTER%20FOR%20REGIONAL%20POLICY%20AND%20COORDINATION%20OF%20STRUCTUR](http://oldweb.ikv.org.tr/print_en.asp?id=600&baslik=THE%20CHAPTER%20FOR%20REGIONAL%20POLICY%20AND%20COORDINATION%20OF%20STRUCTUR) (Accessed on 16 May 2015).

building in terms of human resources is regarded essential for the use of funds both at central, regional and local levels. Fifth, “Turkey designs and demonstrates the effective functioning of its national policy leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion in line with Articles 174 and 175 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and the EU Cohesion Policy requirements”. This benchmark denotes that it is essential to devise a comprehensive national policy which will be implemented by using both national and EU resources. Sixth, “Turkey submits to the Commission drafts of a national strategic planning document and Operational Programmes under EU Cohesion Policy which complement Turkey's own policy in this field. Turkey demonstrates its ability and readiness to address and implement programmes under all objectives of EU Cohesion Policy for which it would be eligible”. A national strategy for regional development is expected to present the policy priorities of Turkey. Seventh, “Turkey designs and completes the set-up of its Management Information System based on a thorough needs assessment and an analysis of good practice across the EU.”<sup>203</sup>

The benchmarks for closing negotiations on chapter 22 underline that further substantial administrative capacity building efforts are required both at central, regional and local levels. Development of institutional capacity is strongly emphasised both in the benchmarks and the progress reports. Furthermore, the requirement for designing regional development plans both at the central and the regional level prepared by regarding partnership principle is also crucial.

Almost two years have passed since the closing benchmarks were communicated to Turkey. The fulfilment of these benchmarks is essential to be able to conclude the accession negotiations regarding the chapter 22. Implementation of the indirect management system for IPA funds successfully means that the allocated EU funds are fully used and not lost due to delays as a result of administrative weaknesses. So that, Turkey could prove that it has established managing and implementing structures for the EU SF. In this case, especially at regional levels capacity improvement would be an issue. Design of a comprehensive national development

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

policy focusing on regional development is also a requirement that needs to be fulfilled. It can be said that the chapter was opened to accession negotiations not because the preparations were considered satisfactory but as a result of a political decision of the European Council. Even though the opening decision for accession negotiations was political, the opening and closing benchmarks of Turkey's negotiation chapters were rather technical and enumerates the task to be completed before accession.

In the past 16 years, after the EU candidate status was granted to Turkey, Europeanization was the main theme in the international and domestic politics of Turkey. EU prepared guidance documents in the form of APs, Turkey prepared and started to implement NPs. Harmonisation of Turkey's legislation with the EU acquis and its implementation dominated the whole reform process. However, as Turkey is a unitary state, its regions did not have much contact with the EU institutions, as was put forward under MLG approach. Their contribution to the regional policy making was also limited, with some possibilities to evolve. Basically, as it was put forward by the intergovernmentalist approach, central administration of the state had the upper hand on designation of regional policies and adoption of the relevant legislative changes. Especially during the adoption of important legislation regarding regional policy, namely establishment of NUTS classification and establishment of DAs in NUTS 2 regions, central administration has managed the process; hence involvement of regional actors to these processes remained rather limited. Overall, the regional policy harmonisation continued rather slowly considering the fact that there is not any accession date for Turkey to the EU on the horizon.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on Turkey's regional policy developments and Turkey's policy documents and EU's RPRs of Turkey's accomplishments on the road to the membership of the EU. Starting from 1999 until present, various policy documents were prepared for implementation and various economic and social cohesion projects were co-funded by the EU. However, despite all these improvements, before the

accession, especially on closing benchmarks for the chapter 22 on regional policy and coordination of SF, there is still a comprehensive task pending that needs to be completed. Substantial administrative capacity building efforts are required both at central and regional/local level. Furthermore, there is the requirement for designing regional development plans both at the central and the regional level which has to be prepared with partnership principle.

However, Turkey is responding to these requirements rather slowly. Especially, it is significant that European Commission assumes a direct and critical link between the chapter 22 and some other chapters. It requests that legal and administrative measures related with public procurement, competition (state aids) and financial control chapters is taken. However, Turkey goes slowly with the harmonisation of laws in fields of public procurement and state aids.

In the next chapter, Turkey's regional policy reform process with regard to the adoption of main principles of the EU regional policy will be discussed more in detail. While doing this, implementation of the EU pre-accession instruments in eliminating economic, social and regional disparities in Turkey will be taken into consideration.

## CHAPTER V

### KEY ISSUES IN TURKEY'S ADAPTATION TO THE EU REGIONAL POLICY

#### 5.1. Introduction

In conjunction with the previous chapter, this chapter discusses three main issues. Firstly, four main developments with regard to the Turkish regional policy which is related to the EU regional policy agenda are going to be taken up. These are establishment of NUTS classification, establishment of 26 “regional” DAs at the NUTS 2 regions in Turkey, adoption of the NSRD and adoption of Regional Development Plans (RDP) prepared by DAs. Secondly, the use of EU pre-accession funds by Turkey in alleviating the regional discrepancies is dealt with. Thirdly and lastly, implementation of these funds is discussed with relevance to the principles of the EU regional policy principles, namely, programming, concentration, partnership and additionality.

All these issues are related to Turkey's future membership of the EU. In the case of membership, Turkey will allocate the EU SF earmarked for its NUTS 2 level regions and most probably through DAs and local administration by paying attention to the guiding principles of the NSRD and RDPs. In addition, at the central level, arrangements were done for establishing operating structures within relevant ministries to allocate and contract the IPA. Within the current developmental conditions and GDP levels, all regions of Turkey would be able to benefit from the EU SF under convergence objective, including the EU cohesion fund involving infrastructural investments at the national level.

## 5.2 Turkey's Regional Statistical Classification and Establishment of Development Agencies

Implementation of the EU regional policy is structured on a statistical system based on regional groupings. EU Regulation No 1059/2003 on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics has constituted the basis of this system.<sup>204</sup> Turkey had to align its statistical system with the EU legislation, as pre-accession funds were to be allocated to the specific regions based on the NUTS classification.

According to the Regulation, three hierarchical levels of NUTS regions are foreseen. Each member state is subdivided into NUTS 1 level territorial units (with population thresholds between 3-7 million). Each NUTS 1 units are further subdivided into NUTS 2 level territorial units (with population thresholds between 800,000-3 million). NUTS 2 units are also subdivided to NUTS 3 level units (with population thresholds between 150,000-800,000).<sup>205</sup>

With the Council of Ministers' Decision of 28 August 2002, Turkey has adopted its NUTS classification.<sup>206</sup> In terms of collection of statistical data, 12 Level 1, 26 Level 2 and 81 Level 3 territorial units were identified (See Table 2). Level 1 units roughly constitute the administrative regions of the country. Level 2 units were constituted by bringing together 1 to 6 provinces depending on their population. Three biggest provinces as a single province constitute Level 2 territorial units. And 81 provinces

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<sup>204</sup> Council of the European Union. *Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS)*, 2003, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1432412895711&uri=CELEX:02003R1059-20140902> (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Council of Ministers. *Decision No 2002/4720 on setting a Classification System for Territorial Units in the country in order to collect regional statistics, make socio-economic analysis of regions, set the framework for regional policies and establish a comparable statistical database with the EU Territorial Statistical System*, 2002, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2002/09/20020922.htm#3>, (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

are also identified as NUTS 3 territorial units.<sup>207</sup> Since 2002, all kinds of statistical data are collected according to this classification. EU pre-accession aid is also used and allocated with respect to NUTS 2 levels.

Statistical classification of regions in Turkey by taking population into account is a novelty introduced in the EU accession process. However, it is important to see the outcome of this classification in state aids and subsidy allocations as well. In fact, it could not be enough to allocate just the EU IPA funds in the pre-accession process, as well as the EU SF on the NUTS 2 level. Rather, all state investments, i.e. allocation of national resources, need to be based on NUTS 2 level, if a concrete impact is aimed. Considering the fact that the EU SF will be comparatively lesser in amount than national funds, in order to achieve a sustainable result in terms of regional development, pooling of both EU and national resources would be essential for individual regions.

**Table 2: NUTS regions in Turkey**

<b>NUTS 1 Regions (12 regions)</b>	<b>NUTS 2 Regions (26 regions)</b>	<b>Nuts 3 Regions (81 regions)</b>
Istanbul	İstanbul	İstanbul
Western Marmara	Tekirdağ	Tekirdağ, Edirne, Kırklareli
	Balıkesir	Balıkesir, Çanakkale
Aegean	İzmir	İzmir
	Aydın	Aydın, Denizli, Muğla
	Manisa	Manisa, Afyon, Kütahya, Uşak
Eastern Marmara	Bursa	Bursa, Eskişehir, Bilecik
	Kocaeli	Kocaeli, Sakarya, Düzce, Bolu, Yalova
Western Anatolia	Ankara	Ankara
	Konya	Konya, Karaman
Mediterranean	Antalya	Antalya, Isparta, Burdur
	Adana	Adana, Mersin
	Hatay	Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

Continued

<b>NUTS 1 Regions (12 regions)</b>	<b>NUTS 2 Regions (26 regions)</b>	<b>Nuts 3 Regions (81 regions)</b>
Central Anatolia	Kırıkkale	Kırıkkale, Aksaray, Niğde, Nevşehir, Kırşehir
	Kayseri	Kayseri, Yozgat, Sivas
Western Black sea	Zonguldak	Zonguldak, Karabük, Bartın
	Kastamonu	Kastamonu, Çankırı, Sinop
	Samsun	Samsun, Tokat, Çorum, Amasya
Eastern Black sea	Trabzon	Trabzon, Ordu, Giresun, Rize, Artvin, Gümüşhane
North-eastern Anatolia	Erzurum	Erzurum, Erzincan, Bayburt
	Ağrı	Ağrı, Kars, Iğdır, Ardahan
Central-eastern Anatolia	Malatya	Malatya, Elazığ, Bingöl, Tunceli
	Van	Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkâri
South-eastern Anatolia	Gaziantep	Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis
	Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır
	Mardin	Mardin, Batman, Siirt, Şırnak

Source: Ministry of Development

Establishment of DAs in NUTS 2 level is the second important development with regard to future implementation of the EU regional policy. The relevant law adopted in 2006 has set the legal framework for these units which will work for regional development by building up synergies at local and regional levels.<sup>208</sup> Initially, İzmir and Çukurova DAs were established. Later on, 24 DAs became functional in 2008 and 2009.<sup>209</sup>(See Table 3).

<sup>208</sup> *Kalkınma Ajanslarının Kuruluşu, Koordinasyonu ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun (Law on the Establishment, Coordination and Duties of Development Agencies)*, 25.1.2006.

<sup>209</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Chapter 22 on Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments*, <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/?p=87&l=2> (Accessed on 13 May 2015).

**Table 3: Development Agencies established at NUTS 2 Regions in Turkey**

Region	Provinces	Development Agency	Web address	Date of Establishment
TR31	<b>İzmir</b>	İzmir KA	<a href="http://www.izka.org.tr/">http://www.izka.org.tr/</a>	2006
TR62	<b>Adana, Mersin</b>	Çukurova KA	<a href="http://www.cka.org.tr/">http://www.cka.org.tr/</a>	
TR52	<b>Konya, Karaman</b>	Mevlana KA	<a href="http://www.mevka.org.tr/">http://www.mevka.org.tr/</a>	2008
TR83	<b>Amasya, Çorum, Samsun, Tokat</b>	Orta Karadeniz KA	<a href="http://www.oka.org.tr/">http://www.oka.org.tr/</a>	
TRB2	<b>Bitlis, Hakkari, Muş, Van</b>	Doğu Anadolu KA	<a href="http://www.daka.org.tr/">http://www.daka.org.tr/</a>	
TRC1	<b>Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Kilis</b>	İpekyolu KA	<a href="http://www.ika.org.tr/default.asp">http://www.ika.org.tr/default.asp</a>	
TRC3	<b>Batman, Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt</b>	Dicle KA	<a href="http://www.dika.org.tr/">http://www.dika.org.tr/</a>	
TR10	<b>İstanbul</b>	İstanbul KA	<a href="http://www.istka.org.tr/">http://www.istka.org.tr/</a>	
TRC2	<b>Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa</b>	Karacadağ KA	<a href="http://www.karacadağ.org.tr/default.asp">http://www.karacadağ.org.tr/default.asp</a>	
TRA1	<b>Bayburt, Erzincan, Erzurum</b>	Kuzeydoğu Anadolu KA	<a href="http://www.kudaka.org.tr/">http://www.kudaka.org.tr/</a>	
TR21	<b>Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ</b>	Trakya KA	<a href="http://www.trakyaka.org.tr/">http://www.trakyaka.org.tr/</a>	2009
TR22	<b>Balıkesir, Çanakkale</b>	Güney Marmara KA	<a href="http://www.gmka.org.tr/">http://www.gmka.org.tr/</a>	
TR32	<b>Aydın, Denizli, Muğla</b>	Güney Ege KA	<a href="http://www.geka.org.tr/">http://www.geka.org.tr/</a>	
TR33	<b>Afyon, Kütahya, Manisa, Uşak</b>	Zafer KA	<a href="http://www.zafer.org.tr/">http://www.zafer.org.tr/</a>	
TR41	<b>Bilecik, Bursa, Eskişehir</b>	Bursa Eskişehir Bilecik KA	<a href="http://www.bebka.org.tr/">http://www.bebka.org.tr/</a>	
TR42	<b>Bolu, Düzce, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Yalova</b>	Doğu Marmara KA	<a href="http://www.marka.org.tr/">http://www.marka.org.tr/</a>	

Continued

Region	Provinces	Development Agency	Web address	Date of Establishment
TR51	<b>Ankara</b>	Ankara KA	<a href="http://www.ankaraka.org.tr/">http://www.ankaraka.org.tr/</a>	2009
TR61	Antalya, Burdur, <b>Isparta</b>	Batı Akdeniz KA	<a href="http://www.baka.org.tr/">http://www.baka.org.tr/</a>	
TR63	<b>Hatay</b> , Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye	Doğu Akdeniz KA	<a href="http://www.dogaka.org.tr/">http://www.dogaka.org.tr/</a>	
TR71	Aksaray, Kırıkkale, Kırşehir, <b>Nevşehir</b> , Niğde	Ahiler KA	<a href="http://www.ahika.org.tr">http://www.ahika.org.tr</a>	
TR72	<b>Kayseri</b> , Sivas, Yozgat	Orta Anadolu KA	<a href="http://www.oran.org.tr/">http://www.oran.org.tr/</a>	
TR81	Bartın, Karabük, <b>Zonguldak</b>	Batı Karadeniz KA	<a href="http://www.bakka.gov.tr/">http://www.bakka.gov.tr/</a>	
TR82	Çankırı, <b>Kastamonu</b> , Sinop	Kuzey Anadolu KA	<a href="http://www.kuzka.org.tr/">http://www.kuzka.org.tr/</a>	
TR90	Artvin, Giresun, Ordu, Rize, Gümüşhane, <b>Trabzon</b>	Doğu Karadeniz KA	<a href="http://www.doka.org.tr/">http://www.doka.org.tr/</a>	
TRA2	Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır, <b>Kars</b>	Serhat KA	<a href="http://www.serka.org.tr/">http://www.serka.org.tr/</a>	
TRB1	Bingöl, Elazığ, <b>Malatya</b> , Tunceli	Fırat KA	<a href="http://www.fka.org.tr/">http://www.fka.org.tr/</a>	

Offices of development agencies are situated in the provinces written in bold letters.

Reference: Ministry for EU Affairs. *Development Agencies*, <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=45921> (Accessed on 5 June 2015); Ahmet Şimşek *Kalkınma Ajanslarının Performans Ölçümü*. Uzmanlık Tezi. Kalkınma Bakanlığı, Bölgesel Gelişme ve Yapısal Uyum Genel Müdürlüğü. Ankara, 2013, p. 15.

DAs were established as public legal entities, different from the public institutions, but are linked with the Ministry of Development. Agencies have the tasks to prepare and implement regional development plans and programmes. They will also monitor and evaluate these regional programmes, as it is the case with the EU funds allocated to candidate countries. DAs will also encourage cooperation among public and private sectors and NGOs in order to foster development in the respective regions. Agencies have the executive board composed of mayors, governors and chairmen of local chambers of commerce and industry.<sup>210</sup> Murat Ali Dulupçu argues that DAs' legislative framework keeps the role of the Ministry and impact of the central administration intact on regions.<sup>211</sup> The day-to-day manager of DAs, the secretary, is appointed by the Ministry, as well as the regional development plans are approved by the Ministry. This may raise some concerns about the freedom of manoeuvre of the agencies from the central administration. Nevertheless, agencies could develop competencies to formulate regional plans which could not be done by the central administration in the past for each region.<sup>212</sup> As mentioned before, the centrally prepared regional plans could not have been implemented in the past due to either lack of financial resources or administrative capacities.

DAs established at NUTS 2 level regions present a novelty for Turkey. As it was mentioned in the general preamble of its draft law,<sup>213</sup> agencies are considered as future intermediary bodies, which are going to prepare and implement regional development programmes to be implemented by national funds and the EU SF. In this regard, DAs are supposed to be crucial actors in implementation of the EU regional policy. However, this future function of the DAs has not yet been officially elaborated either by the Ministry of Development or the European Commission. In

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<sup>210</sup> Ebru Ertugal. "Europeanization and multi-level governance in Turkey", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 10:1, 2010, pp.97-110, p. 101.

<sup>211</sup> Murat Ali Dulupçu. *Bölgesel Politikalar Kopyalanabilir mi? Bölgeselleş(tir)me (Yönetim) Karşısında Yeni Bölge(sel)cilik (Yönetişim)*, pp.233-255, p. 248. [http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum3/3\\_3\\_dulupcu.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum3/3_3_dulupcu.pdf). (Accessed on 6 July 2015).

<sup>212</sup> Ebru Ertugal. "Europeanization and multi-level governance in Turkey", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 10:1, 2010, pp.97-110, p. 103.

<sup>213</sup> Ministry of Development. *Draft Law on Establishment of Development Agencies*, September 2005, pp. 13-25, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem22/yil01/ss920m.htm> (Accessed on 15 May 2015).

fact, it is also mentioned also mentioned by the EU in the screening report and 2009 RPR that present status of the DAs and their organic links with the central administration make it difficult for them to act as intermediaries of the EU SF.

### **5.3 Turkish National Strategy for Regional Development**

The main policy document for regional development, NSRD was adopted in December 2014 by the supreme regional development council and published in the Official Gazette in March 2015. This Strategy was a much expected political document by the European Commission, as it was mentioned almost in all the RPRs. The Strategy was prepared as a comprehensive coordination document including all aspects of national and regional development. As it was emphasised in the strategy, the partnership principle was applied largely by the Ministry of Development during the preparation of the strategy, by consulting and negotiating with representatives of public and private sector, NGOs, universities, DAs and other local stakeholders.<sup>214</sup>

The stated principles of the NSRD include cohesion and complementarity with national priorities, equal opportunities in development, sustainability, efficiency, participation, cooperation and partnership, multi-level governance and locality and subsidiarity.<sup>215</sup> These principles coincide especially with the partnership principle of the EU SF.

There are two rival goals in the Strategy that needs to be balanced. First goal of the Strategy is decrease regional disparities, whereas second goal is to realise the potential of regions by increasing their competitiveness through promoting local productive dynamics.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Kalkınma Bakanlığı. *Bölgesel Gelişme Ulusal Stratejisi (National Strategy for Regional Development) (2014-2023)*, 2014, p.99, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2015/03/20150324M1-1-1.pdf> (Accessed on 16 June 2015).

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. p.99.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. p.1.

Accordingly, main general objectives of the regional strategy was listed as “(a) spreading welfare in a more balanced manner by reducing regional disparities, (b) maximizing the contribution of all regions to the national development by realizing their potentials and increasing their competitiveness, (c) strengthening economic and social integration, (d) ensuring a more balanced spatial organization across the country”.<sup>217</sup> Similarly, on the one hand, competitiveness level of the regions are aimed to be increased, on the other hand, the less developed regions are to be supported.

Moreover, there are spatial and horizontal objectives. In terms of spatial development, the focus is on metropolitan and rural areas. Increasing global competitiveness of metropolitan areas and their hinterlands, as well as of industrial development centres are two stated spatial objectives related to the “competitiveness”. In terms of decreasing regional economic differences, economic activity in structurally transformed cities will be revived together with the regional growth poles in the less developed regions. Furthermore, cities in priority development areas and rural development areas will be supported.<sup>218</sup>

As regards horizontal objectives, improving governance and administrative capacity in regional development, reconciling public investment and subsidy mechanism with regional development objectives, increasing innovation capacity and competitiveness of regions, developing cross-border and inter-regional cooperation, ensuring sustainable and environment-friendly development and improving transportation network and accessibility are the main themes.<sup>219</sup>

As it can be clearly inferred from the stated objectives of the NSRD, Turkish regional policy will be implemented by a variety of instruments. In addition to public investments and subsidies at the regional level, and to some extent phasing out the former ones, human resources development, access to information and network infrastructures and improvement of business environment seems to be the new

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid. p.101.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid. p.101.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. p. 101.

priority objectives. In this regard clustering and regional innovation systems stand out as popular tools to increase regional competitiveness. Even though infrastructural supports for transport and industries will continue, considerable investment is planned to be made for science parks and technology centres.<sup>220</sup>

The NSRD lists the institutional structure for implementation of the strategy at three levels, namely central, regional and local levels. At the central level, the Ministry of Development and line ministries forming the regional development committee and supreme council will be involved in designing policies for regional development. At the regional level, main actors are the DAs (in 26 NUTS2 regions) and the regional development administrations (KOP, DOKAP, DAP and GAP). Finally at the local level, municipalities and special provincial administrations will be active in implementation. At the political decision making level, the regional development supreme council will be the main platform composed of relevant ministers. The regional development committee, on the other hand, will provide technical consultation among the undersecretaries of the related ministries.

The NSRD does not refer to development priorities of individual NUTS 2 regions, rather general remarks are made regarding sectors and development priorities, with the sole exception of the tourism strategies which are elaborated on NUTS 2 basis. In this regard, the regional dimension of the NSRD has to be rather inferred as it was not stated explicitly.

All in all, finalisation of this strategy is important in the sense that it represents the “national” framework for regional policy by taking current EU regional development priorities into consideration. The European Commission is going to review the Strategy in order to analyse its complementarity with the EU regional policy objectives. However, at a stage where there is no accession date at sight, it could be less likely that the Commission would analyse Turkish strategic documents solely to assess the compliance with the current EU regional policy objectives.

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid. p. 31.

#### **5.4 Regional Development Plans of the Development Agencies: The Example of TRC3 region**

Regional plans had been prepared in 26 NUTS 2 regions in 2009-2010 by taking the general framework established by the then draft NSRD. In line with the adopted NSRD, the second round of regional development plans were adopted for the 2014-2023 period in December 2014. These plans have identified development potential of respective regions and set forth priority development sectors and areas in these regions.

Out of 26 NUTS 2 level regions, the regional plans of NUTS 2 regions with lower levels of development focused mainly on social and infrastructural development. In this study, one regional development plan was taken as an example. The TRC3 (Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt) region was chosen as it is one of the three least developed regions in Turkey. According to a survey on economic and social development levels of provinces in Turkey, out of 81 provinces, Mardin ranks 74th, Batman 70th, Şırnak 77th and Şırnak 78th.<sup>221</sup>

TRC3 regional plan was prepared by the coordination of Dicle Development Agency. The plan has two main priority axes with various sub-priorities. The first axis is social development and social inclusion. It has following priorities: improving quality of education at primary, secondary and vocational school, including increasing schooling rates of girls and boys, as well as raising the literacy among the public in general; increasing access to health services and increasing its quality; decreasing the rate of undeclared work by awareness raising and improving skills of labour force; social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged groups by providing services to youth, children disabled and elderly and improving status of women and ensuring equal opportunities. Another priority is to increase the quality of life in rural areas. Road building out of indigenous material instead of asphalt, preservation of

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<sup>221</sup> Kalkınma Bakanlığı. *İllerin ve Bölgelerin Sosyo-Ekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırması (SEGE-2011)*, 2013, p. 76, [http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/2\\_turkiye\\_ab\\_iliskileri/2\\_2\\_adaylik\\_sureci/2\\_2\\_8\\_diger/tckb\\_sege\\_2013.pdf](http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/2_turkiye_ab_iliskileri/2_2_adaylik_sureci/2_2_8_diger/tckb_sege_2013.pdf). (Accessed on 7 August 2015).

drinking water resources, initiation of waste water and sewage systems by local budgets, building internal roads of villages, transformation of irrigation systems are the sub-priorities. Encouraging entrepreneurship and thereby increasing employment, developing cultural life and popularising sport activities are the other sub-priorities of social development axis<sup>222</sup>.

In the second axis, value added production and services, the main priorities are increasing value added agricultural production by branding and competitiveness of animal husbandry. It is also focused on developing new fields of industry, together with effective and efficient use of mining potential. Another point is searching for oil and natural gas, while efforts will be given for realisation of Iraq-Turkey natural gas pipeline project.<sup>223</sup> In line with the Europe 2020 objective, renewable energy potential of the region will also be investigated. In this regard, hydroelectricity potential will be searched, infrastructural work of provinces and districts will be completed and biogas and landfill gas potential will be explored. Sun, wind and geothermal potential of the region will be pinpointed and relevant feasibility studies will be carried out. Competitiveness of tourism in the region will be increased. In addition, foreign trade capacity with neighbouring countries will be increased and new markets will be searched. Financial, institutional and technical support services will be developed and disseminated for investors and entrepreneurs, together with improving promotion, branding and marketing capabilities of enterprises.

Sustainable development, as also being a priority in the EU is another axis of the regional plan. The preservation of natural areas and ecological resources as well as management of drinking and utility water and waste water is also cited as objectives. Prevention of environmental pollution, securing clean and continuous energy supplies, implementation of energy efficiency practices, strengthening agricultural infrastructure by irrigation systems and land consolidation are other important

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<sup>222</sup> Dicle Kalkınma Ajansı. *TRC3 Mardin-Batman-Şırnak-Siirt 2014-2023 Bölgesel Gelişme Planı*, 2014, pp. 258-321, [http://www.dika.org.tr/photos/files/TRC3\\_2014-2023\\_B%C3%B6lgesel\\_Geli%C5%9Fme\\_Plan%C4%B1.pdf](http://www.dika.org.tr/photos/files/TRC3_2014-2023_B%C3%B6lgesel_Geli%C5%9Fme_Plan%C4%B1.pdf) (Accessed on 30 June 2015).

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. pp. 326-332.

objectives. In fact, other main infrastructural targets, such as the transportation, communication and industrial zones were also mentioned.<sup>224</sup>

This comprehensive plan has provided detailed analysis of the potential of the region and an exhaustive list of objectives; however, it has not foreseen a timeframe for the actions nor has it foreseen budget allocation, although potential sources of financing were cited as ministries, KOSGEB and private sector. In addition, even though the plan contains extensive analytical data, it does not include any detailed sectoral policies and measures.

According to a recent report<sup>225</sup> which analysed 25 regional development plans, all plans have established links with national strategies, yet some of which are out of date. Sectoral priorities are consistent with those of national strategies; however in some NUTS 2 regions prioritisation of sectors were made both at regional and provincial levels, putting more emphasis on specific policies and measures. Too many prioritised sectors would negatively affect the logic of prioritisation and effectiveness while allocating resources.<sup>226</sup> This feature can be observed in the TRC3 regional plan as well, as focusing on limited priorities could provide better implementation prospects.

## **5.5 EU Funding for Regional Development in Turkey**

The EU financial assistance to Turkey was initiated to improve both institutional capacity of Turkish institutions, quality of legislation and its implementation in order to align Turkish policies with those of the EU. EU financial assistance dates back to the 1960s, which is long before the accession candidacy status of Turkey. In 1964-1995, Turkey has used one billion Euros as EU assistance, mostly in the form of credits. In 1996-1999, after the decision was taken to establish the customs union

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid. pp. 404-414.

<sup>225</sup> OECD and Ministry of Development. *Boosting Regional Competitiveness in Turkey, Second Project Committee Meeting Background Note*, Ankara, 8 April 2015.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. pp. 12-13.

between Turkey and the EU, 755.3 million Euros were used mostly as credits. In addition, under MEDA I (Mediterranean Economic Development Area) Programme, grants were allocated to 55 projects with a total budget of 376 million Euros over the period of 1996-1999.<sup>227</sup>

After the announcement of the candidacy of Turkey for the EU membership at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, the EU assistance was streamlined under the coordination of the newly established Secretariat for EU Affairs affiliated with the Prime Ministry and the Central Finance and Contracts Unit attached to the Undersecretariat of Treasury. Annual programmes composed of projects were prepared and implemented mainly by the beneficiary public institutions. Especially, after October 2005, when the EU membership negotiations began with Turkey, there has been a substantial increase in the amount of EU financial assistance. Between the years of 2002-2006, 164 individual projects were implemented amounting to a total of 1,320 million Euros.<sup>228</sup> In 2007-2013, a new EU financial assistance programme, IPA, was initiated. The main difference between the IPA and previous EU financial aids was the foreseen establishment of operating structures for the implementation of sectoral OPs, which constitute the precursor of the EU SF management structures. Mainly programming, implementation, contracting and finance units were established in four ministries. The Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation, the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communication, the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security have set-up relevant bodies to use the IPA funds. These operating structures have to implement four OPs (Environment, Transportation, Regional Competitiveness and Human Resources Development) under the framework of IPA and these units became fully operational for the 2007-2013 period.

The IPA I is divided into five components (See Table 4). Component I is on “Transition Assistance and Institution Building”, which is allocated for “the EU

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<sup>227</sup>Ministry for EU Affairs. *Turkey-EU Financial Cooperation*, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=5&l=1> (Accessed on 2 June 2015).

<sup>228</sup>Ibid.

acquis alignment, public administration reform, justice and home affairs reforms, civil society development and fundamental rights, environment policy, education and health system reform and financial control”.<sup>229</sup>

Component II is on “Cross Border Cooperation” which aims to prepare Turkey for the use of EU SF. Currently, Turkey is party to the Turkey-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Programme and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Black Sea Basin Programme. Both programmes are coordinated by the Ministry for EU Affairs which is tasked with Prime Ministerial Circular in 2009. On “Bulgaria-Turkey IPA CBC Programme” The Ministry for EU Affairs is acting as the national authority. The Programme is run by shared management by the lead of Bulgarian agency. The NUTS 3 regions Kırklareli and Edirne provinces are eligible regions to benefit from the programme. The programme is implemented through call for proposals open to not-for-profit partner applicants from Bulgarian districts Yambol and Haskovo and Turkish provinces Edirne and Kırklareli. Three sets of call for proposals for joint projects were organised in the 2007-2013 programming period.<sup>230</sup> A total of €32 million have been contracted for 120 projects to be implemented by joint beneficiaries from Bulgaria and Turkey.<sup>231</sup>

Another cross-border cooperation tool, Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC Programme, was established under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument. Eight countries at the Black Sea basin, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and Turkey participate to the Programme. The Programme generally aims to “promote economic and social development by involving local people to work together in the border areas”. The Programme is open to all levels of local/regional/central authorities/institutions and civil society organisations. In Turkey, seven NUTS 2 regions and 25 provinces are eligible to benefit from the

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<sup>229</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *IPA-I Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component* <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=45627&l=2> (Accessed on 2 June 2015).

<sup>230</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2012, p.23, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=46749&l=1>. (Accessed on 30 June 2015).

<sup>231</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2014, p.17.

Programme resources. For 2007–2013, 28.1 million Euros was allocated for the Programme from ENPI resources, and 7 million Euros were added to the programme from IPA funds for Turkish partners. The Programme is implemented by call for proposals, where the eligible applicants implement joint projects from the participating countries. So far, two groups of projects were implemented in 2009 and 2012. Increasing the institutional capacity for these cross-border cooperation programmes is very important, since the EU cohesion policy has a component to improve the capacity of border regions throughout the EU border regions.<sup>232</sup>

Component III is on the regional development focusing on transport, environment and regional competitiveness and aims to prepare Turkey for the use of EU SF once it becomes an EU member state. The Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology established units for implementation of the respective OPs. In the Transport OP it is mainly focused on “improving transportation infrastructure by taking safety and inter-modality on future trans-European transport network” into account. Under Environment OP, mainly “environmental protection by constructing waste water treatment and solid waste services, as well as quality drinking water supplies” are to be developed. Regional competitiveness OP, on the other hand, focuses on “developing technological and innovative bases for industry and services in the regions for enhancing competitiveness and reducing regional socio-economic disparities in the regions that per capita income is lower than 75% of Turkey average”.<sup>233</sup>

Component IV is on developing human resources and on preparation of Turkey for the future use of the ESF. Employment, gender equality, social inclusion and education are its sub-priorities. Human resources development OP is implemented by Ministry of Labour and Social Security and aims to provide training for the labour

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<sup>232</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2011, p.22, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=46749&l=1> (Accessed on 30 June 2015).

<sup>233</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *IPA-I Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component* <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=45627&l=2> (Accessed on 2 June 2015).

force and increase their employability in the regions whose per capita income is lower than 75% of Turkey average.<sup>234</sup>

Component V is on rural development. Rural development remains outside the scope of the current EU SF. However, the rural development programme provides financial support to enterprises, productive individuals, cooperatives, and production associations operating in agriculture, animal husbandry, nourishment, fishery and alternative agricultural fields. In this component, full authority over use of funds was conferred upon the Institution for Supporting Rural and Agricultural Development in Turkey.<sup>235</sup>

In this thesis, IPA components I, II and V will not be discussed, since either some of them have different priorities or have differing implementing modalities. The main focus is going to be on IPA components III and IV.

**Table 4: EU Pre-accession Aid to Turkey (IPA I) (million Euro)**

Component	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
I- Transition Assistance and Institution Building	256.7	256.1	239.6	217.8	231.2	227.5	238.5	1,667.4
II-Cross-border Cooperation	2.1	2.8	3	3.1	5.1	2.1	2.2	20.6
III-Regional Development	167.5	173.8	182.7	238.1	293.4	356.1	366.8	1,778.4
a. Environment	67	69.5	67.6	95.2	117.3	142.4	146.7	705.8
b. Transport	58.6	60.8	60.3	71.4	88	124.6	128.4	592.1
c. Regional Competitiveness	41.9	43.5	54.8	71.4	88	89	91.7	480.4
IV-Human Resources Development	50.2	52.9	55.6	63.4	77.6	83.2	91.1	474.1
V-Rural Development	20.7	53	85.5	131.3	172.5	187.4	204.1	854.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>497.2</b>	<b>538.6</b>	<b>566.4</b>	<b>653.7</b>	<b>779.8</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>902.9</b>	<b>4,795.2</b>

Source: Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 10 November 2014.

Before discussing the IPA components, it could be necessary to mention about economic and social cohesion projects implemented before IPA and focused on regional development. Those can be categorised in two groups: MEDA projects

<sup>234</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *TR-EU Financial Cooperation*, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=5&l=2>. Accessed on 2 June 2015.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

which were implemented in 2000-2004 period and projects implemented in line with the pNDP, which became operational in 2003 and implemented in 2004-2006 period.

Under MEDA Programme in 2001, GAP regional development programme was implemented with a budget of 47 million Euros. This was the first EU funded action with a specific regional focus on poverty alleviation, covering 9 provinces of the GAP region in the South-eastern part of Turkey. Among the components of the project, a rural development grant scheme with a 20 million Euros budget supported farmers to improve their skills and farming methods through training, capacity building and investment. A cultural heritage grant scheme totalling 12 million Euros was used to restore some historical building to function for income generating and employment creating purposes. A further 2 million Euros were allocated for SME grant scheme to support local GIDEMs (Entrepreneurs Support Centres).<sup>236</sup>

Another project under MEDA was the Eastern Anatolia Development Programme with a budget of 45 million Euros, which was an important step for adopting an integrated approach to regional programming. Van, Hakkari, Bitlis and Muş provinces were the project provinces. It had various components, such as capacity building; agriculture and rural development; support for SMEs; tourism, environment and social measures. Similar to GAP programme, under rural development component, trainings were provided for farmers to improve their skills for quality production of livestock. In addition a grant scheme helped farmers build capacity and further invest in their production. SME support, on the other hand focused on improving entrepreneurial skills in the region through training and capacity building for local business support organisations. The tourism and environment component aimed to improve image of the region as a tourism destination and preserve environment by developing waste management systems. Poverty was also taken into consideration and assistance to most vulnerable groups and capacity building opportunities for these groups was provided to local social services and NGOs.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Theresa Reeves. *Regional Development in the EU and Turkey*, 2006, p. 36, [http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum1/1\\_2\\_reeves.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum1/1_2_reeves.pdf) (Accessed on 10 June 2015).

<sup>237</sup> Ibid. p. 37.

**Table 5: EU Funded Regional Development Programmes Budget Allocation (2000-2006)**

Programme	Budget (million Euros)		Total (million Euros)
	EU Support (million Euros)	National Contribution (million Euros)	
Eastern Anatolia Development Programme (TRB2)*	45	-	45
GAP*	47	-	47
Kastamonu (TR82), Samsun (TR83), Erzurum(TRA1)	40	12.3	52.3
Kayseri (TR72), Konya (TR52), Ağrı (TRA2), Malatya (TRB1)	70	20.6	90.6
Trabzon (TR90)	18	6	24

\* Eastern Anatolia Development Programme (TRB2) and GAP were financed under EU MEDA programme and did not require any national co-financing.

Source: Compiled from Deniz Akkahve, AB Destekli Bölgesel Kalkınma Programlarının Yönetimi ve Yapısal Fonlara Hazırlık, 2006, p. 174, [http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum2/2\\_4\\_akkahve.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum2/2_4_akkahve.pdf). (Accessed on 10 June 2015).

In 2001, as a requirement of the EU accession process, the European Commission has asked Turkey to prepare a pNDP as an Annex of the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (2003). The pNDP had to set the framework for economic and social cohesion of Turkey which would be supported by the EU pre-accession financial aid. Accordingly, 35% of the earmarked financial aid was allocated for achieving the objective of the economic and social cohesion. For the 2004-2006 period, four development axes were identified, as “(1) enhancing competitiveness of enterprises; (2) human resources development and employment; (3) improvement of infrastructure and protection of environment, and (4) enhancing economic power of regions, decreasing regional developmental discrepancies and rural development”.<sup>238</sup> In this document, it was stated that Turkey would prepare a regional development strategy at the national scale, together with the regional development plans in NUTS 2 regions as was required in AP 2003. In this regard regional development projects were developed in Samsun, Kastamonu, Erzurum, Kayseri and Konya based NUTS 2 regions under the 2003 and 2004 programming of the EU pre-accession assistance. Implementation of these projects took place in 2003-2006. The Eastern Anatolia

<sup>238</sup> Kalkınma Bakanlığı. *Bölgesel Gelişme Ulusal Stratejisi (National Strategy for Regional Development) (2014-2023)*, 2014, p. 29, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2015/03/20150324M1-1-1.pdf> (Accessed on 16 June 2015).

Development Programme supported by MEDA would also be implemented in 2003-2006. Furthermore, master plans prepared for the South-eastern Anatolia Project (GAP), the Eastern Anatolia Project, the Eastern Black Sea Regional Development Project, and the Zonguldak-Bartın-Karabük Regional Development Projects will be converted to regional OPs.

The pNDP constituted the strategic framework for programming EU pre-accession financial assistance for Turkey's economic and social cohesion.<sup>239</sup> In fact, when Turkey's population and geographical size, as well as problems regarding economic and social cohesion and its capacity to develop programmes and projects towards solving these problems are considered, it is asserted that financial assistance to be provided by the EU in 2004-2006 periods in the field of economic and social cohesion is quite limited in amount to be able to create a considerable impact. In addition, Turkey's accession date to the EU was indefinite too. Ensuring convergence in the field of economic and social cohesion could only be possible if effective regional programmes aiming to reduce regional development disparities are implemented at the national scale.<sup>240</sup>

Hence, a series of economic and social cohesion projects were implemented in the identified priority NUTS 2 regions, which are considerably less developed. These regions were TR82 (Çankırı, Kastamonu, Sinop), TR83 (Amasya, Çorum, Samsun, Tokat), TRA1 (Bayburt, Erzincan, Erzurum); TRA2 (Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır, Kars), TR72 (Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat), TR52 (Karaman, Konya), TRB1 (Bingöl, Elazığ, Malatya, Tunceli) and TR90 (Artvin, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Ordu, Rize, Trabzon). These NUTS 2 regions; except for Gaziantep, Konya and Kayseri provinces, were also within the scope of priority development areas and these regional development programmes amounted to a total budget of 235 million Euros. These programmes

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<sup>239</sup> *Preliminary National Development Plan*, Ankara, December 2003, p. 2, [http://www.cepal.org/iyd/noticias/pais/1/31521/Turquia\\_doc\\_1.pdf](http://www.cepal.org/iyd/noticias/pais/1/31521/Turquia_doc_1.pdf) (Accessed on 15 June 2015).

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

were mainly implemented through large scale grant schemes.<sup>241</sup> The programmes aimed to build capacity at the regional level to implement programmes in a decentralised manner and encourage a more participatory approach to regional planning with involvement of both public and private sector local stakeholders. The pre-accession programmes covered projects on “small scale infrastructure, human resource development, agricultural support, tourism and rural development; environmental protection and quality of life”.<sup>242</sup>

Samsun (TR83), Kastamonu (TR 82), Erzurum (TRA1) regional development programmes financed by the EU pre-accession aid provided funding for projects on small scale infrastructure and support to SMEs and local development initiatives, with a budget of 52.3 million Euros and mostly through grant schemes. Malatya (TRB1), Ağrı (TRA2), Konya (TR52), Kayseri (TR72) regional development programme covered a total of 13 provinces and had a budget of 90.6 million. It had similar priorities and modalities, as it was the case in other programmes. Furthermore, Trabzon (TR90) regional development programme had a 26 million Euros budget and covered 5 provinces of the Eastern Black Sea coast. The priorities and activities were similar to other programmes.<sup>243</sup> All in all these EU funded regional development projects created a stimulus for the further development of a regional policy perspective in wider Turkey. However, the impact of those is yet to be seen.

## **5.6 Operational Structures and Programmes for Implementation of IPA I**

In 2007-2013 programming period, for the implementation of the IPA Components III and IV, respective ministries were accredited by the EU services and actual implementation has started in 2011-2012. Since then, these units have improved their

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<sup>241</sup> Deniz Akkahve. *AB Destekli Bölgesel Kalkınma Programlarının Yönetimi ve Yapısal Fonlara Hazırlık*, 2006, [http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum2/2\\_4\\_akkahve.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum2/2_4_akkahve.pdf) (Accessed on 10 June 2015).

<sup>242</sup> Theresa Reeves. *Regional Development in the EU and Turkey*, 2006, p. 36, [http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum1/1\\_2\\_reeves.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum1/1_2_reeves.pdf) (Accessed on 10 June 2015).

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

capacity to a considerable extent. The main issue with regard to the capacity was high staff turnover in the IPA units established at the ministries due to lower level of salaries. In order to remedy this, a uniform regulation was adopted which equalized salaries of expert personnel in the public institutions, including IPA units of the respective ministries.<sup>244</sup>

Transport OP (IPA-I 2007-2013), which was managed by the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, could have considerable impact on regional development; however, this OP has no geographical concentration focus to favour the less developed regions of Turkey; rather a connectivity objective with the EU transport networks was the main idea for designing the programme. Transport OP includes two sub-sectors of transport; railway infrastructure and port infrastructure. Main projects financed under this programme are “Rehabilitation and reconstruction of Köseköy-Gebze section of Ankara-Istanbul High Speed Railway Line”, “Rehabilitation and Signalization of Irmak-Karabük-Zonguldak Railway Line”, “Construction of a New Port in Filyos” and “Construction of Mersin Container Port”, “Modernization of Samsun-Kalın Railway Line”, “Modernization of Malatya-Narlı Railway Line”, “Modernization of Alayunt-Afyon-Konya Railway Line” and “New Construction of Halkalı-Kapıkule Railway Line”.<sup>245</sup> For 2007-2013, the co-financing rate for Turkey is 15 % and the total budget of the programme is 687.9 million Euros, 103.1 million Euros of which is financed by national resources.<sup>246</sup>

Environment OP (IPA-I 2007-2013) is setting up the framework for regional development in terms of providing infrastructure to the cities. Ministry of Environment and Urbanization is the operational structure for the programming, contracting and financing of the operations to be implemented under the Environment OP. In the OP, there is no geographical concentration focus on the less

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<sup>244</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2014, p. 96.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. p.52.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. p.56.

developed regions; instead all provinces and districts of Turkey which are in need of urban infrastructure are eligible to benefit from the programme.<sup>247</sup>

Mainly provincial and district municipalities have been using the fund for building clean and waste water facilities as well as for disposal and reuse of solid waste. Improving water supply, sewerage and wastewater treatment services is essential especially in the central and eastern parts of the country. In addition, integrated solid waste management are to be improved in a number of cities. A predetermined ratio (25%) of national contribution is foreseen for co-financing these urban infrastructural projects.<sup>248</sup>

Since these projects involved construction of waterways, plants etc. it took a long time to prepare the paperwork of feasibility studies, work tenders and contracts. Delays in tendering procedure have also affected implementation process. The funds that could not be used (disbursed) after three years of the programming year are to be de-committed by the EU, which means the EU funds will be lost without using them.<sup>249</sup>

As of 2013, 39 projects (in Manavgat, Erdemli, Lüleburgaz, Ordu, Erdemli, Doğubayazıt, Manavgat, Ceyhan, Diyarbakır, Amasya, Lüleburgaz, Siverek, Erzurum, Erzincan, Konya, Adıyaman, Balıkesir, Merzifon, Soma, Seydişehir, Çorum, Bulancak, Nizip, Akçaabat, Akşehir and Bartın, Polatlı, Silvan, Diyarbakır, Kütahya and Şanlıurfa) are at various stages of planning, tendering, contracting and implementation with a cost of 941.5 million Euros.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Ministry of Environment and Forestry. *Environment Operational Programme*, September 2007, Ankara, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/ipa/tk3\\_envir\\_ek1\\_eop\\_2007\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/ipa/tk3_envir_ek1_eop_2007_en.pdf). (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>248</sup> Ibid. p. 108-111.

<sup>249</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2011, p.41, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=46749&l=1>. (Accessed on 30 June 2015).

<sup>250</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2014, p.33.

Regional Competitiveness OP (IPA I 2007-2013) is the third programme which has substantive focus on regional development by enlivening the regional business potential. Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology is the operational structure for the programming, contracting and financing of the operations to be implemented under the Regional Competitiveness OP. Contrary to the Environment and Transport OPs, in Regional Competitiveness OP, there is a geographical concentration on the lesser developed regions, whose per capita GDP is lower than the 75% of Turkey average. Regional Competitiveness OP has two main priorities: improving business environment, and strengthening enterprise capacity and fostering entrepreneurship. Under first priority, mainly, industrial infrastructures and financing instrument will be developed. Business incubators will be established. Research and development (R&D), innovation, technology and ICT facilities will be improved. In addition, tourism infrastructure will be improved and promotion and marketing activities will be held in tourism sector.<sup>251</sup>

Second priority is mainly focusing on provision of information and consultancy to enterprises and fostering cooperation in industrial sector.<sup>252</sup> As of December 2013, 63 operations were either planned and tendered or contracted and implemented. Budget of 51 operations amounted to 425.5 million Euros, which have not started to be implemented. Remaining 12 projects are currently under implementation with a budget of 129.7 million Euros. Names of some bigger projects are “Establishment of Innovation Centre for Food-Innofood Centre” and “Samsun Logistics Centre”.<sup>253</sup>

Human Resources Development OP (HRD OP) (IPA-I 2007-2013) has a focus on the less developed regions by increasing the human potential in the regions. Ministry of Labour and Social Security is the operating structure of the HRD OP. This programme also has a geographical focus in terms of eligibility of operations. Mainly there are four axes, “increasing employment, especially of women and youth;

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<sup>251</sup> Ministry of Science Industry and Technology, *Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme*, Ankara, 2007, <https://ipa.sanayi.gov.tr/Files/Documents/amending-rcop-tr-annexe-1-26112012100620.pdf> (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. pp. 87-120.

<sup>253</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2014, p.43.

improving quality of education by establishing links with requirements of labour market, especially increasing the enrolment of girls; increasing adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs by promoting lifelong learning facilities; and improving opportunities for disadvantaged people to be included into labour market".<sup>254</sup> Various operations were planned and implemented to achieve these objectives. Capacity building activities in order to attain the programme objectives were implemented by both public and civil society institutions via grant projects. Main operations were on increasing woman and youth employment, improving vocational education, increasing enrolment rates, especially of girls, to secondary education, promoting lifelong learning, fighting against undeclared work, increasing quality of public employment services and promoting active inclusion of disadvantaged groups. HRD OP entailed considerably labour-intensive implementation modalities, where 431 individual small sized projects (grant contracts) were put into effect mainly in the Eastern part of the country.<sup>255</sup>

In order to increase synergies and potential development impact on the regions, there needs to be established coherence between the diverse OPs implemented in the same region. For example, when Regional Competitiveness OP supports operations in a specific region to boost enterprises/jobs; Human Resources Development OP should finance operations in the same region to provide training and retraining for the labour force accordingly. As a matter of fact, this issue is also emphasised for the current EU member states as well. John Bachtler argues that "lack of integration between national OPs and regional-level programmes, and between national programmes implemented by different ministries is a strategic problem".<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Ministry of Labour and Social Security. *Human Resources Development Programme*, 2007, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/ipa/tk4\\_hrd\\_op\\_turkey\\_2007\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/ipa/tk4_hrd_op_turkey_2007_en.pdf) (Accessed on 18 June 2015.)

<sup>255</sup> Ministry for EU Affairs. *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Assistance under IPA*, 2011, pp.71-90, <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?p=46749&l=1> (Accessed on 30 June 2015).

<sup>256</sup> John Bachtler et al. (2013) *Evaluation of the Main Achievements of Cohesion Policy Programmes and Projects over the Longer Term in 15 Selected Regions (from 1989-1993 Programme Period to the Present)* (2011.CE.16.B.AT.015), Final Report to the European Commission (DG Regio), European Policies Research Centre, University of Strathclyde (Glasgow) and London School of Economics, p. 121, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/cohesion\\_achievements/final\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/cohesion_achievements/final_report.pdf) (Accessed on 17 June 2015).

## 5.7 Turkey's Performance in Europeanizing Its Regional Policy

EU regional policy does not entail either a strict conditionality to be fulfilled before accession, or any EU acquis to be transposed before acceding to the EU. Therefore, most Central and East European countries did not prioritise regional policy in preparing for accession. These countries have benefited from EU pre-accession funding too; however, these funds were not sufficient for them to adjust their legal frameworks, administrative structures and management systems. After their accession it came to the forefront that albeit some structures were available, there also existed weak coordination, high turnover of staff, and lack of skills and frequent institutional change which would arguably negatively affect the planning and implementation of the EU SF in these countries.<sup>257</sup>

However, the picture turned out the reverse when performance assessments were made for new EU member states in 2004–2008 multi-financial programming period, in using the funds. In the new member states the main focus was on sufficiency of institutional and administrative capacity to implement the funds properly. In fact, there were arguments about the fact that after the accession, reforms made for the EU accession could have gone backwards.<sup>258</sup> However, a research on the SF performance of eight CEE countries in 2004–2008 showed that institutionalization continued after the accession in terms of the use of EU SF, in fact, the administrative capacities became much more effective in time.<sup>259</sup>

It can be asserted that even though there were some concerns about the absorption capacity of new EU member states in benefiting from the SF effectively, the research showed that their capacity has improved in a short period of time than predicted and

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<sup>257</sup> John Bachtler and Irene McMaster. "EU cohesion policy and the role of the regions: Investigating the influence of structural funds in the new member states", *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 26(2), 2008, pp. 398–427.

<sup>258</sup> John Bachtler et al. *From Conditionality to Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe: Administrative Performance and Capacity in Cohesion Policy*, European Policies Research Centre, School of Government and Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK b Metis GmbH, Vienna, Austria Published online: 01 Mar 2013, 2013, p. 736.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.* p. 735.

those have achieved a performance comparable to some older member states.<sup>260</sup> Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Poland were presenting good level of development in application of funds according to this study.<sup>261</sup>

In this regard, new member states have had an adjustment process for EU regional policy “through intensive pre-accession aid programmes to build administrative capacity”. At the final analysis the pre-accession aid and post-accession regional policy enabled the new EU member states to develop new organizational structures, human resource management and administrative procedures and tools. This was achieved mainly through “learning-by-doing”.<sup>262</sup>

A similar path of thinking can be followed for the Turkish case as well, with the exception of the non-existence of an accession date to the EU. In all the missions of the European Commission during which they discuss either policy issues or IPA assistance programmes, Commission bureaucrats reiterate the close link between the accession process and the IPA funds, especially in the field of regional policy. It has been repeated in numerous occasions that IPA programme components III and IV, namely environment, transport, regional competitiveness and human resources development, should have a close and indispensable links with the current and upcoming EU regional policy priorities.<sup>263</sup> And since the existing IPA implementing structures at the central level are planned to be used also for the EU SF after membership, it can be argued that in terms of administrative capacity at the central level, but not much at regional level, considerable development has been achieved. Nevertheless there always exists the probability of Turkey’s inability to use the allocated funds due to time limitations set forth in the financing agreements. In such cases, funds that could not be spent at a fixed period go back to the EU budget. This shows that there still exist some bottlenecks in programming and implementation of IPA funded projects.

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid. p. 752.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid. p. 751.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. p. 753.

<sup>263</sup> Interview with the IPA programme manager in European Commission, 23 April 2015, Brussels.

In addition, at regional and local levels potential implementing structures are not ready and are rather in a fledgling stage. In this regard, for the future period, the main efforts need to be given to develop administrative structures and intensify capacity building efforts for the use of EU SF at regional and local levels. Conditioning the starting of such efforts with the fixing of an accession date for Turkey may delay the whole process which can negatively affect the country's absorption capacity for IPA funds and the readiness for the use of EU SF upon accession.

At the bottom of all these concerns lie three issues that present some hindrances for Turkey's full harmonisation with EU regional policy. As Murat Ali Dulupçu made it clear that "firstly the state itself has to evolve from its unitary and/or centralist structure to a shape that facilitates the regional decision-making processes. Secondly EU accession process has to move forward with the Europeanization efforts simultaneously, which means that Europeanization could be possible as long as the EU accession process is kept alive. This is also very much related to the attitude and perception of the EU decision-makers, apart from Turkey. And thirdly, populist policies, such as providing state aids to the regions which traditionally raise support to certain political parties, have to be abandoned for the implementation of effective regional policies".<sup>264</sup>

When it comes to the principles of the EU regional policy, as it is mentioned in the second chapter, having put special emphasis on eliminating regional developmental discrepancies among EU regions by the EU founding treaties, the EU regional policy has set four principles for the use of the EU SF, which are concentration, programming, partnership and additionality. These principles which have been set with the 1988 reform still constitute the distinctive elements of the EU regional policy. The adoption and implementation of these principles under the IPA funds by Turkey may present to a certain extent its performance in Europeanization of its regional policies.

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<sup>264</sup> Murat Ali Dulupçu. "Regionalisation for Turkey: An Illusion of a Cure?" *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 12(2), 2005, pp.99-115, p. 111.

Programming on a multi-year perspective, which currently constitutes a 7 years period is the first principle. EU budgetary financial framework is set for seven years' period. Since the amount of EU SF allocated to the EU member states is also set for seven years' time, it is essential for member states to adjust their budgetary provisions with the EU financial framework. So that, co-financing for projects can be arranged accordingly without causing any backlogs.

According to the screening report prepared by the European Commission, Turkish budget planning system in fact allows for indicative multi-annual programming at national and regional level; however, the system is not clear about its budgeting. It does not provide enough certainty about budgeting of this multi-annual programming since state budget is adopted on an annual basis. Possibility for transferring funds among programmes is rather limited. However, the current budget planning system still allows for commitments of investment projects to be made in subsequent year that cannot be made in the current fiscal year.<sup>265</sup>

In the EU context, until 1988 individual project financing was held on an annual basis. However, from 1988 onwards, the principle of programming was introduced for the EU SF. Programming means individual projects are designed to complement a comprehensive development programme to be implemented on a multi-annual basis over a region. The aim is to initiate a long-term approach for regional development activities, independent from the cyclical political decisions.<sup>266</sup>

With relevance to Turkey, current EU pre-accession fund has a 7 years financial perspective. IPA funds are allocated to individual priorities by reference to the respective OP. However, OPs do not generally contain details of operations (individual projects). In order to be able to fully absorb the allocated funds, in

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<sup>265</sup> European Commission. *Screening report Turkey, Chapter22-Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, WP Enlargement+Countries Negotiating Accession to EU MD154/07*, 14.05.07, p. 10, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening\\_reports/screening\\_report-22-tr\\_internet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/screening_reports/screening_report-22-tr_internet_en.pdf) (Accessed on 7 June 2015).

<sup>266</sup> Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal. "Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey", 471, *Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics, Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, (2004) <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf>. (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

addition to policy priorities, Turkey needs to identify individual projects, including budgets and timeframes within each programme, so that an effective implementation of OPs could be realised. Building administrative capacity during the accession period with IPA is especially important, as the persistent lack of capacity to use the funds can most probably have negative effects upon accession when Turkey is entitled to use the EU SF. There are examples for such cases in new EU member states. Bulgaria has lost some of their allocated EU SF.<sup>267</sup> In this regard, multi-year programming is essential both in the IPA and in EU SF processes.

With regard to nationally-funded projects, apart from the GAP project, there has not been any long-term implemented programme for regional development in Turkey. Some regional plans were prepared especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s; however, these plans could not find chance to be implemented thoroughly due to lack of given priority and resources. Existing regional plans had one or two projects and after their implementation, programmes came to a halt. The requirement for having tight link between programming activity and preliminary drafting of the budget mainly causes uncertainty about availability of resources to be invested. Hence, in current situation, the lack of multi-annual programming of budgetary expenditures together with the investment plans in Turkey presents a risk of incompatibility with the EU multi-annual SF programming.

The second principle is concentration, which is about identification of needs of less developed regions in order to design tailored regional policies for these regions. The backbone of the EU regional policy is the concentration of funds to the regions and states which are most needy, in order to create a solid impact on the improvement of development levels of lagging behind regions. In 2007-2013 period, regions which

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<sup>267</sup> *Bulgaria Lost EU Funding of EUR 51.3 M for Rural Development in 2014*, <http://www.novinite.com/articles/165928/Bulgaria+Lost+EU+Funding+of+EUR+51.3+M+for+Rural+Development+in+2014>; *Bulgaria's EU Funds Loss under Regional Development Program May Reach BGN 95 M*, <http://www.novinite.com/articles/164116/Bulgaria%E2%80%99s+EU+Funds+Loss+under+Regional+Development+Program+May+Reach+BGN+95+M>; EU Structural Funds Bulgaria, Current Status, <http://www.eufunds.bg/en/pubs/6399>; Bulgaria lost 86 M in EU funding this year, <http://www.standartnews.com/english/read/bulgaria+lost+eur+86+m+in+eu+funding+this+year-6887.html> (2 July 2015).

fall within the scope of convergence objective were allocated 80% of the EU SF.<sup>268</sup> However, in the period of 2014-2020; only 53% of all EU SF will be earmarked for the concentration (less developed) regions.<sup>269</sup> In fact, in the EU context we observe a decrease in the share of funds for convergence regions. However, this principle is still kept alive and it is essential to put this principle in practice in the IPA context as well.

As for Turkey, in the past, allocation of resources has not been really mobilised to reduce regional developmental disparities in Turkey. Industrialisation as a target and tool for national development and economic growth has been the main factor shaping all national development plans. Reducing disparities was rather mainly considered economically inefficient, except for in the early years of the Republic.<sup>270</sup>

Similar to the new approach in the EU regional policy focusing on developing competitiveness across the EU regions, Turkey also adopts the target of developing regional competitiveness in order to increase economic growth. However, reducing regional disparities and producing balanced growth is a popular discourse which is widely used by the both sides. Nevertheless, EU's Lisbon Agenda of 2000 and Europe 2020 strategy, which basically aim to increase economic growth, focus mainly on creating technology and competitive small business sector in Europe. This means that Europe should be allocating resources into more successful regions to support already flourishing commercial sectors and small businesses. Other way round, if it is aimed to address regional disparity then the focused regions would not

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<sup>268</sup> Gian Paolo Manzella and Carlos Mendez. *The Turning Points of EU Cohesion Policy*, Report Working Paper, 2009, p.19, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8\\_manzella\\_final-formatted.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/8_manzella_final-formatted.pdf) (Accessed on 17 May 2015).

<sup>269</sup> Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy. *Cohesion Policy and the Europe 2020 Strategy*, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/future/eu2020\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/eu2020_en.htm) (Accessed on 16 May 2015).

<sup>270</sup> Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal, "Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey", 471, *Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics, Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, 2004, p.11, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf> (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

be the same.<sup>271</sup> According to the example of the United Kingdom (UK), although a comprehensive regional policy was pursued to address regional disparities in the twentieth century, the poor regions in the last century are still poor today. In the northern parts of the UK there is not any net job growth in the last fifty years. Hence, it is regarded that developing disadvantaged regions is a rather difficult task to accomplish.<sup>272</sup> In this regard, it is argued that there should be “two distinct policy agendas; one would be to pursue economic growth as a whole, by ensuring that it takes place at the regional level as well, and the other would be to achieve social cohesion in general by providing special measures for less developed regions”.<sup>273</sup>

In Turkish context, it is of utmost importance to decide to what extent the public resources are going to be allocated to the least developed and out-migration regions, where there is definitely an opportunity cost for allocating them to the regions having real development potential. Hence, as it was the case in the EU, the dichotomy of “competitiveness” versus “redistribution” also prevails in the Turkish context. Hence, it remains to the decision of the government to formulate the right composition of these objectives in order to work out economic and social problems of less developed regions without making a negative impact on the national economic growth.

The third principle is the additionality, which is based on the idea that funds will not replace national funds originally allocated to a project or region. Additionality is a fundamental principle of EU regional policy aiming to create a genuine added value. EU SF should complement, but not replace public expenditure of the member states, that were supposed to be allocated to EU regions. This is verified according to the information that “average annual level of national public expenditure in real terms equals at least the levels that were determined at the beginning of the programming

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<sup>271</sup> David Walburn. *Regional Development Agencies: The Tool To Stimulate Economic Development, Bölgesel Kalkınma ve Yönetişim Sempozyumu*, Ankara, ODTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi ve TEPAV, (2006) p. 51, [http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum1/1\\_3\\_walburn.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/sempozyum/2006/bildiri/bolum1/1_3_walburn.pdf) (Accessed on 16 June 2015).

<sup>272</sup> Ibid. pp. 51-52.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. p. 52.

period”.<sup>274</sup> The EU regulation on the EU SF stipulated that “EU SF may not replace the national or equivalent expenditure by a EU member state. The principle of additionality is verified at national level by the Commission, in cooperation with member states, for the regions covered by convergence objective”.<sup>275</sup>

Before starting implementation of the EU SF, the Commission and the EU member states decide the level of eligible public or equivalent spending to be maintained all over the programming period.<sup>276</sup> According to the current Regulation of the cohesion funds, “partnership agreements” are signed between the European Commission and member states for using EU SF. The information related to the respect for additionality principle is included to this agreement. In case a member state does not obey by the additionality principle, financial corrections, i.e. redeeming the funds by the Commission take place.<sup>277</sup>

In the Turkish case, there is not much structured information about additionality. This is rather a novelty to be introduced to the budgetary expenditure system. In this regard, extensive work needs to be carried out by determining and identifying the expenditures allocated to individual regions. This issue is in fact very much related to the programming principle. It is essential to keep in mind that a seven year budgetary picture is required to be able to foresee the required national and EU funds.

The fourth principle, partnership, is a much emphasised aspect of the EU SF process. It is about mobilisation and participation of economic and social actors in the programming and implementation of projects in using the EU SF. Brought about by the 1988 reform, partnership is defined as “close consultations between the Commission, the member state concerned and the competent authorities designated by the latter at national, regional or local level, with each party acting as a partner in

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<sup>274</sup> *Additionality*, <http://insideurope.eu/node/493> (Accessed on 10 June 2015).

<sup>275</sup> European Commission. *Regional Policy, Additionality*, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/how/additionality\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/how/additionality_en.htm) (Accessed on 11 June 2015).

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

pursuit of a common goal. Partnership shall cover the preparation, financing, monitoring and assessment of operations”.<sup>278</sup> In the 1993 reform of the EU SF, economic and social partners were also included to the partnership method.<sup>279</sup> Accordingly, “each member state should organise a partnership with representatives of competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners and other relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non- governmental organisations and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non- discrimination, including, where appropriate, the umbrella organisations of such authorities and bodies”.<sup>280</sup> In this regard EU member states need “to identify the most representative relevant partners, such as institutions, organisations and groups which are capable of influencing the preparation or could be affected by the preparation and implementation of the programmes. These could be associations, federations or confederations of relevant regional, local and urban authorities.”<sup>281</sup>

Partnership with the economic and social partners in Turkey has recently started to be developed, especially during the EU accession process. Traditionally the implementation of partnership principle has been rather weak in the country. Since Turkey is a unitary state, territorial administrative units, namely provinces and districts, have limited administrative powers and act as functionaries of the central

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<sup>278</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Regulation (EEC) No 2052/88 of 24 June 1988 on the tasks of the Structural Funds and their effectiveness and on coordination of their activities between themselves and with the operations of the European Investment Bank and the other existing financial instruments*, 1988, Article. 4. <http://www.l2d.lv/leul.php?i=18269> (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

<sup>279</sup> European Commission. *Community Structural Funds 1994-1999 Revised Regulations and Comments*, August 1993, pp. 19-20, [http://aei.pitt.edu/1750/1/structure\\_funds\\_93\\_commentary.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/1750/1/structure_funds_93_commentary.pdf) (Accessed on 1 July 2015).

<sup>280</sup> Council of the European Union. *Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006*, 2013 OJ L 347, p. 321, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0320:0469:EN:PDF> (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* p. 321.

government. In addition, there are no regional structures for administration of regional matters.<sup>282</sup> Local government exist at three levels, namely in provinces, municipalities and villages. There is no similar regional administration, although starting from 2002, NUTS regional classifications were identified which is mainly used for collection of statistical data. Central nature of administrations at the local level has reduced the potential of partnership principle in the implementation. Formerly, regional policies and regional planning were designed by the central administration without much involvement of local parties. In addition to consultation with regional and provincial units of central administration, there has not been any tradition of consulting economic interest groups and NGOs while designing public policies.

However, this trend has started to change with the EU accession process. Especially starting from 2002, during the implementation of EU financial assistance and later on while using IPA funds, for each sector, monitoring committees were established and participation of stakeholders including economic and social partners was foreseen. Consequently, especially in IPA process, for regional policy (environment, transport, and regional competitiveness) and human resources development sectors, sectoral monitoring committees were set up to include current and potential beneficiaries of the programmes which are mainly economic and social partners as well as local administrations, and their probable comments and recommendations were incorporated to OP documents. However, since this practice is rather a novelty for the current system, these partners are not much devoted to the process, which may change in a positive way in the future. Similarly, while preparing the NSRD (2014-2023) as well as regional plans at NUTS 2 level by the facilitation of DAs; partnership method was extensively used at the national and regional levels, respectively.<sup>283</sup> In this regard, it can be said that especially for designing regional

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<sup>282</sup> Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal. "Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey", 471, *Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics, Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, p.10, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf> (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

<sup>283</sup> Kalkınma Bakanlığı. Bölgesel Gelişme Ulusal Stratejisi 2014-2023, 2014, p. 12, 90, <http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Yaynlar/Attachments/641/2014-2023%20B%C3%B6lgesel%20Geli%C5%9Fme%20Ulusal%20Stratejisi.pdf> (Accessed on 16 June 2015).

programmes, local partnerships started to be used as required by the essence of the policy making. However, in most instances, involvement of social partners and civil society organisations to the regional policy making is limited and not substantial. This may cause some difficulties in the implementation of the main national programming documents.

Another issue is the establishment of sustainable and solid administrative structures both at central, regional and local levels which is essential for the implementation of the EU SF. New EU member states have started to establish these structures while they were benefiting from the EU pre-accession funds. Similar to these countries, Turkey has also established implementing structures for the use of EU funds. Turkey established National Fund and National Authorising Officer for managing the financial transactions; Central Finance and Contracts Unit, for contracts and payments, financial cooperation committee and joint monitoring committees, to oversee the process at the higher levels. Consequently, at the IPA process, line ministries functioning as operational structures, which take over both the tasks of programming, contracting and financing, have started to play important roles in operations related to regional development. These ministries are planned to continue to act as managing authorities once Turkey starts to benefit from the EU SF.

Similarly, at the regional level, DAs will be able to act as implementing agencies of EU SF. In fact, currently DAs play certain roles in supporting regional development by carrying out planning, programming, and managing support schemes similar to the EU financial assistance process financed by national resources. They also offer business support services and foster cooperation among public and private sector. DAs have held calls for proposals under several support programmes and have financially supported numerous projects since their establishment. However, their administrative capacities are limited at varying degrees depending on each agency.

As a result, Turkey's prolonged accession process to the EU has made varying degrees of impact on the development of individual policy areas, including the regional policy. The EU insisted on the adoption of a national strategy for regional

development, but did not specifically intervene in the content of the strategy. However, the EU recommended that implementing structures established at the regional levels are well advanced and have power and ability to shape the policies at their regions. In this regard, central nature of decision-making for regional policies in Turkey was mainly criticised. However, preparation of regional plans and application of IPA funds at the regional level by DAs could be seen as real improvement in this regard. Yet, it is essential to make these entities rather more operational without waiting the EU funds. DAs could have their own agenda of focusing on regional development. State investments and subsidies could have a link with the allocated EU funds and both of these could be administered at the regional level by the DAs in order to increase synergies and effectiveness.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter showed that as it can be inferred from the recent developments; DAs are centred in the forefront of the regional development initiatives in the second half of the 2000s. Even though these new regional territorial institutions present some civil nature by incorporating various regional and local actors to planning and implementation stages of regional development plans, they still keep some formal and organic links with the central administration. In addition, regional level is described at NUTS 2 level which constitutes two or more provinces. The regional development projects are required to focus on these groupings; however, state investment and subsidy practices are established at provincial level which is at NUTS 3 level.<sup>284</sup> This constitutes a discrepancy between national and EU originated practices of support systems for developing the regions. Another issue is that, while using current EU IPA funds as the precursor of future EU SF, Turkey is experiencing absorption capacity problems due to delays in preparation and tender procedures of operations. In addition, EU SF principles are not adopted precisely in Turkey

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<sup>284</sup> Council of Ministers. *Decision on the State Aid for Investments No. 3305 (Yatırımlarda Devlet Yardımları Hakkında Karar, No. 3305)*, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/06/20120619-1.htm> (Accessed on 6 July 2015).

currently during the implementation of IPA funds. In the next chapter, a general conclusion will be presented by wrapping up the main findings.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This thesis has sought to analyse the impact of Europeanization process in the evolution of Turkey's regional policy since the 1999 EU Helsinki Summit, where a decision was taken to grant Turkey a candidate country status for the membership in the EU. The analysis in this thesis has tested the hypothesis that Europeanization process could involve a comprehensive transformation in the institutions and policies of the EU candidate countries. The conditionality principle attached to the accession process is believed to be sufficient enough in order to motivate the candidate countries to emulate the EU's norms, institutions and common policies, including the EU regional policy.

The findings of this thesis supports the main argument of this thesis that contrary to the views of some experts who claim that the Europeanization process involves a comprehensive transformation of the institutions and policies of the candidate countries in line with the expectations of the EU, Turkey's regional policy between 1999 and 2015 demonstrates that such a comprehensive transformation may not always be realized as Turkey's regional policy has not been substantially harmonised with the principles and institutional framework of the EU's overall regional policy, as well as met EU's expectations as a candidate country. This is partly related to the reluctance of the EU during Turkey's accession negotiations, but also to Turkey's continuing adherence to centralisation principle in its policy towards its regions despite its stated objective of Europeanization of its regional policy.

This thesis accepts that the Europeanization process of Turkey has come a long way through the EU accession process between 1999 and 2015. Various legal and administrative changes have taken place in the field of regional policy; hence formal

rules were set to be able to make the Turkey's regional policy function in line with the EU regional policy.

However, the adoption of formal rules is not always followed by the implementation of these rules. Although there have been some formal, that is, rule based changes including the adoption of NUTS classification, establishment of DAs, adoption of national strategy documents, there has been a very limited degree of informal and behavioural change in Turkey's regional policy. In other words, Turkey has rather accomplished partial Europeanization focusing on legislative harmonization and some institutional adaptation without deeper changes and substantial transformation of its regional policy in line with that of the EU. In this sense, Turkey's centralization drive in regional policy seems to contradict with the Europeanization process of this policy field.

Turkey's partial Europeanization fits with Tanja Börzel's thesis of decoupling that is an observable gap between legislative harmonization and behavioural changes. In this regard, behavioural changes "decouple" from formal rules; hence implementation does not fully comply with institutional rules and practices that were put in place by the EU harmonisation process. The gap between these two processes, legal harmonisation and implementation, confirm Turkey's partial Europeanization of its regional policy. EU funds are allocated to Turkey in order to create a leverage effect on Turkey's reform process which aims to ensure Europeanization of Turkey's governing structures and policies. However, in this process Turkey does not put in enough effort to really implement regional policies in line with that of the EU.

From an intergovernmentalist perspective, it is the political will of the EU member states and Turkey that makes things happen in Turkey-EU relations in general. Turkey is an actor that needs to be ready and convinced to further mobilise its efforts for a real harmonisation with the EU. The EU accession negotiation process takes place rather at the intergovernmental level, since the start of accession negotiations is decided at the top political level of the EU, the European Council. The intergovernmental nature of this process leaves very little room for other sub-state

(regional and local) and non-state actors to shape the accession and harmonisation process for the time-being. In this regard, without the “carrot” of EU membership, and in the absence of any “sticks” at the sight, Turkey could not find any real reason and hence political will to ensure the full implementation of the EU- harmonised regional policies in Turkey.

In this sense, Turkey’s partial Europeanization of its regional policy fits with intergovernmentalist analysis that places emphasis on the absence of EU incentives alongside its monitoring efforts that would help to initiate behavioural changes on the part of Turkey. The EU member states’ positions on the opening and closing benchmarks of Turkey’s negotiation chapters reflect intergovernmentalist tendency on the part of the EU. Similarly, the tendency for centralization in Turkey also confirms Turkey’s state-interest approach in this policy area. Since regional policy is one of the “constitutive” policy fields where the candidate countries could achieve the required transformation from government to governance, Turkey’s centralization reflex can be seen as a sign of resistance to such (re)constitution or restructuring which is embedded in its process of Europeanization in the regional policy field.

Although the positions of both the EU and Turkey on regional policy issues seem to reflect intergovernmentalist approaches, the thesis underlines that there are limits to the explanatory power of intergovernmentalism, too. In fact, the EU’s decision to open accession negotiations on chapter 22 could be attributed to some expected spillover effects on the related key issue-areas such as state aids, public procurement and financial control. This suggests that the overall intergovernmentalist reading of Turkey’s attempts at harmonizing its regional policy with the EU policies could be qualified with some insights from other theoretical perspectives such as neofunctionalism and its functional spillover conceptualization, in particular. However, such a deeper theoretical analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The findings are demonstrated and discussed in detail in the main chapters of the thesis. The second chapter, which is entitled as “Evolution of the European Union’s Regional Cohesion Policy” demonstrates that the EU regional policy, called also

cohesion or structural policy, has been transformed from a merely compensation mechanism for the side effects of the completion of the EU internal market to the less developed regions, into a full-fledged policy area with required financial resources, which comprises almost one third of the EU budget. This policy area has its own guiding principles which have been consolidated with the passing years. These principles are concentration, programming, partnership and additionality. Every member state has to pay attention to these guiding principles while programming and implementing programmes to benefit from the EU SF. In recent years, EU regional policy has been based on the realisation of the Europe 2020 development goals, which foresee smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Especially, for 2014-2020 it was set that all European regions will benefit from these financial resources to be able to reach Europe 2020 targets. In this regard, less developed regions will start to receive lesser part of these resources. On the other hand, Turkey, once it becomes an EU member state, will be able to use EU SF for all of its regions based on the convergence objective. In this regard, these funds may create a leverage effect for development of all regions of Turkey.

Chapter Three, which is entitled as “Evolution of Turkey’s Regional Policy before 1999” demonstrates that Turkey has vast range of economic and social differences among its regions and has in the past paid attention to development of backward regions in the country. However, regional policy tool could not be effectively used due to various political concerns, albeit various policy measures were taken to promote economic growth in less developed regions. With the aim of keeping unitary nature of the state intact, regional policies are developed by centrally prepared national development programmes, rural development projects and provincial development plans. There are no regional government because of the concerns that ethnic problems may arise and affect the security of the state. Therefore, centralisation was legitimated due to external and internal threats to the state and its borders.

Similarly priority development areas were identified centrally and supported by infrastructure establishment and through investment incentives to the private capital.

These developments are important in order to grasp current regional development efforts taking place in the EU accession process. However, it can be accepted that a new impetus has been gained with the EU membership candidacy of Turkey.

Chapter Four, which is entitled as “Development of Turkey’s Regional Policy and the European Union Accession Process”, demonstrates that with Turkey’s candidacy for EU membership, Turkey’s mobilisation in terms of adoption of the EU acquis has speeded up. Hence, a number of important developments in the domain of regional policy took place in terms of adaptation of Turkish regional policy with that of the EU. The policy documents of the EU and Turkey have clearly set out the main objectives regarding this policy area. EU’s APs and RPRs and Turkey’s NPs, specify the tasks to be fulfilled for ensuring alignment with the EU regional policy. After France waived its veto on chapter 22, it was opened for accession negotiations. Since the preparedness level of Turkey for the implementation of EU SF was not considered satisfactory, seven closing benchmarks were set by the EU. Closing benchmarks present the fact that there is still comprehensive task that needs to be completed before the EU accession. In addition, in the relevant chapters on public procurement and state aids, simultaneous progress is expected from Turkey. However, Turkey is acting rather slowly for ensuring compliance with the EU rules on these issues. This fact clearly shows that there is a slow going process on the part of Turkey with regard to the Europeanization process in the field of the regional policy.

The final main chapter before this conclusion chapter, Chapter Five, which is entitled as “Key Issues in Turkey’s Adaptation to the EU Regional Policy” demonstrates that during the use of EU IPA funds for alleviating regional disparities there needs to be established relevance to the principles of EU regional policy principles, namely, programming, concentration, partnership and additionality. These principles have to be adopted by Turkey while implementing regional policy instruments. In addition, in the EU accession period, two main developments took place. Firstly, NUTS classification was established in Turkey in 2002, and secondly, 26 “regional” DAs at NUTS 2 regions were set up and started to function as regional development actors starting from 2006. However, state investments and supports allocated to regions are

based on NUTS 3 regions, namely at provincial level, instead of NUTS 2, at regional level. Hence, in the future, there will be a mismatch between national funds used at NUTS 3 level as against the EU funds allocated at NUTS 2 level. Similarly, establishment of “regional” DAs at NUTS 2 level are considered as very important development in the regional policy of Turkey. Nevertheless, albeit these new regional territorial institutions present some civil nature by incorporating the various regional and local actors to the planning and implementation stages of the regional development plans, they still keep a kind of hierarchical and organic link with the central administration. When it comes to the implementation of EU pre-accession funds, which are the precursor of future EU SF, it is clear that there exist potential risk and actual de-commitment of funds due to various reasons including the weak administrative capacity. This could be alleviated by engaging massive capacity building activities. However this mobilisation could not take place, partly due to the unclear future of the relations with the EU, including the accession.

Until the EU accession process started, Turkey has not preferred to design and implement the regional policy by the participation of the regional governance mechanisms. It was believed that a centralized policy is preferable for the regional development so that unitary nature of the state is not hampered. However, in the EU accession process, several legislative changes were made and capacity development took place at central, regional and local levels, which might serve for this purpose. However, unlike the new member states of the EU, Turkey was not presented with a definite accession date to the EU, which may have negatively affected the whole course of work for adaptation of Turkish regional structures and legislation in line with the EU requirements so that Turkey can benefit from the EU SF upon accession.

The EU accession process serves as an opportunity to use the allocated funds for establishing and strengthening administrative structures which can help regional development in Turkey, as well as mobilise potential actors for future use of EU structural funds. EU funds together with the national resources and with substantial strategies and actions tailored to the needs of individual regions are essential to alleviate regional disparities in Turkey.

To sum up, the process of Europeanization of a candidate country to the EU membership could not automatically bring about comprehensive transformation of the institutions and policies in the field of regional policy. As it is reflected in Turkey's regional policy, Turkey's legislative, administrative, institutional developments are not up to the standards of the EU to be able to benefit from the EU funds once it becomes an EU member state. In this regard, especially institutional capacity at the regional level requires to be improved. As a result, by establishing regional structures, Turkey will be able to benefit from the EU SF by co-financing economic and social development projects. Setting up new regional structures in Turkey can become quite challenging given the fact that existing governing structures were not designed by taking the regions classified at NUTS 2 level into consideration.

The above-mentioned main findings in the chapters of this thesis clearly demonstrate that Europeanization process has largely affected policies, policy processes and institutions in Turkey; however, it could not result in a comprehensive transformation of Turkey's regional policy between 1999 and 2015 in line with the principles and institutional framework of the EU's regional policy.

This is partly related to the reluctance of the EU during Turkey's accession negotiations, which is marked by the absence of an accession date but also to Turkey's continuing adherence to centralisation principle in its regional policy despite its stated objective of Europeanization of its regional policy.

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## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY

#### AVRUPALILAŞMA VE TÜRKİYE’NİN BÖLGESEL POLİTİKASI: 1999-2015

**Bu tezin amacı,** Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliğine (AB) üyelik için adaylık statüsünü kazandığı 1999 yılındaki Helsinki Avrupa Birliği Konseyi Zirvesinden itibaren yaşanan Avrupalılaşma sürecinin, Türkiye’nin bölgesel politikası üzerinde yarattığı etkiyi incelemektir.

Türkiye’nin bölgesel politikasının AB’nin bölgesel politikaları ile uyumlaştırma çabaları, **tezin kapsamını** teşkil etmektedir. Tez, Türkiye’nin bölgesel politika alanında AB’nin bölgesel politika gereklilikleri ile ne ölçüde uyum sağladığını belirlemeye çalışacaktır.

Türkiye’de olduğu gibi, AB üyesi ülkelerde bölgesel politika önemli bir konu olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Zira, ülkelerin farklı bölgeleri, farklı ekonomik ve sosyal gelişmişlik seviyelerine sahiptir. AB üyesi ülkelerde, üyelikten önceki dönemlere kıyasla ekonomik bir büyüme gözlenmekle birlikte, bu ülkelerin bölgeleri arasında gelişmişlik farkları varolmaya devam etmiştir. Bu bakımdan, AB düzeyinde bir bölgesel politika geliştirilmiş, yapısal fonlar oluşturulmuş ve AB bütçesinden ayrılan finansal kaynaklarla bu gelişmişlik farkları giderilmeye çalışılmıştır. Türkiye de bölgeler arasında önemli gelişmişlik farklarını barındıran bir ülke olarak, AB üyesi olduğunda bu fonlardan yararlanabilecektir.

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti kuruluşundan bu yana az gelişmiş bölgelerini güçlendirmek için bölge planları geliştirmiş ve kısmen de olsa, bu planları uygulamaya geçirmiştir. Ancak AB üyelik süreci bu çabalara taze bir enerji kazandırmıştır. AB’nin katılım

ortaklığı, düzenli ilerleme raporları gibi kılavuz ve değerlendirme belgeleri referans alınarak, AB'nin bölgesel politika ilke ve önceliklerine uygun bir şekilde bölgesel politika öncelikleri belirlenmesine çaba gösterilmiştir. AB'nin Türkiye'nin AB sürecinde kat ettiği gelişmeleri ve müzakere sürecinde bundan sonra yapması gereken çalışmalara yer verdiği düzenli ilerleme raporlarında da gözlemlenebileceği üzere, esasen bölgesel politika alanında önemli gelişmeler sağlanmıştır. İstatistiki Bölge Birimleri Sınıflandırması (İBBS), Türkiye'nin coğrafi bölgelerini tanımlayacak ve bu seviyelerde ekonomik ve sosyal alanlarda istatistik derlenmesine de temel oluşturacak şekilde üç düzeyde yapılmıştır. 26 adet İBBS Düzey 2 bölgesinde kalkınma ajansları kurulmuştur. Türkiye AB üyesi olduğu zaman yararlanacağı AB yapısal fonlarına hazırlık amacını da taşıyacak şekilde, AB'nin katılım-öncesi mali yardımlarının (IPA) kullanılabilmesi için, program otoriteleri kurulmuş ve uygulama mekanizmaları geliştirilmiştir. Türkiye'de bölgesel politikaların çerçevesini, ana hedef ve önceliklerini içeren Bölgesel Gelişme Ulusal Stratejisi (BGUS) ve İBBS 2 düzeyinde bölge planları hazırlanmış ve 2014-2023 yılları için uygulanmak üzere yürürlüğe girmiştir. Bütün bu gelişmeler bölgesel politika alanında Türkiye'nin AB ile üyelik müzakereleri sürecinde sağlanan somut gelişmeleri teşkil etmektedir.

Türkiye gibi nüfusu ve toprakları birçok AB ülkesinden çok daha büyük olan bir ülke için, AB yapısal fonlarının tahsis edilmesi, bölgesel ekonomik farklılıkların azaltılması yolunda muhtemelen büyük bir etki yapamayabilecektir. Ancak, tüm üyelik sürecinin bir parçası olarak, yapısal fonların ileride kullanılması amacıyla yapılan hazırlıklar, ülkenin az gelişmiş bölgelerinin gelişmesi yönünde atılacak adımlara yeni bir ivme kazandıracak ve söz konusu yapısal fonlar ulusal kaynaklarla birlikte harmanlandığında, ülkedeki bölgesel gelişme farklılıklarının giderilmesine yardımcı olabilecektir.

Bu tezin temel araştırma sorusu şöyledir: Türkiye'nin 1999 yılında başlayan AB üyelik süreci, Türkiye'nin kurumlarının ve politikalarının, bölgesel politika alanı da dahil olmak üzere, AB'nin politikaları ile kapsamlı bir uyumunu öngörmesine

rağmen, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikası, neden ve nasıl AB bölgesel politikasından önemli ölçüde farklı olmaya devam etmektedir?

Bu sorunun cevabını araştırmak için Avrupalılaştırma süreci hakkındaki ve Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikası hakkındaki akademik yazının gözden geçirilmesi, Avrupalılaştırma süreci ile Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasının özellikleri arasındaki ilişki üzerine yapılan akademik tartışmaları anlamak için önemlidir.

Genel olarak, Avrupalılaştırma süreci, üyeliğe aday bir ülkenin AB'nin bir parçası haline gelebilmesi için, ilgili bütün alanlardaki kurumlarını ve politikalarını, AB'nin normları ve standartlarına uyumlu hale getirmesi gerektiğini ifade eder. Diğer bir deyişle, "Avrupalılaştırma" AB'ye üye olmak isteyen bir devlet için temel bir konudur. Claudio Radaelli'ye göre Avrupalılaştırma, AB üyesi ve aday ülkeler tarafından, "AB politika sürecinde resmi ve resmi olmayan kuralların ve süreçlerin, AB politika süreçlerinde kurumsallaşması ve bunların iç politika yapılarına ve kamu politikalarına katılmasını" ifade eder.<sup>285</sup> Bu bakımdan AB politikalarının üye ve aday ülkelerin iç politikalarında bir etkisi vardır. "Uyumun iyiliği" ve "adaptasyonel baskılar", AB üyeliği için adaylık statüsünün zorlayıcı etkilerini tanımlamak için kullanılan ve Avrupalılaştırma yaklaşımının kavramlarıdır.<sup>286</sup> Türkiye'nin katılım sürecinde, AB müktesebatına uyum ile ilgili ülkedeki gelişmeler hakkında düzenli ilerleme raporları yayınlamak suretiyle, AB tarafından Türkiye üzerinde "adaptasyonel baskı", oluşturulmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu tezde, bölgesel politikanın Avrupalılaştırması, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasının, AB'nin bölgesel politikasının ilkeleri ve kurumsal gereklerine uyumlaştırılması olarak kabul edilecektir. Öte yandan, Avrupalılaştırma AB kurallarının kurumsallaştırılması ve fiilen uygulanmasını içerdiğinden, AB'ye üye olan ülkelerde yürürlüğe konulan bu bazı AB kurallarının gerçekte uygulanmadığı da öne sürülmüştür. Bu bakımdan, davranışlar kurallardan

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<sup>285</sup> Claudio Radaelli. "Whither Europeanization? Concept stretching and substantive change", *European Integration Online Papers*, 4(8), 28, 2000, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/pdf/2000-008.pdf> Cited in John Bachtler, Carlos Mendez and Hildegard Oraže. "From Conditionality to Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe: Administrative performance and Capacity in Cohesion Policy", *European Planning Studies*, Vol.22, No. 4, 735-757, 2013, p. 737.

<sup>286</sup> H. Tolga Bolukbasi, Ebru Ertugal and Saime Özçürümez. "The Impact of the EU on Turkey: Toward Streamlining Europeanization as a Research Programme", *European Political Science*: 9, pp. 464-480, 2010, p. 469.

farklılık gösterebilir, diğer bir deyişle, mevcut uygulamalar, AB ile uyumlaştırma sürecinde yürürlüğe konulan kurumsal kural ve uygulama gerekleri ile uyuşmayabilir.<sup>287</sup>

AB bölgesel politikası, Türkiye'nin AB katılım koşullarını karşılamak için ilerleme yapması gereken otuz üç müzakere başlığına konu politika alanlarından biridir. Genellikle AB bağlamında, uyum politikası ve yapısal politika şeklinde de ifade edilebilen AB'nin bölgesel politikası, Avrupa'nın bölgeleri arasındaki ekonomik ve sosyal gelişmişlik farklarının azaltılması prensibine dayanmaktadır. Bu hedefe ulaşmak için, AB bütçesinin neredeyse üçte biri yapısal fonlara tahsis edilir ve bu fonlar önceden belirlenmiş ilkelere göre, üye devletlerin bölgeleri arasında dağıtılır.

"Bölge" kelimesinin farklı anlamları vardır. Avrupa bağlamında, en az iki tanım mevcuttur. Bölgeselleşme Şartına göre bölge, "coğrafi açıdan devamlılığı olan, nüfusu bazı ortak özellikler içeren ve oluşan bu özel kimliği korumak ve kültürel, sosyal ve ekonomik gelişme amacıyla geliştirmek isteyen topraksallıklardır".<sup>288</sup>

Diğer taraftan, Avrupa Bölgeler Meclisinin Avrupa'da Bölgeselleşme isimli Bildirgesinde, bölge kelimesine siyasi yönetsel bir bağlam eklenir ve bir bölge, "devlet altı seviyede, siyasi olarak kendini yöneten, kamu hukukuna bağlı bir topraksal yapı" olarak tanımlanır. Bildirgede, "ülkenin anayasasında ve kanunlarda bölgenin özerklik, kimlik, yetki ve örgütsel yapılarının garanti altına alınması gerektiği" belirtilmektedir.<sup>289</sup> Ancak bu tezde "bölge" ifadesi, AB'nin bölgesel politikasını açıklamak amacıyla, İBBS sınıflandırması altında belirtilen istatistiksel

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<sup>287</sup> Tanja A. Börzel and Diğdem Soyaltın. "Europeanization in Turkey Stretching a Concept to its Limits?", *KFG Working Paper No. 36*, February 20012, p.10, [http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/en/v/transformeurope/publications/working\\_paper/WP\\_36\\_Boerzel\\_Soyaltin\\_neu.pdf](http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/en/v/transformeurope/publications/working_paper/WP_36_Boerzel_Soyaltin_neu.pdf). (Accessed on 7 August 2015)

<sup>288</sup> European Parliament. *Resolution on Community regional policy and the role of the regions and Annexed Community Charter for Regionalisation minutes of the Sitting of 18 November 1988*, Official Journal C 326, 19 December 1988, p. 296, [http://aei.pitt.edu/1758/1/ep\\_resolution\\_regional\\_11\\_88.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/1758/1/ep_resolution_regional_11_88.pdf) (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

<sup>289</sup> Assembly of European Regions. *Declaration on Regionalism in Europe*, 1996, p.4, [http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PressComm/Publications/DeclarationRegionalism/DR\\_GB.pdf](http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PressComm/Publications/DeclarationRegionalism/DR_GB.pdf) (Accessed on 18 June 2015).

bölgeleri belirtmek için kullanılacak ve kelimenin siyasi anlamı üzerinde durulmayacaktır.

AB bölgesel politikası, Avrupa çapında temel ilkeleri oluşturulan bir uyum politikasının geliştirilmeye başlandığı 1988 yılından itibaren şekillenmeye başlamıştır. Daha sonra, 2000’li yıllarda, AB bölgesel politikası önceliklerine bir “bölgesel rekabet edebilirlik” boyutu dâhil edilmiş ve böylelikle bu önceliğin, bölgesel gelişmişlik farklılıklarının azaltılması amacı ile tezat teşkil ettiği tartışmaları da ortaya atılmıştır. Esasen, az gelişmiş bölgelerde rekabet edebilirlik kapasitesinin ortaya çıkarılması çok da kolay olmayabilir. Teorik açılarından, bu ikilik dışsal (klasik) ve içsel büyüme (yeni bölgecilik) teorileri olarak tespit edilmiştir. Geleneksel yaklaşım, yani dışsal büyüme, ekonomik büyümeyi teşvik etmek ve istihdamı artırmak amacıyla bölgelere yabancı sermaye çekmeye dayanıyordu.<sup>290</sup> Bu bakımdan, kamu yatırımları ve teşvikler yoluyla, ulusal refahın yeniden dağıtılması için kaynakların az gelişmiş bölgelere transfer edilmesi öneriliyordu.

Globalizm sonucu ortaya çıkan, içsel büyüme teorisi, yani yeni bölgecilik ise, bölgesel düzeyde firmaların, kurumsal destek tesisleri, beşeri sermaye, eğitim ve güven ilişkilerinin bir sonucu olarak ağlar kurabileceğini ve böylelikle, yatırımların söz konusu bölgeye çekilebileceğini savunuyordu. Bölgesel ekonomik faaliyetin, modern ekonomilerde ekonomik büyümenin önemli bir kaynağı olduğu iddia edilmektedir.<sup>291</sup> Bölgesel kalkınma hakkındaki güncel AB perspektifi de, içsel büyüme teorisine dayanmaktadır.

Türkiye’nin bölgesel politikasının AB’nin bölgesel politikasına uyum durumunu analiz ederken, hükümetler arası/siyasi realist yaklaşım, AB mali yardımının Türkiye’yi AB ile bağlantılı tutmaya ve Türkiye’nin idari yapılarını ve uygulamalarını dönüştürücü etkisini anlamamıza yardımcı olabilir. Ancak, bu

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<sup>290</sup> Ebru Ertugal. “Europeanization of Regional Policy and Regional Governance: The Case of Turkey”, *European Political Economy Review*, Vol.3, No.1 (Spring 2005), pp. 18-53, p. 28.

<sup>291</sup> European Commission. *White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities), 1993. Cited in Ebru Loewendahl-Ertugal (2004), “Regions and European Integration: Prospects for Regional Governance in Turkey”, *ECPR Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics Bologna*, 24-26 June 2004, p.4, <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/471.pdf>. (Accessed on 8 June 2015).

dönüştürücü etkinin, Türkiye'nin siyasi önceliklerine bağı olarak bazı sınırlılıkları vardır. Öte yandan, çok düzeyli yönetim yaklaşımı, Türkiye gibi çok düzeyli idari ve uygulama yapıları henüz kurulmuş bir ülke için yeni bir olgudur. Mevcut koşullarda, bölgesel aktörler ulus ötesi arenada kendi isteklerini empoze edebilmekte çok zayıf kalmaktadır.

Bu tezin ana argümanı şudur: Avrupalılaştırma sürecinin, AB üyeliğine aday ülkelerin kurumları ve politikaları üzerinde AB'nin beklentileri doğrultusunda kapsamlı bir dönüşüm yarattığını savunan bazı uzmanların görüşlerinin aksine, Türkiye'nin 1999 ve 2015 yılları arasında uyguladığı bölgesel politikalar, böyle bir dönüşümün her zaman gerçekleştirilemeyebileceğini göstermiştir; zira Türkiye'nin izlediği bölgesel politika, AB'nin genel bölgesel politikasının ilkeleri ve kurumsal çerçevesi ile büyük ölçüde uyumlaştırılmamış ve AB'nin Türkiye'den bir aday ülke olarak beklentilerini karşılamamıştır. Bu durum, kısmen AB'nin Türkiye ile sürdürdüğü üyelik müzakerelerine yeterince önem vermemesiyle, kısmen de bölgesel politikasını Avrupalılaştırma konusunda dile getirdiği amacına rağmen, Türkiye'nin bölgelere dönük politikasında merkezîyetçi yaklaşımını muhafaza etmeyi sürdürmesi ile ilişkilidir.

1999 Helsinki zirvesinden bu yana Türkiye'de bölgesel politika alanında sağlanan gelişmeler, AB üyelik perspektifi ile bir ivme kazanmış olmakla birlikte, AB'ye katılım perspektifinin eksik olmasının ve bu alanda AB tarafının siyasi bir taahhüdünün bulunmayışının, Türkiye'nin AB'nin bölgesel politikasına tam uyum sağlamasını zorlaştırdığı söylenebilir.

Tezin kuramsal çerçevesi, siyasi realizm yaklaşımından ortaya çıkan ve daha ziyade AB çalışmalarında kullanılan hükümetler arası yaklaşımdır. Siyasi realistlere göre, siyaset, hem iç hem de uluslararası alanda esasen gücün kullanımı ile ilgilidir. Siyasi aktörleri motive eden unsur, yurtdışında ve yurtdışında daha fazla güç kazanmak için yapılan mücadelelerdir. Bölgesel politika bağlamında bu hükümetler arası yaklaşım tezin ikinci bölümünde ayrıntılı olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu tezde, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasının AB'nin bölgesel politikası çerçevesinde dönüşümünü anlayabilmek için

siyasi realist bir bakış açısının kullanılmasının, liberal çok düzeyli yönetim yaklaşımına göre daha anlamlı olacağı öngörülmektedir.

Tezin metodolojisi bakımından, hem birincil hem de ikincil kaynaklar kullanılmıştır. Birincil kaynaklar olarak, Avrupa Komisyonunun düzenli ilerleme raporları, AB Bakanlar Konseyinin katılım ortaklığı belgeleri, tarama sonu raporu ve AB'nin bölgesel politikasına ilişkin diğer Komisyon ve Konsey belgeleri kullanılmıştır. İkincil kaynaklar olarak, birçok makale ve kitaptan yararlanılmıştır. Bu kaynaklara erişmek için, temelde ODTÜ kütüphanesi ve elektronik veri tabanı kullanılmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, başta Avrupa Birliği Bakanlığının internet sayfası olmak üzere, birçok web sayfasına erişim sağlanmıştır. Son olarak, Türkiye'nin ve AB'nin bölgesel politika yaklaşımı konusunda, iki Avrupa Komisyonu uzmanı ve iki Türk kamu bürokrasisinden uzmanla görüşmeler yapılmıştır.

Tez giriş ve sonuç bölümleri dâhil olmak üzere altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Yukarıda özetlenen giriş bölümünden sonra, tezin "Avrupa Birliği'nin Bölgesel Uyum Politikası Evrimi" başlıklı ikinci bölümünde, AB bölgesel politikaları, günümüze kadar yapılmış olan değişikliklere özel önem verilerek analiz edilmektedir. Özünde bir ulusal politika alanı olan, bölgesel politika, 1974 yılında Avrupa Bölgesel Kalkınma Fonunun (ERDF) kurulması ile birlikte AB düzeyine devrolmuştur. Ancak, esasen AB'nin ilk kuruluşundan beri, temel antlaşmalarında Birlik düzeyinde ekonomik ve sosyal uyumun sağlanması ile ilgili maddeler yer almaktaydı. Temelde Avrupa bölgesel politikası, AB iç pazarının tamamlanması sonrasında Avrupa'nın daha az gelişmiş olan bölgeleri üzerinde oluşabilecek muhtemel olumsuz etkilerin giderilmesi amacıyla ortaya çıkmış, ancak yıllar itibarıyla bu mahiyetteki bir tazminat mekanizması sisteminden, AB bütçesinin neredeyse üçte birini kapsayan, gerekli mali kaynaklara sahip tam teşekküllü bir politika alanına dönüşmüştür. Bu politika alanının kendi yol gösterici ilkeleri vardır. Bu ilkeler konsantrasyon, programlama, ortaklık ve katkısallıktır. Her üye devlet, AB yapısal fonlarından yararlanabilmek için programlama ve uygulama aşamalarında bu ilkelere riayet etmek durumundadır. AB bölgesel politikasının dinamikleri, yıllar itibarıyla ekonomik gelişmenin gereklerine ilişkin zihniyet dönüşümü paralelinde evrilmiştir. Son yıllarda, AB bölgesel politikası, Avrupa 2020 kalkınma hedefleri

çerçevesinde, AB çapında akıllı, sürdürülebilir ve kapsayıcı bir büyüme sağlanması için konulan hedeflerin gerçekleştirilmesine dönük bir araçsallık arz etmeye başlamıştır. Bu süreçte, endüstriyel gelişme amacının yerini, yenilikçilik, rekabet edebilirlik ve bölgelerin ulusal ekonominin motoru olması şeklindeki yeni yaklaşımlar almıştır.

Tezin üçüncü "1999 öncesi Türkiye'nin Bölgesel Politika Evrimi" başlıklı bölümünde, AB üyelik süreci öncesinde Türkiye'de bölgesel politika alanındaki gelişmelere yer verilmektedir. Türkiye'nin bölgeleri arasında büyük ölçüde ekonomik ve sosyal gelişmişlik farkları vardır. Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan bu yana, yoksul bölgelerin kalkınmasına oldukça önem verilmiştir. Ancak, bu çalışmalar daha ziyade merkezi düzeyde tasarlanmış ve uygulanmış, yerel idarelere ya da başka bir siyasi otoriteye bölgesel politikaların üzerinde herhangi bir yetki verilmemiştir. Bu bağlamda, AB Konseyinin 1999 tarihli Helsinki Zirvesi öncesinde, bölgesel politika merkezi bir yaklaşımla ele alınmış ve temelde merkezi idare tarafından hazırlanan Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planları vasıtasıyla şekillendirilmiştir. Bu durum, muhtemelen, bölgesel düzeyde yönetsel birimlerin oluşturulmasını engelleyen, ulusal toprak bütünlüğü ve ulusal güvenlik kaygılarının bir sonucu olabilir. Zira, etnik problemlerin ortaya çıkabileceği ve bu çerçevede devletin güvenliğinin tehlikeye girebileceği endişesi ile bölgesel yönetimlerin oluşturulmasından imtina edilmiş ve politikaların merkezi düzeyde geliştirilmesi, devlet sınırlarına yönelik iç ve dış tehditlerin varlığı düşüncesiyle uygun görülmüştür. Aynı şekilde, bu dönemde yürütülen bölgesel politika kapsamında, kalkınmada öncelikli yöreler merkezden belirlenmiş ve bu yöreler altyapı yatırımları ve özel sektöre sağlanan yatırım teşvikleri ile desteklenmiştir. Bu gelişmeler, AB üyelik sürecinde yer alan güncel bölgesel kalkınma çabalarını kavramak için önemlidir.

"Türkiye'nin Bölgesel Politikasının Gelişimi ve Avrupa Birliğine Katılım Süreci" başlıklı dördüncü bölümde, Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği için aday ülke olarak kabul edildiği tarihten sonra, bölgesel politika alanındaki gelişmelere odaklanmaktadır. Bu bölümde, ülkenin adaylık statüsünü elde etmesiyle birlikte, bölgesel politika alanında uyum çabalarında bir ivme kazanılmış olsa bile, ilgili müzakere faslının AB tarafından müzakerelere açılıp, sonrasında faslın müzakerelerinin kapanması için bir

grup kapanış kriterlerinin konmuş olması durumunun, AB ile uyumun sağlanması için başka çalışmaların da yapılması gerektiği ortaya konmaktadır. Bu bölümde, AB'nin Türkiye üzerine hazırladığı tarama sonu raporu, düzenli ilerleme raporları ile katılım ortaklığı belgeleri ve aynı zamanda Türkiye'nin politika belgeleri ele alınmıştır. Ayrıca, bölgesel politika ile ilgili müzakere faslının kapanış kriteri de analiz edilmektedir. AB'nin ve Türkiye'nin söz konusu politika belgeleri, diğer alanlarda olduğu gibi bölgesel politika alanında da temel hedefleri ve spesifik eylemleri ortaya koymaktadır. Fransa'nın bölgesel politika ile ilgili 22 no'lu faslın müzakerelere açılması hakkındaki engellemesinden vazgeçmesi üzerine, 2013 yılında fasıl müzakerelere açılmıştır. Ancak, bu fasıldaki ilerleme, yeterli düzeyde bulunmadığı için, faslın müzakerelerinin bitirilebilmesi için yedi adet kapanış kriteri konmuştur. Söz konusu kapanış kriterlerinin mevcudiyeti, AB üyeliği öncesinde Türkiye'nin tamamlanması gereken kapsamlı çalışmaların bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Buna ek olarak, kamu alımları, devlet yardımları ile ilgili müzakere fasıllarında da eş zamanlı ilerleme kaydetmesi Türkiye'den beklenmektedir. Ancak, Türkiye, bu konularda AB kurallarına uyulmasının sağlanması sürecinde oldukça yavaş hareket etmektedir. Bu durum, bölgesel politika alanında Türkiye'nin Avrupalılaşıma sürecinin yavaş işlediğini açıkça göstermektedir.

“Türkiye'nin AB'nin Bölgesel Politikasına Uyumu Konusundaki Temel Konular” başlıklı beşinci bölümde, AB bölgesel politikasının gereklilikleri bakımından, AB bölgesel politikasının temel ilkelerinin (konsantrasyon, programlama, ortaklık ve katkısallık) benimsenmesine ve AB yapısal fonlarından yararlanılabilmesi için gerekli idari kapasitenin oluşturulmasına odaklanılarak, katılım sürecinde Türkiye'nin kazanımları analiz edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye için AB tarafından tahsis edilen, katılım öncesi mali yardım araçları ve özellikle katılım öncesi mali yardım aracının-IPA kullanımı da değerlendirilmektedir. AB'ye üyelik sürecinde, iki temel gelişme sağlanmıştır. Öncelikle, AB İBBS sınıflandırması 2002 yılında Türkiye'de oluşturulmuş, ikinci olarak 2006 yılında, 26 İBBS Düzey 2 bölgesinde, "bölgesel" kalkınma ajansları kurulmuş ve bölgesel gelişmeden sorumlu birimler olarak faaliyet göstermeye başlamıştır. Ancak, hâlihazırda bölgelere ayrılan devlet yatırımları ve destekleri, İBBS düzey 2 seviyesinde değil, İBBS düzey 3 seviyesinde, yani bölgesel değil il düzeyinde tahsis edilmektedir. Dolayısıyla,

gelecekte, İBBS düzey 2 seviyesinde tahsis edilen AB fonlarına karşılık, İBBS düzey 3 seviyesinde kullanılan ulusal fonlar arasında bir uyumsuzluk olacaktır. Benzer şekilde, İBBS düzey 2 seviyesinde kalkınma ajanslarının kurulması, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politika alanında elde ettiği çok önemli bir gelişme olarak kabul edilmektedir. Ancak, bu yeni bölgesel birimler, bölgesel kalkınma planlarının planlama ve uygulama aşamalarında, çeşitli bölgesel ve yerel aktörleri de dahil ederek sivil bir yapı oluştursa da, bu birimler esasen merkezi idare ile bir anlamda hiyerarşik, ve organik bağlantılarını muhafaza etmektedirler. Öte yandan, gelecekteki AB yapısal fonlarının öncüsü addedilen, AB katılım öncesi fonlarının uygulanması söz konusu olduğunda, idari kapasitenin yetersizliği de dâhil olmak üzere çeşitli nedenlerle, gerçekleşen fon kayıplarının ve fon kaybı risklerinin bulunduğu da bir gerçektir. Bu durum, geniş kapsamlı kapasite geliştirme faaliyetleri yapılarak giderilebilir. Ancak bu tarz kapsamlı bir seferberlik hali, AB'ye katılım da dâhil olmak üzere, AB ile ilişkilerin geleceğinin belirsiz olmasına da bağlı olarak gerçekleşmemektedir.

Sonuç olarak, bu tezdeki analiz, Avrupalılaşıma sürecinin, AB aday ülkelerinin kurumları ve politikaları üzerinde kapsamlı bir dönüşüm içerebilir hipotezini test etmiştir. Katılım sürecine bağlı koşulluluk ilkesinin, aday ülkelerin AB'nin norm, kurum ve AB bölgesel politikası da dâhil olmak üzere ortak politikalarını benimsemek için motive olmaları bakımından etkili olduğuna inanılıyordu.

Ancak, Türkiye örneğinde bu durum pek de bu şekilde gerçekleşmemiştir. Tezin bulgular, tezin temel argümanını destekler mahiyettedir. Esasen, Avrupalılaşıma sürecinin, AB üyeliğine aday ülkelerin kurumları ve politikaları üzerinde, AB'nin beklentileri doğrultusunda kapsamlı bir dönüşüm yaratacağı savunulmaktadır. Ancak, Türkiye'nin 1999 ve 2015 yılları arasında uyguladığı bölgesel politikalar, böyle bir dönüşümün her zaman gerçekleştirilemeyebileceğini göstermiştir; zira Türkiye'nin izlediği bölgesel politika, AB'nin genel bölgesel politikasının ilkeleri ve kurumsal çerçevesi ile tam olarak uyumlaştırılmamış ve AB'nin Türkiye'den bir aday ülke olarak beklentilerini karşılamamıştır. Bu durum, kısmen AB'nin Türkiye ile sürdürdüğü üyelik müzakerelerine yeterince önem vermemesi ile, kısmen de bölgesel politikasını Avrupalılaştırma konusunda dile getirdiği amacına rağmen,

Türkiye'nin bölgelere dönük politikasında merkezîyetçi yaklaşımını muhafaza etmesi ile ilişkilidir.

Bu tez, Türkiye'nin 1999-2015 yıllarını kapsayan AB üyelik sürecinde Avrupalılaşıma bakımından önemli bir yol katettiğini kabul etmektedir. Bölgesel politika alanında, çeşitli yasal ve idari değişiklikler yapılmış ve böylelikle Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasının, AB bölgesel politikasına uygun olarak işleyebilmesi için kurallar konulmuştur. Ancak, kuralların konulmuş olması, bunların gerçekte uygulandığı anlamına gelmemektedir. İBBS sınıflandırmasının yapılması, kalkınma ajanslarının kurulması, bölgesel gelişme ulusal stratejisinin kabul edilmesi gibi bazı resmi ve kural temelli değişiklikler yapılmış olmakla birlikte, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasında sınırlı düzeyde enformel ve davranışsal değişiklik meydana gelmiştir. Diğer bir ifadeyle, Türkiye mevzuat uyumu ve bazı kurumsal adaptasyonlara odaklanılan, ancak AB ile uyumlu bir bölgesel politika oluşturulması anlamında, esaslı bir dönüşüm içermeyen ve derinlemesine değişiklikleri barındırmayan, kısmi bir Avrupalılaşıma sağlamıştır. Bu bakımdan, Türkiye'nin merkezîyetçi eğilimi AB'nin bu politika alanındaki Avrupalılaşıma süreci ile çelişmektedir.

Türkiye'nin bu kısmi Avrupalılaşıması durumu, Tanja Börzel'in mevzuat uyumu ve davranışsal değişiklikler arasında gözlemlenebilir farklılaşma tezi ile de uyumludur. Bu bakımdan, davranışsal değişiklikler formal kurallardan ayrılmakta ve uygulama AB ile uyumlaştırma sürecinde ortaya konan kurumsal kurallar ve pratiklere tam olarak uyum sağlamamaktadır. Mevzuat uyumu ve uygulama süreçleri arasındaki fark, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politika alanındaki kısmi Avrupalılaşımasını teyit etmektedir.

Türkiye'ye verilen AB fonları, ülkenin reform sürecinde bir kaldıraç etkisi yaratmayı ve Türkiye'nin yönetim yapıları ve politikalarının Avrupalılaşımasını sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ancak, bu süreçte Türkiye bölgesel politikalarını uygularken, bunun AB ile tam uyumlu olması için bir çaba sarf etmemektedir. Bu bağlamda, bunun gerçekleşmesine ya da gerçekleşmemesine neden olan siyasi iradenin kararıdır. Türk hükümeti, AB ile gerçek bir uyum sağlanması için çabaların seferber edilmesi

amacıyla ikna edilmesi gereken siyasi aktördür. Katılım müzakerelerine başlama kararının AB'nin en üst siyasi organı AB Konseyi tarafından alınmış olmasının da gösterdiği gibi, katılım müzakereleri, daha ziyade hükümetler arası bir düzeyde cereyan etmektedir. Sürecin hükümetler arası olan doğası, hâlihazırda diğer merkezi yönetim dışındaki bölgesel ve yerel aktörlerin katılım sürecini şekillendirmelerine pek de fırsat bırakmamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, AB üyeliği biçiminde bir "havuç" olmaksızın ve görünürde herhangi bir "sopa"nın bulunmadığı bir ortamda, Türkiye'de, AB ile uyumlaştırılmış bir bölgesel politikanın uygulanmasını sağlamak için somut bir neden ve dolayısıyla bir siyasi irade bulunamayabilir.

Bu bakımdan, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasının kısmen Avrupalılaşması durumu, Türkiye'ye AB tarafından gerekli teşviklerin verilmediği bir ortamda, AB'nin Türkiye'nin AB sürecindeki çalışmalarını izlemesinin Türkiye'de davranışsal bir değişiklik yaratmasına neden olamayacağını vurgulayan hükümetlerarası analiz ile uyumlu bir durumdur. AB üyesi ülkelerin, Türkiye'nin fasıl açılış ve kapanış kriterlerine ilişkin tutumu, AB düzeyinde de bir hükümetlerarası eğilimin varlığına işaret etmektedir. Aynı şekilde, Türkiye'nin bu politika alanındaki merkezîyetçilik eğilimi de devlet çıkarı yaklaşımını desteklemektedir. Bölgesel politika alanı, aday ülkelerin yönetimden yönetişime doğru evrilmesi sürecinde dönüştürücü bir özellik arz etmektedir. Bu bakımdan Türkiye'nin merkezîyetçi yaklaşımı, bölgesel politika alanında Avrupalılaşmanın beraberinde getirdiği yeniden yapılandırma sürecine bir direnme işareti olarak değerlendirilebilir. AB'nin ve Türkiye'nin bölgesel politika konularındaki tutumları hükümetlerarası yaklaşımı yansıtır mahiyette olmakla birlikte, bu tez hükümetlerarası yaklaşımın açıklayıcı gücünün de sınırlılıkları olduğunu altını çizmektedir. Esasen AB'nin fasıl 22'nin katılım müzakerelerine açılması kararı bu fasılla ilgili, devlet yardımları, kamu alımları ve mali kontrol gibi diğer politika alanlarına da yayılma etkisi yaratması amacına hizmet etmesi amacını da taşımış olabilir. Bu durumda, Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasını uyumlaştırması çabalarına dönük yapılan hükümetlerarası analiz, yeni işlevsellik yaklaşımının ve özellikle yayılma etkisi kavramsallaştırması ile daha da niteliklendirilebilir. Ancak bu şekilde yapılacak derinlemesine bir analiz, bu tezin kapsamı dışında kalmaktadır.

AB üyelik süreci başlayana kadar, Türkiye’de bölgesel politika tasarlanırken ve uygulanırken bölgesel yönetim mekanizmalarının kullanılması tercih edilmemiştir. Devletin üniter yapısının etkilenmemesi için, bölgesel gelişme alanında merkezileşmiş bir politikanın uygulanmasının daha uygun olacağı değerlendirilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, AB üyelik sürecinde, birçok yasal değişiklik yapılmış ve bu amaca hizmet etmek üzere, merkezi, bölgesel ve yerel düzeyde kapasite geliştirme çalışmaları yapılmıştır. Diğer yeni üye olan ülkelerin aksine, Türkiye’ye AB tarafından kesin bir üyelik tarihinin verilmemiş olması, Türkiye’nin bölgesel yapılarının ve mevzuatının, üyelikle birlikte AB yapısal fonlarından yararlanabileceği şekilde, AB’nin bölgesel politikasının ilkelerine uygun olarak adapte edilmesini olumsuz yönde etkilemiş olabilir

AB’ye katılım süreci, hâlihazırda AB tarafından Türkiye’ye tahsis edilmiş olan katılım öncesi fonların kullanılarak, Türkiye’de bölgesel gelişmeye yardımcı olacak idari yapıların kurulması ve güçlendirilmesi fırsatını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu alandaki gelişmeler üyelik durumunda, AB yapısal fonlarının kullanılabilmesi için de gerekli alt yapının oluşturulmasını sağlayacaktır; zira oluşturulmuş mevcut yapılar, AB’ye üye olunduktan sonra da kullanılmaya devam edebilecektir. AB fonlarının ulusal kaynaklarla birlikte ve bölgelerin bireysel ihtiyaçlarına uygun olarak hazırlanmış eylemler içeren kapsamlı stratejiler çerçevesinde uygun projelere aktarılması, Türkiye’de bölgesel gelişmişlik farklarının giderilmesi bakımından önem arz etmektedir.

Özetle, Avrupalılaşıma süreci, AB üyeliğine aday bir ülkede, bölgesel politika alanındaki kurumların ve politikaların geniş kapsamlı bir dönüşümünü sağlayamamıştır. Türkiye’nin bölgesel politikasında da görüldüğü üzere, Türkiye’de yaşanan yasal, idari ve kurumsal alandaki gelişmeler, üye olduktan sonra AB yapısal fonlarından yararlanabileceği biçimde, henüz AB standartlarına erişememiştir. Bu bağlamda, özellikle bölgesel düzeyde kurumsal kapasitenin geliştirilmesi gerekmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bölgesel yapıların oluşturulması vasıtasıyla, Türkiye AB yapısal fonlarından yararlanarak ve ortak finansman yoluyla ekonomik ve sosyal kalkınma projelerini hayata geçirebilecektir. İBBS Düzey 2 bölgelerinin mevcut

yönetim yapılarında bir yerinin bulunmadığı göz önünde tutulduğunda, Türkiye'de yeni bölgesel yapıların kurulmasının oldukça zorlayıcı olduğu düşünülebilir.

Tezin bölümlerinde tespit edilen temel bulgular göstermektedir ki, Avrupalılaşma süreci, Türkiye'deki politikaları, politika süreçlerini ve kurumları büyük ölçüde etkilemiştir. Ancak, bu süreç, 1999-2015 yılları arasında Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikasının, AB'nin bölgesel politikasının ilkeleri ve kurumsal çerçevesi doğrultusunda kapsamlı bir dönüşümüne neden olamamıştır. Bu durum, Türkiye'ye kesin bir üyelik tarihi verilememesinin de gösterdiği gibi, kısmen AB'nin Türkiye ile katılım müzakerelerindeki isteksizliği, kısmen de bölgesel politikasını Avrupalılaştırma konusunda dile getirdiği amacına rağmen, Türkiye'nin bölgelere dönük politikasında merkeziyetçi yaklaşımını muhafaza etmeyi sürdürmesi ile ilişkilidir.

## B. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

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