

PROBLEMATIQUE IN TURKISH-FRENCH RELATIONS:  
THE FRENCH PERSPECTIVE ON TURKEY'S CANDIDACY  
FOR EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

### PROBLEMATIQUE IN TURKISH-FRENCH RELATIONS: THE FRENCH PERSPECTIVE ON TURKEY'S CANDIDACY FOR EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERSHIP

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This thesis analyzes France's assessment on Turkey's candidacy for European Union (EU) membership, covering a time period of twenty years -from 1999 to 2019. By the time Turkey has obtained EU candidate country status at Helsinki EU Summit in 1999, a massive debate has occupied French socio-political spheres. Turkish candidacy has been never debated that widely in any EU member country other than France. Equally, France had never debated any candidate country that intensely other than Turkey. The thesis searches for the reasons behind these aspects and evaluates the general arguments along with facts constituting public opinion and leaders' (multifaceted) discourses. The theoretical framework hereby assumes that values and identities construct discourses, making public opinion valuable as never before. The thesis, then, highlights the French national self-conception, prejudices about cultural characteristics are dominant parameters in forming the opinions of the public and that of leaders. The overall evaluation reveals French political leaders and the political elite in general -irrespective of their personal thoughts about Turkey's adhesion, will always invoke public opinion to decide on this particular issue.

**Keywords:** Turkish-French Relations, Turkish European Union Adhesion, French Public Opinion, Discourse Analysis, Turkish Image

## ÖZ

### TÜRK-FRANSIZ İLİŞKİLERİNDE SORUNSAK: TÜRKİYE’NİN AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ ÜYELİĞİ ADAYLIĞINA DAİR FRANSA’NIN YAKLAŞIMI

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Bu tez, Fransa’nın Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği (AB) üyeliğine adaylığı hakkındaki değerlendirmelerini, 1999 ve 2019 yılları arasında kapsayan yirmi yıllık bir zaman dilimi çerçevesinde analiz eder. Türkiye’nin 1999 yılında Helsinki AB Zirvesi’nde aday ülke statüsünü elde etmesiyle, Fransa’daki sosyo-politik çevreleri meşgul eden geniş çaplı bir tartışma başladı. Türkiye’nin adaylığı başka hiçbir AB ülkesinde bu denli tartışılmamış; aynı şekilde, Türkiye dışında başka hiçbir ülkenin adaylığı Fransa’da bu derece tartışma konusu olmamıştır. Tez, bu durumun ardında yatan sebepleri araştırmakta; kamuoyunu ve liderlerin (çok yönlü) söylemlerini oluşturan genel argümanları olgularla beraber ele almaktadır. Buradaki teorik yapı, değerlerin ve kimliklerin söylemleri inşa ettiğini ve böylelikle kamuoyuna hiç olmadığı kadar önem kazandırdıklarını varsaymaktadır. Bu bağlamda, tez, Fransız ulusal benlik kavramının; kültürel özelliklere dair önyargıların, kamuoyunda ve liderlerdeki fikirlerin oluşumunda baskın parametreler olduklarının altını çizer. Nihai değerlendirme, Fransız siyasi liderlerin Türkiye’nin üyeliğine dair şahsi düşüncelerinden bağımsız olarak, bu konu hakkında karar alınırken her zaman kamuoyuna başvuracaklarını açıklamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk-Fransız İlişkileri, Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği Üyeliği, Fransız Kamuoyu, Söylem Analizi, Türk İmajı

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
CCAF	Coordinating Council of Armenian Organisations of France
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
EUROMED	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
IFRI	Institut Français des Relations Internationales (French Institute of International Relations)
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JCAD	Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide
JETCO	Joint Economic and Trade Committee
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCF	Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Party)
RPR	Le Rassemblement pour La République (Rally for the Republic)
UDF	Union pour la Démocratie Française (Union for French Democracy)
UfM	The Union for the Mediterranean
UMP	Union pour Un Mouvement Populaire (Union for a Popular Movement)

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Turkey has always proved to be part of European judicial, economic and military systems through its membership to many institutions of the continental Europe. To mention a few; Turkey is the founding member of Council of Europe and also of Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The ultimate aim to be integrated in European multi-faceted systems, Turkey has been also aspiring to become part of the politico-economical cooperation in Europe since the first steps have been made. Turkey had applied for membership to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959, shortly after this entity had been established. From EEC till the emergence of the European Union (EU), Turkey never pulled itself away from the European sphere. Indeed, to integrate with the European system thru every dimension had been a strategic national goal. The aspiration for full membership to the European Union awarded Turkey with a “candidate country” status in 1999 Helsinki Summit of the European Council. Being declared as a candidate for full EU membership, Turkey became the center of attention in some EU member states.

Any candidate country who would aim of becoming part of a system is inevitably evaluated by the other countries already taking part in the structure the formers envisage integrating into. This evaluation does not only involve the annotation of bureaucratic congruity of the candidate but also a social viewpoint embodied by cultural filters. Perceptions based on historical memory and normative conditionality necessitated by contemporary formations, are the elements constituting these cultural filters.

The values of a state, directly or indirectly, affect the opinions of its citizens. The viewpoints the citizens adopt when encountering foreign cultures are in direct

correlation with these opinions. Cognition of the ‘other’ entails getting rid of formal societal bias. Individuals are affected by socio-cultural dynamics and thus, it is difficult to have them interpret foreign cultures in an objective manner. By a conscious or an unconscious reflex, the individual seeks to find and match similarities between her/his own culture and those of the others. Any disparity found could enthuse but, most importantly, could frustrate the individual. The effect of disparities on the individual varies according to the level of communication and interaction between the society she/he belongs to and the contemplated society. As the level of interaction augments when these two societies take place within the same political structure, the reactions would unexpectedly become more intensified.

Disparities provide an indirect answer to the question “*who am I?*”. The “I” is mostly the passive piece of the collective identity. In this manner, the question above undertakes a crucial role in the construction of the collective identity and its solidification. Words and notions gain a hypnotizing value when they reflect beliefs and their influential power is enhanced accordingly. Communicative interactions comprise a conceptual base for identity construction. In this context, leadership discourses contain psycho-social parameters bonded to collective identity. Discourses reshape the perceptions by they are nourished. Each power (leader, media, etc.) which tends to reach masses, needs to consider imaginaries, emotions, frustrations and other psycho-social attributions belonging to the mass in question. Adjectives and notions juxtaposed to the object of the discourse need to be paid attention. The way the object is denominated plays a key role in the encoding of the object.<sup>1</sup> The denomination serves to highlight the differences. “Debates over denominations problematize a given identity”<sup>2</sup> at the point where the differences are not accepted as richness but as scary and even as menacing parameters.

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<sup>1</sup> Nilgün Tatal, *Söylemler ve Temsiller: Fransızlar Türkleri Nasıl Anımsıyor ya da Fransız İmgeleminde Türkiye*, Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2006, p.66.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.73.

## 1.1. France as Subject of Research

France became the most radical voice declaring its objection to Turkey's EU membership. In France, Turkey's adequacy for EU membership had been and is still discussed by this time, with all its social, political, economic and judicial aspects. The French are traditionally devoted to enhanced intellectual practices. This is also a crucial factor explaining why Turkey becomes a topic for their intellectual discussions. The discussions have the power to impact Turkey's overall potential EU membership. The debates intensified after the negotiation talks with the EU began in 2005 and the opinion within the French political scene began to be reflected towards Turkey by also impacting its EU roadmap.

As the founding member state and the most influential power in the EU alongside Germany, France had prevented five new chapters of the *acquis communautaire* to be opened in Turkey-EU negotiations in 2007. Other than the Republic of Cyprus that Turkey does not recognize *de jure*, France emerged as the only country interrupting the course of the negotiations by its vetoes and gained a "special" place in Turkish political memory. These five titles were "Agriculture and Rural Development (Chapter 11)"; "Economic and Monetary Policy (Chapter 17)"; "Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments (Chapter 22)"; "Financial and Budgetary Provisions (Chapter 33)"; "Institutions (Chapter 34)".

Examining the opinions and the prejudices of French about Turkey does not aim to condemn but to understand France within the spectrum of ideas, opinions declared by the public, the media and the leaders. The main aim is to understand if French leaders' -namely, the presidents', discourses can be determined as reflecting France's official state policies and be considered as absolute. The thesis, therefore, asks the question whether there is a variety of arguments that changes in accordance with leaders or, whether there is a common ground, such as the public opinion, that would ultimately say the last word on the membership issue.

Chapter 2 plays an introductory role in assessing the general arguments upon which ideas on Turkish membership are built. The imagery of the Turk within the French

public and political spheres is examined briefly. It evaluates the historical basis that impact the formation of the Turkish image in French minds.

Chapter 3 focuses particularly on four presidents -namely, Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande and Emmanuel Macron and treats in depth their speeches throughout particular periods. By analyzing and highlighting particular arguments of the leaders, the dissertation aims to detect not only the main points/ideas of their political approaches but also, whether there is a change in their discourses and if so, why. This approach paves the way towards the analysis of the public opinion, a focus area which stands crucial as being leaders' target group.

Chapter 4 treats French public opinion on the issue of Turkish EU candidacy and aims to detect the main parameters that affect the general arguments that French have about it. It considers public and political/judicial debate areas (such as the National Assembly) as the overall public opinion. The analysis of the main aspects constituting the general arguments articulated through public opinion aims to understand the extent public opinion nourishes leaders' discourses. This would also help to understand why some of the French leaders declare the final decision on Turkish adhesion is to be made by the French public. The chapter does not only envelops arguments on Turkey but also some of the debates regarding internal French politics. Indeed, the debates about some controversial topics -such as secularism and the veil issue, shape the arguments on Turkey by triggering a correlation between current internal "crises" and the possibility to encounter similar ones due to the Turkish adhesion.

## **1.2. Methodology and Limitations**

This thesis analyzes political and cultural discourses. Identities are discursive productions. They are produced by over-emphasized specificities or by characteristics that do not have any affiliation with their culture. Every individual perceives and interprets identities through her/his own viewpoint which is shaped by collective memory.

The collective memory appoints social imaginaries about specific topics. These imaginaries are repetitively reflected on the public and official discourses. In these terms, the French newspapers and the leaders' speeches dealing with Turkey happen to be the primary sources. Besides newspapers, the poll results were used to revise public opinion.

Media has a pedagogical role as it is the main supplier of information for the public. By transferring information, it functions as the indirect creator of opinions or the intensifier of the prejudices. In this dissertation, the three prestigious French dailies *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* are mainly used as referent sources displaying leaders' discourses. The debates and decisions (draft laws) made at the National Assembly, the Senate were referred in order to analyze to what extent political debates impact the legal and legislative spheres, bearing in mind that these could also give clues about whether there is an official stance that surpass leaders and/or governmental periods. Additionally, the articles published therein are considered as indicators of general public views. They mostly treat the socio-political problems in Turkey. Denoting that a newspaper may contain both negative and positive stances, particular perspectives could not be attributed to these dailies. Articles and publications of French intellectuals were also used in order to assess the conceptual framework of the argumentation. The intellectual sphere is considered as a cluster that reflects political and public argumentative points.

The thesis would like to offer a different point of view to general observation of France in Turkey; France is mostly evaluated through the speeches of leaders by classifying mainly as being totally negative or positive about Turkey/Turkish membership.

One of the limitations encountered during literature review was about the small amount of academic researches made about the perspectives of François Hollande and Emmanuel Macron's on Turkey's EU membership compared to the high amount of academic resources published on Nicolas Sarkozy's speeches. Therefore, the analysis focused mostly on the available media sources and personal evaluation of the facts. Another limitation that had been expected before the writing of this

thesis was the fact that societal values such as public opinions and identities are difficult to be evaluated as they may differ from period to period or even within the same social segments.

The thesis believes further analysis could be made by using different research tools of various disciplines such as sociology, political science. Additionally, the EU history, the approach of French leaders to and the role of France within the construction of Europe could be further detailed in order to assess a more politico-philosophical background. This multidisciplinary approach could enable to further develop the view of point towards Turkish-French relations as well as to the focus area of foreign policy analysis within the discipline of International Relations<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For further information on French political scene especially regarding the EU framework, works such as Michael Sutton's "*France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007: The Geopolitical Imperative*", 2011, could be referred.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE GENERAL TRAITS OF FRENCH PERCEPTION ON TURKEY

Debates over Turkish membership to the European Union (EU) led to the questioning of what European identity is. Turkey's qualification for EU membership is correlated to the extent of its Europeanness. This questioning on Europeanness focuses on how the Ottoman, Islamic heritage of Turkey affects its contemporary politico-cultural identity. The Ottoman Empire signifies mostly an Islamic state and a conquest power in the minds of the French people. World political history is filled with examples of appetite for conquests. The Ottoman Empire is blamed for its conquest politics because the European continent had also been targeted. This historical feature outlines Turco-skeptic insight leading to deem Turkish impetus for EU membership as the contemporary version of conquest strategy. The right of free flow of citizens recognized by the EU membership is believed to serve Turkish expansionism in human terms.

In general, references to Ottoman period and administration contain negative aspects. The target audience may not interrogate the accuracy of the information given, especially if there are already ossified stereotypes in their minds. This becomes critical particularly when essential data about an issue is purposely not conveyed. The purpose is to evoke stereotypes. An illustrative instance about how historical heritage of Turkey is negatively used to mislead audiences can be observed in the theme focusing on the practice of slavery in the Ottoman Empire. The practice of slavery ended only in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This feature is referred to characterize Turkey with a negative attribution in order to highlight its difference from the European sphere –where slavery was already

abolished<sup>4</sup>. Turkey is interpreted as different because its momentum of juridical development was not synchronized with that of Europe. The crucial detail missed in this information transfer is that slavery system in the Ottoman Empire differs from the European way. Yet, the two systems differed from each other by a totally diverse point. In the Ottoman Empire, the slaves could be appointed to public offices solely after apostasy without being judged by their skin colors contrary to what was practiced in Europe<sup>5</sup>.

The Turkish society is considered as being Islamized for more and more and this is annotated as a paradox. This indicates Middle Eastern values are more emphasized or having replaced the ones implying European aspects. The transition between values fosters the paradoxical facet of Turkish society. Such a paradox would impede Turkey from undertaking European identity and thus inductively, from becoming a member of European *troika*. As the paradox is ultimate, it is impossible to envisage Turkey as becoming a European state<sup>6</sup>.

Every society has a potential of perfectibility. The concept may be polemical in itself, especially in terms of determining what is perfect. On one hand, reflections on perfectibility may result in discriminatory viewpoints. The “imperfections” could be dangerously highlighted, leading to the alienation of the subject. On the other hand, such reflections shall enable individuals to apprehend that each society, with its civilizational structures, transcends the thresholds remarking its developmental level and impetus. Civilizational matters, thus, constitute the central part of the analyses on Turkey. The main analyses are focused on issues related to internal politics –democracy, minority rights, women rights, secularism; economic development and internationalized ones such as the Armenian and the Cyprus issues. The treatment of minorities and their rights are the subjects French give

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<sup>4</sup> See Alexandre del Valle, *La Turquie dans l'Europe: Un Cheval de Troie Islamiste*, Paris: Editions des Syrtes, 2004, p.178.

<sup>5</sup> Gül Akyılmaz, “Osmanlı Hukukunda Köleliğin Sona Ermesi ile İlgili Düzenlemeler ve Tanzimat Fermanı'nın İlanından sonra Kölelik Müessesesi”, *Gazi Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol.1-2, no.213 (2005), p.214.

<sup>6</sup> Tatal, *Söylemler ve Temsiller*, p.338.

particular attention to. Any news or information related to these issues enjoy the law of priority.<sup>7</sup>

The evaluation of European history would be efficacious to forecast the perfectibility of a society. The European continent witnessed intra-religious conflicts, nationalist wars, even two world wars and many outrages against human dignity. Nevertheless, all these facts motivated leaders to design and set up a politico-economic structuring based on the spread and the guarantee of universal values, in an effort to obviate any similar outrages to repeat in the future. On that score, a country needs to be evaluated with its potential of reaching a determined level of perfectibility. Turkey stands in a considerable position regarding its enthusiasm about EU membership.

By their value integrity, European structures have always been a model and an objective for Turkey's judicial, political and, to a degree, cultural developmental planning. Acknowledging historically and socio-philosophically formed values and norms, Turkey desired to become part of the European systems, since their very first establishment. Despite negative stands and forecasts, Turkey never gave up on its official ideal. Indeed, no other candidate country than Turkey has been subjected to intense discussions and interrogations held at both public and bureaucratic level. The assumption is that, Turkey should not be disregarded only because of the existing condition observed in several areas, which does not meet European criteria. The resentment, however, emanates from the idea of Europeanness, neglecting the membership criteria of European Union. The outcome of this identity-oriented perception is the argument that the negotiations will not serve Turkey to be considered as European, but can only help it to ameliorate its democracy level. This is the point where EU membership equals Europeanness. Subsequently, if a state wills to become a member of the Union, it should prove its Europeanness within a scale between state-based and societal entities. The problem arises from the conviction that Europeanness is a pre-determined identity, having specific features

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<sup>7</sup> Tatal, *Söylemler ve Temsiller*, p.99.

that can easily be detected and be attributed. However, this paper has the motivation that Europeanness is a dynamic and therefore an indefinable identity.

One of the EU values is to respect and protect cultural diversity within and between member states. Such a universal vision requires surmounting any prejudices and instituting dialogue, which is essential to create harmonious coexistence. Differences between and within societies can easily be found convenient to be conceptualized as “otherness”. There is a reciprocal correlation between the conception of “otherness” and prejudice. This interaction prepares ground for the evolution of cultural hierarchy. By glorifying French and European culture with regard to Turkish culture, a cultural hierarchy may demand Turkey to fully conform to this cultural system as a non-written precondition. Becoming an EU member becomes the equivalent of being suitable to a predetermined culture. This standpoint affects the annotations on migrants (and then the Turkish membership). The attributes of foreign cultures are given as the reasons why migrants face difficulties throughout adaptation<sup>8</sup>. This determination is imperative as Muslim migrants in France compose an important source for the French, on constituting a picture about Turkey in their minds.

Despite the fact that its membership will take a very long process and that the negotiations continue in slow-motion by reserving the risk of deadlock, there is an intense, noteworthy public discussions on Turkey’s identity and its compatibility to EU ‘cultural standards’. This aspect signals the high possibility of Turkey being rejected for membership because of socio-cultural criteria, even if many delicate issues that have been source of tensions between EU and Turkey are resolved. Being European is a cultural identity that Turkey cannot simply acquire by fulfilling membership criteria. Turkey would not fit EU because it is not socio-historically European. Even if it becomes a member of the EU, its identity could only embrace an ‘EU member state’ trait. Hence, the arguments of the French are mostly based upon social context and non-written social norms. Such norms make socio-cultural life peculiarities to be subject of focal point.

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<sup>8</sup> Tural, *Söylemler ve Temsiller*, p.19.

## **2.1. Psychology of Fear**

There are a number of scenarios about what developments can emerge if Turkey's membership is ever rejected. Just as those who conceive negative scenarios about what Turkey's membership may cause, people who support Turkey's membership point out scenarios covering possible negative consequences that the rejection of the membership may lead to. It is certainly a good move to try gaining support by exploiting the psychology of fear. As the ultimate goal is to guarantee survival –that is in this case, to protect the societal structure, people are expected to take steps in order to prevent these potential threats. Conversely, such scenarios mostly work out as trump cards for those who are against Turkish membership. The reason is that these scenarios concentrate on negative parameters that give Turkey a problematic and hazardous country status. Its candidacy being rejected, Turkey would hold on to its historical militarism, act rigidly against Kurds, be more Islamic-oriented and pursue a non-diplomatic approach in its foreign policy with its neighbors –an approach that is attributed to Middle East countries. Pointing out such possibilities only serve to highlight once again that potential risks are still present in Turkey. Why to host a threat and undermine the European dream? Within the geostrategic scale, pro-Turkish arguments mention that Turkey, as a bridge between significant actors, could serve Europe to enlarge its power area and to gain more stakes from regional economic networks. Yet, the notion of “bridge” evokes fear by its negative connotations. Nobody would approve to open the gates of a bridge that enemies could use to cross over. Simply for security reasons, the “bridge” should be kept at threshold and be sacrificed if needed. Moreover, a geographical location near to the most troubled regions is expected to prevent the opportunity to create a common foreign policy<sup>9</sup>.

## **2.2. Internal Dynamics**

France contains the largest Muslim community in Europe and thus, is very sensitive on the issue of the integration level of the migrants. This context is worth

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<sup>9</sup> Michel Rocard, *Avrupa Birliği Yolunda Türkiye'ye Evet*, İstanbul: YKY, 2009, p.71.

consideration since France's perception about and attitudes toward Turkey are affected by its own internal problems.

Equally, Jacobin French state tradition is reflected in its perception about the migrants. "In the Jacobin tradition, the concept of ethnicity evokes images of a segregated society."<sup>10</sup> Hence, the Jacobin approach forms a socio-political basis that blurs the thin line between integration and assimilation phases. Confronting the problem of integration at the level of migrants, France doubts EU will face the same problem with a Turkey unable to integrate itself in the EU –an inability which would damage the European system.

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<sup>10</sup> Alistair Cole, *French Politics and Society*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1998, p.226.

## CHAPTER 3

### LEADERS' DISCOURSES

Within the French political scene, the left and center (center-left; center-right) parties are prejudicially described as being mostly pro-European while the far-right wing is seen as Euro-skeptic. This theoretical division is expected to be valid for Turkish adhesion. The left political thought has considered the EU and the stages of its journey as emancipatory steps that would serve democratic values to proliferate. The background of French presidents' political thought certainly affects their stances about Turkey's membership and their EU visions accordingly. However, as the analysis will distinguish it as well, many other factors and personal preferences could motivate leaders take different steps on the contrary to the political wing they represent. For instance, Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy have been comrades in their political carriers. They worked together in Gaullist and conservatist "*Le Rassemblement pour la République*" (RPR; Rally for the Republic), party founded by Chirac in 1976. However, in the following years of their political career, they frequently opposed each other as in the issue of Turkish EU membership.

This section aims to depict the main arguments of French presidents. The focus will be on the leaders' discourses by sometimes referring to the arguments mentioned by other political figures -in order to detail or to clarify the argumentative stance of the leaders. In order to comprehend the French standpoint, the analyses should be supervised to catch sociological elements that build the discourses of the leaders. Indeed, within the French political culture, leaders' argumentations are nourished by the tendency in public opinion as the French public has a tendency to be political more involved in decision-making than in any other European country.

### **3.1. Jacques Chirac Period (1999-2007): Discourses and Developments**

Chirac had a major role in Turkey's gain of candidate status. At 1999 Helsinki and 2002 Copenhagen Summits, he did not deprive his support. Probably, if Sarkozy was then president, Turkey's candidate status would be challenged or even made impossible to be gained. Moreover, at 2004 Brussels Summit, he gave signature for the start of EU-Turkey negotiations. He never blindly supported Turkey, as he always highlighted the requirements to be fulfilled. Even so, in 2005 he promised a referendum for any further EU enlargement. How should it be interpreted? This subsection will examine the approaches of Chirac and evaluate his decision of referendum.

#### **3.1.1. 1999 Helsinki Summit**

This section will treat the response of the French side in the aftermath of the Helsinki Summit. The role of the leaders in EU-Turkish relations will be more comprehensible when the emphasis is put into important dates in the timeline of these relations.

The Helsinki Summit of 10-11 December 1999 has been the turning point in the relations between the EU and Turkey. Turkey gained the official status of candidate country for European membership. It is also an important date in terms that France supported and contributed to this decision taken in Helsinki. Jacques Chirac underlines his opinions on this decision with these words:

[L]a Turquie a une vocation européenne, historique, très ancienne.(...) [C]ette vocation est justifiée parce que c'est de notre intérêt politique, européen, de notre intérêt économique également, d'avoir une Turquie stable, démocratique, moderne, et qui a fait le choix de la laïcité depuis 1923. <sup>11</sup> (Turkey has the European capacity; an old and historical one. Turkey's capacity has been justified as to have a stable, democratic, modern Turkey which has opted for secularism since 1923 integrated in the EU is in our political, European and economic interest; my translation.)

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<sup>11</sup> République Française, "Les Discours Publics" (publication: 28 July 2004), Available at <<http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/047000114.html>>

The positive stance of Chirac had an undeniable impact on this decision. Yet, his stance does not resume the approval of the French public. The French public was not that interested in Turkey's EU ambitions before things got serious between EU and Turkey. Indeed, there was no need to raise oppositional voice since the Helsinki Summit did not promise Turkey full membership. Nonetheless, Sarkozy could not be expected to allow the Council taking such a stimulating decision.

### **3.1.2. 2002 Copenhagen Summit of the European Council**

In the Copenhagen Summit, held on 12 December 2002, the EU took the decision to open negotiations with Turkey. This decision has intensified the debates on Turkey. Turkish membership became one of the hit topics of the public debates. The public did not pay so much attention to Helsinki Summit decisions as the candidate status was not a guarantee for the membership procedure to begin but this decision meant a lot.

By the Copenhagen Summit, the debates extended their sphere of influence from bureaucratic EU level to public domain. Debates gained a new dimension. The European public sphere met disputes over the European identity while examining Turkey. Geographical, historical, religious and cultural parameters of identity had been intensely brought to the intellectual agenda. Considering this aspect, it is not difficult to envisage that Turkey would have found itself being the subject of solely identity debates when it fulfills all major EU criteria<sup>12</sup>.

### **3.1.3. The Main Arguments of Chirac's Discourse**

Chirac mainly argued that Turkey has the potential to become an EU member if it accomplishes the requirements specified in European documents. He believed that Turkey can reach this level only in the course of time. The widespread conviction is that Europeanness cannot be acquired by the fulfillment of these requirements. In the minds of the French public, being an EU member necessitates being European.

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<sup>12</sup> Nilüfer Göle, "Turquie: Un Désir d'Europe qui Dérange", *Critique Internationale*, p.41.

In 2002, Chirac explicated whether Turkey could be identified as European or not, by this expression:

Je sais que la chose peut se discuter d'un point de vue strictement géographique, mais je ne crois pas qu'on puisse la discuter d'un point de vue historique, de la civilisation.<sup>13</sup> (I know that this can be discussed from a geographical viewpoint, however, I do not believe that we can discuss it from a historical and civilizational perspective; my translation.)

The motive behind this expression is the idea which acknowledges the notion of civilization as universal and in this respect, the European civilization could expand beyond physical frontiers. For Chirac, the critical move Turkey has to make at this point is “cultural revolution”<sup>14</sup>. The appellation ‘revolution’ should be underscored; it does not ascribe any of the concepts of evolution and development. Revolution refers to a radical change; it establishes a new order with new dynamics, new principles that denies the existing cultural values. What other candidate country is expected to undergo a cultural revolution? Does Turkey need to change in a totally radical way? Chirac’s statement can serve those who oppose Turkish membership. It leads people to think about what possible parameters could prevent Turkey from becoming an EU member. It is inevitable to have the minds think “if a supporter of Turkish membership like Chirac requires a revolution, then the negations the opposite voices always underline should be factual”. Since such thoughts are paired with doubts over Turkey’s aptitude for accomplishing necessary reforms, Chirac’s arguments become contentious.

Chirac classifies Turkey as being a part of European system through several political, economic and military partnerships. Unfortunately, memberships to the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), do not totally render a country European. Chirac was careful about making comments on Turkey’s Europeanness. In 2003, he asserted the

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<sup>13</sup> Speech of Jacques Chirac in *Le Figaro* (27.12.2002) quoted in Sadi Lakhdari, “Qu’est-ce qu’une Barrière Culturelle?”, *Outre-Terre*, Vol.2, no.7 (2004), p.338.

<sup>14</sup> Helena Smith and Nicolas Watt, “Ankara needs cultural revolution to join EU, says Chirac”, *The Guardian*, 05 October 2005, Available at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/oct/05/turkey.eu>>

important thing was not to discuss whether Turkey belongs to Europe but rather to notice and appreciate the fact that Turkey is enthusiastic about becoming an EU member approximately for more than 30 years.<sup>15</sup>

For the opponents, Turkey will not be able to implement the essential reforms as it has a paradoxical nature. This paradoxical character will always constitute an obstacle in front of Turkey. Turkey's secularist state tradition was an asset that was frequently mentioned by Chirac. It emerges as an asset because Turkish secularism has been inspired by the French *laïcité*. As in France, Turkish Constitution prohibits religious practices and the use of religious symbols in the public domain. This is a positive feature for Chirac to use in his argument that Turkey should not be marginalized because of its cultural divergence. He even warned about a possible clash of civilization if Turkey's membership was rejected simply on the bases of ethnic arguments. This similarity does not satisfy Turco-skeptics as they consider the type of secularism being applied in Turkey as *alla turca*, which means the cultural and religious aspects prevent the secular doctrine to function properly.

Chirac's period also demonstrates the presence of issues that could disrupt positive atmosphere in relations. The Armenian issue is one of these "ingrained" topics that Turkey needs to treat on several occasions, no matter how much a French leader is supportive of its membership. On the Armenian issue, Chirac underlined the necessity for Turkey to confront its history. According to him, every country grows up by recognizing its tragedies and its faults.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, it is necessary to mention that, while visiting Armenia in September 2006, Chirac never gave an official visit to Turkey during his presidency years from 1995 to 2007. The attitude of Chirac regarding the Armenian issue will be elaborated deeply in the forthcoming chapter.

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<sup>15</sup> "Chirac: If criteria are fulfilled, Turkey can enter EU", *Hürriyet* 23 September 2003, Available at <<http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/09/23/347472.asp>>

<sup>16</sup> "Pour Jacques Chirac, la Turquie Doit Reconnaître le Génocide Arménien", *Le Monde* 30 September 2006, Available at <[www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2006/09/30/la-turquie-doit-reconnaitre-le-genocide-armenien-pour-entrer-dans-l-ue\\_818484\\_3214.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2006/09/30/la-turquie-doit-reconnaitre-le-genocide-armenien-pour-entrer-dans-l-ue_818484_3214.html)>

### ***3.1.3.1. The Referendum***

On March 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, Chirac amended the Constitution of the Fifth Republic to make any new enlargement in the EU be voted by a referendum. There can be two reasons behind this decision. Firstly, Chirac might not have wanted to overthrow his political prestige and power by ignoring the concerns of the society where the public opinion is very effective. The second reason could be to prevent a possible rejection of the European Constitution which was correlated in the public debates with the Turkish membership. The scheduling of the amendment is noteworthy. After the amendment of the clause 88-5, Chirac set March 4<sup>th</sup> 2005 as the referendum day.

Any Government Bill authorizing the ratification of a treaty pertaining to the accession of a state to the European Union shall be submitted to referendum by the President of the Republic (Article 88-5, Constitution of the Fifth Republic).<sup>17</sup>

Such an amendment had definitely appeased the concerns of the French public and the Turco-skeptics. Whatever the results of the negotiations are, the last decision would depend on the public. If the public rejects Turkish membership, France will not approve Turkey's adhesion to the Union even if this one fulfills all criteria. This development might have had two outcomes. Firstly, France would not lead the negotiations to a deadlock and let Turkey to fulfill some of the criteria. By this way, France would not endanger its relations with Turkey which are mainly dominated by economic ties and thus, are vital for France. France argues the procedure will eventually have an encouraging effect on Turkey; Turkey will have its juridical, economic system improved at the end. The process, whatever the result is, will be to its benefit. Secondly, Turkey will not occupy the public debates as intense as before and may ease the atmosphere for more efficient debates.

Within this atmosphere, French voters were also preparing themselves to decide upon the future of the EU. The EU Council had been designing a constitution

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<sup>17</sup> The French National Assembly, "Constitution of October 4, 1958", Available at <<http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/langues/welcome-to-the-english-website-of-the-french-national-assembly>>

(“European Constitution”) to improve the decision-making process and to have a more integrated Union. In France, the Referendum on the Constitutional Treaty was held on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2005. The Referendum caught a considerable interest from the citizens. %69,37 of the subscribed voters participated to the voting. The European Constitution was rejected by %54,67 ‘no’ votes against %45,33 ‘yes’ votes. The result reflects a bipolarized France –“one in favor of European cosmopolitanism...and...another...defensive towards the nation-state”<sup>18</sup>. The post-referendum Eurobarometer poll held in France, ironically, reflects that French are concerned about the economic developments rather than the Turkish membership.

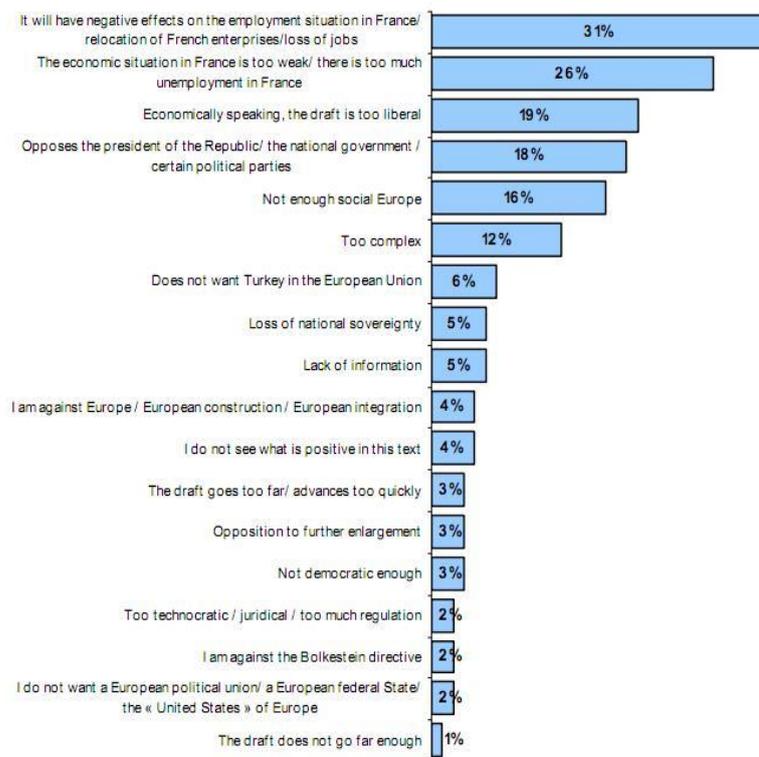


Figure 1. Votes at the Referendum on the EU Constitution: “What are the reasons why you voted ‘no’ at the referendum on the European Constitution?”

Source: Eurobarometer Survey 171, *European Commission*, June 2005, <[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl171\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl171_en.pdf)>

Having Turkey as a reference item in the surveys proves the extent Turkey occupies public debates. Even if the results lists the item defining non-willingness of Turkish

<sup>18</sup> Alistair Cole, *Governing and Governance in France*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p.109.

EU membership below other items, the fact that the percentage surpassed the items regarding democracy or integration in general should be evaluated adequately.

Just before the Referendum the unemployment rate in France was around %10<sup>19</sup>. This rate had been the highest level measured since December 1999. The coercive effect of the economic dimension can be detected in the reactions of the citizens. Many trade unions related unemployment with the latest Eastern enlargement of the EU. The main argument is that the employers lean to countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic because of the advantageous, low wages. This ‘business of migration’ is determined to have triggered unemployment across the country.

Herein, the discussions establishing a relation between the approval of the Convention and the definite membership of Turkey had no effect on “no” votes. Only %4 of the voters expressed the polemics on Turkey affected their decisions:

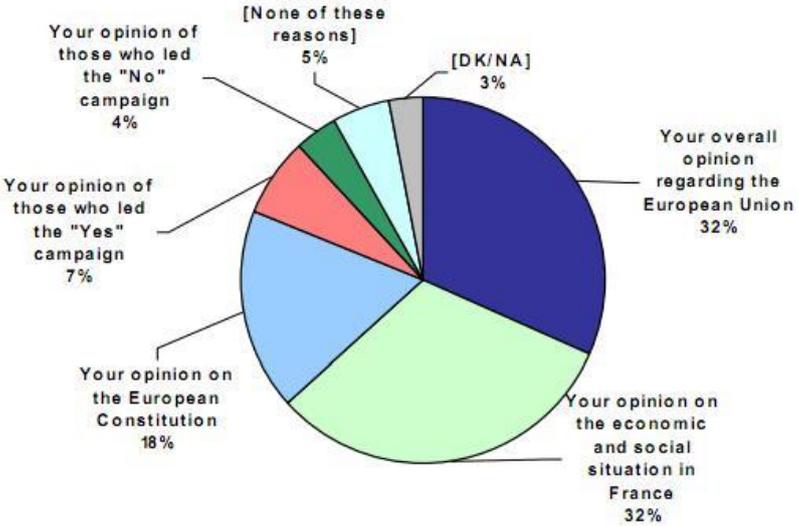


Figure 2. Key Elements Behind the Votes: “What was the key element that led to your vote in this Referendum?”  
 Source: Eurobarometer Survey 171, European Commission, June 2005, <[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl171\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl171_en.pdf)>.

Another survey held by Harris Interactive on May and June 2007, asked the participants whether their negative votes on Turkey would change if this country

<sup>19</sup> “Chômage: Bilan 2005”, 20 Minutes 13 February 2006, Available at <<https://www.20minutes.fr/societe/6749-20060213-chomage-bilan-2005>>

accomplishes the reforms outlined by the EU. The results reveal that only %21 of the voters responded that they would support Turkish membership if these reforms were ever to be achieved. In contrast to this group, a considerable percentage of the voters (%64) refuted the possibility of a change in their votes even if Turkey fulfills the criteria successfully.<sup>20</sup> This indicates that most of the French base their opinions about Turkey on cultural and geographical grounds, which are also affected by historical memory.

The reason behind the refusal might be the distrust they have towards Turkey. EU emerges as an irreligious and a laic entity. They doubt Turkey has the qualification to take part in this secular context. The secular aspect of the Turkish state is far away from satisfying these skeptic circles. Turkish political history reveals examples of tensions between secularism and religious practices. These examples are considered to reflect the incompatibility between secular system and Islam. For the French, the way Turkey deals with these challenges gives clues about its capability to integrate into the EU system. The general belief is that Turkey will always have to face these challenges. This belief is complemented with a cynical scenario that Turkey can experience an Islamist take-over. The succession of *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP; Justice and Development Party) government since 2002, serves the arguments of the cynical groups as a supportive example.

The Article II-70 of the European Constitution had an impact upon the votes. This article declares everyone has the right to manifest her/his religion both in public and private spheres<sup>21</sup>. Considering the veil affair and the febrile debates it has triggered in France, the effect of the article is deductive. While struggling with the issue and trying to find efficient ways to handle the impasse, the enactment of such an article would worsen the situation. *Laïcité* is a “sacred”, an essential political element in French socio-juridical system. Any modification may constitute a threat to this

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<sup>20</sup> Harris Interactive, “EU Citizens Want Referendum on Treaty” (publication: 18 June 2007), Available at <<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=1228>>

<sup>21</sup> See European Union, “Treaty Establishing A Constitution for Europe”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, Vol.47, C310 (16 December 2004), p.44. Available at <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2004:310:SOM:en:HTML>>

secure doctrine. Taking Turkey as a concrete exemplar and its struggle to protect the secular order vis-à-vis Islamic traditions, French intellectuals suggest to be careful and not to take any sudden risk. Thus, this abstention can also be associated with the will to protect societal and state independency. A ratio of %37 (and %53 of *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* partisans) of the voters assume the European Constitution will threaten a large spectrum of areas –from legislative to social.<sup>22</sup>

Did Sarkozy have objecting opinions like his fellows? In February 24<sup>th</sup> 2005, Sarkozy, then president of the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP; Union for a Popular Movement), made the following statement:

En disant oui à la Constitution, on augmente la marche que devra franchir la Turquie pour intégrer l'Europe.<sup>23</sup> (By accepting the Constitution, we increase the number of steps Turkey will have to make to join Europe; my translation.)

Sarkozy's strategy was to prevent the rejection of the European Constitution. The motive to protect the solid position and to boost it toward a more centric status was behind the assertion of Sarkozy. The particular emphasis on Turkey demonstrates to what extent its membership issue serves as propaganda apparatus for internal politics. How consistent was Sarkozy's argument that the EU Constitution would impede the negotiations with Turkey? Specifically, the following articles of the EU Constitution are expected to constrain Turkish membership: Article I-2, Article I-58 and Article I-57.

Article I-2 requires the maintenance of tolerance, non-discrimination, solidarity and equality between men and women. The human rights record of Turkey is not brilliant, especially when equality between man and woman is in question. This area

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<sup>22</sup> Renaud Dely, "Le Oui Plombé par le Social et la Turquie", *Libération* 08 February 2005, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/politiques/0101518148-le-oui-plombe-par-le-social-et-la-turquie>>

<sup>23</sup> Sarkozy's statement on February 24, 2005 in Tarbes (France). See Didier Hassoux, "A l'UMP, des Oui...contre la Turquie", *Libération* 17 March 2005, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/politiques/0101522493-a-l-ump-des-oui-contre-la-turquie>>

of human rights witnesses conflictual interactions between the modern civil laws and religio-cultural practices.

Article I-58 demands unanimity of the European Council for any new enlargement. The statement “any European state” put in the Article mentioned, would probably generate discussions on Turkey’s Europeanness.

Lastly, Article I-57 gave signs about a neighborhood policy based on privileged partnerships. Privileged partnership has been mentioned as an alternative road for Turkey’s relations with the EU. France and Germany, being the most radical voices in the Union to denounce Turkish membership, can concentrate their arguments on this Article.

It is essential to denote the decision of the European Council on the accession negotiations to be opened in 2005, has been given in 2004. The anteriority of the decision date signalizes the fact that the Constitution and the Turkish membership are and should be kept as two distinct processes.

#### ***3.1.3.2. 2004 Brussels Summit of European Council***

17 December 2004 was the date determined to designate the conditions for the opening of the negotiations with Turkey. Just before the Summit, French National Assembly administrated a debate on the membership eligibility of Turkey on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The debate reflects two different standpoints in France. The then French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin highlights the last decision would be made by the public. According to him, the vocation of the Turkish public should not be disregarded as the membership process has a motivational impact on its dynamics

of progression<sup>24</sup>. This is the common argument of the supporting side. This argument is supplied by the condemnation of the efforts aiming to close the doors even before they are open. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Michel Barnier, indicates that this attitude would mean defining the Turkish public as fundamentally incompatible with universal values like secularism, democracy and human rights.<sup>25</sup> Supporting discourses does not ignore the difficulty of the process and suggest a transparent communication with the Turkish public which would inform them about the fact that neither the EU nor Turkey are ready for this membership. The main motive was to adopt a peaceful approach towards Turkey. This will was also announced by the president of the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF; French Communist Party), Alain Bocquet, who used the lines of the Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet: “to live as brothers like trees in a forest”.<sup>26</sup>

Further supportive arguments -like that of deputy of Paris, Jean-Marie Le Guen, indicated that Turkey had recurrently recorded progress and did never fail. This means Turkey had still the potential to prove additional improvements and, in these terms, the rejection of its candidacy would be illogical.<sup>27</sup>

The opposing discourse focuses on the burden the Turkish membership would bring to the EU. The president of the *Union pour la Démocratie Française* (UDF; Union

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<sup>24</sup> “Mais, en tout état de cause, comme le Président de la République s'y est engagé, la volonté de la nation sera respectée, puisque le peuple de France aura, par référendum, le dernier mot. L'espoir du peuple turc doit être aussi pris en considération pour que les forces de progrès qui l'animent - beaucoup plus puissantes que certains ne le croient - ne soient pas désespérées par ce qui risquerait d'apparaître comme une incompréhension, voire une exclusion.” Assemblée Nationale, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, “Déclaration du Gouvernement sur la Candidature de la Turquie à l'Union Européenne et Débat sur Cette Déclaration” (14 October 2004), Available at <[http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/cra/2004-2005/016.asp#P32\\_329](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/cra/2004-2005/016.asp#P32_329)>

<sup>25</sup> “Mais refuser à la Turquie la possibilité de prouver qu'elle peut s'adapter à l'Europe, c'est juger le peuple turc fondamentalement inadapté à la laïcité, à la démocratie et aux droits de l'homme.” Assemblée Nationale, Michel Barnier, *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> My translation for “vivres en frères comme les arbres d'une forêt” in “Notre Europe, c'est celle qui se bat contre l'exploitation et la guerre, celle de Rosa Luxembourg, celle du poète turc Nazım Hikmet rêvant de voir les peuples ‘vivres en frères comme les arbres d'une forêt’”, Assemblée Nationale, Alain Bocquet, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> “Mais jusqu'à présent Notre partenaire turc n'a pas failli. Dès lors, pourquoi cette tentative de rejet qui s'affirme aujourd'hui.”, Assemblée Nationale, Jean-Marie Le Guen, *ibid.*

for French Democracy), François Bayrou (who would become the Minister of Justice during François Macron's presidency later on) argues the enlargement causes the disparity of the Union which rends it weaker.<sup>28</sup> The arguments in this discourse are based upon the belief that Turkey will never be able to fulfill the EU criteria. In the presence of this reality, the opposing voices reason that agreeing the candidacy status would mean lying to the Turks. The distrust on the Turkish capacity is also valid for its secular regime. For the French, Turkey is still vis-à-vis the risk of Islamism. Their argument suggests that the secular regime was protected thanks to the military and its extreme interventions. By the decline of military detection over the politics, the country is expected to slip into Islamism. According to this perspective, the enthusiasm of the Islamist groups for the EU membership is due to the fact that the EU demands the retreat of the military power from the political scene.<sup>29</sup>

### **3.2. Nicolas Sarkozy Period (2007-2012): From Ministry to Presidency**

Contrary to Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy has always been against Turkish membership. He has always highlighted his stance in order to concretize his difference. Indeed, Sarkozy has always used public opinion to gain support since the very beginning. Chirac was rather sensitive to public opinion, independently from ego-centric political games. Sarkozy could benefit from the public opinion to cause a fracture between himself and Chirac. During his presidency campaign, Sarkozy promised to deadlock Turkish accession talks. After being elected as the new President, he pursued a political approach relatively different from what he had revealed when running his campaign, even if he had not radically altered his views. What is

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<sup>28</sup> My translation for “Plus on rend l'Europe dispersée, plus la rend impuissante”, Assemblée Nationale, François Bayrou, *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> “Le risque islamiste existe aussi. Certes la Turquie a maintenu le principe de laïcité imposé par Atatürk, mais ce, grâce à un pouvoir fort soutenu par l'armée. Or, l'entrée de ce pays dans l'Union européenne est aujourd'hui conditionnée à la disparition du pouvoir militaire. Cela fait le bonheur des mouvements islamistes radicaux qui attendent patiemment une brèche dans le système. Paradoxalement, plus la Turquie sera proche d'entrer dans l'Europe, plus elle sera menacée de basculer vers un islam radical. Voilà pourquoi les mouvements islamistes turcs, généralement si jaloux de l'indépendance nationale, sont si favorables à l'entrée dans l'Union européenne.”, Assemblée Nationale, Philippe Pemezec, *ibid.*

essential to denote is that both of the two leaders had to take different measures in their multidimensional, triangular relationship with Turkey, EU and France. Still, the discourse adopted by Sarkozy remained disturbing, and negative for Turkey.

### **3.2.1. The Main Arguments of Sarkozy's Discourse**

Sarkozy formalized his arguments on the basis of geography, the idea of “*Europe Puissance*” and European culture. His views are more likely to reflect the French public opinion. Indeed, Sarkozy is different from antecedent leaders by some means. He is considered to be quite an ordinary person for a leader<sup>30</sup>. Such a qualification refers to Sarkozy's courageous and clear stances –besides the convergent nature of his ideas with that of the French public. Therefore, his standpoint merits analysis not only because he had the power to deadlock EU-Turkey relations but also to understand French opinions and to develop more accurate policies accordingly.

When Interior Minister, Sarkozy had been criticized for his statements and decisions he made concerning Muslim communities residing in France. His proclamations reflected a discriminatory approach toward Muslim communities and, more importantly, Islam in general. He often emphasized his ties with the Christian heritage and does not pursue a sensitive political style that would protect any societal segment from being offended. Therewith, like the major part of European public does, Sarkozy ties the Christian heritage with EU fundamentals. This suggests being Christian as an essential element of European identity. Considering these accentuations, a Muslim country is expected to weaken the feeling of European identity and at the end to demolish the Christian Union.

Indisputably, being Christian can never be submitted as a precondition in terms of EU membership. Such a criterion would challenge respectively the ideals of “shared values of democracy, human rights, rule of law” and “fundamental freedoms” that formed the core basis of the EU.

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<sup>30</sup> Eşref Hilmi Açık, *Geçmişten Günümüze Türkiye-Fransa İlişkileri*, İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2008, p.526.

To assert that it is impossible for Turkey to implement these values and to go through a set of changes and developments for the simple reason it is a Muslim country, is disregarding the universality of the values in question:

The universality and indivisibility of human rights and the responsibility for their protection and promotion, together with the promotion of pluralistic democracy and effective guarantees for the rule of law, constitute essential objectives for the European Union as a union of shared values and serve as a fundamental basis for our action.<sup>31</sup>

From the French perspective, being at a point where it will be commemorated with such values will not automatically give Turkey the key for EU membership. This view illustrates the EU identity as embracing several cultural countenances besides these written values. Is it possible to specifically mark these traits? The answer lies in the arrogant statement of Sarkozy: “Si la Turquie était en Europe, ça se saurait”<sup>32</sup>. This popular statement, made just after (19 December 2004) the Brussels European Council, reveals important aspects about identity formulation. Turkish membership is not desired because of the existent preconceptions and stereotyped criteria in the minds referring to identity schemas. What identity are these criteria related to? Bonds between identity and preconception will be evaluated in Chapter 4.

### ***3.2.1.1. Presidency: Any Change in Attitude?***

During the Presidential campaign rally, Turkey constituted a key pattern in Sarkozy’s discourse building. Analyzing the public opinion and detecting whether the majority is against or abstainer about Turkish membership, Sarkozy was insistent on using every opportunity to affirm his personal beliefs and political stance on the issue. His political strategy does not take refuge in giving references

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<sup>31</sup> European Union, “Declaration of the EU on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the UDHR”, Vienna: European Union, 1998, Available at <[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/HR.EN8.htm](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/HR.EN8.htm)>

<sup>32</sup> “If Turkey would have been European, it would have been known; my translation”, statement made by Nicolas Sarkozy in Charles Jaigu, “L’Elysée Prêt au Débat sur l’Adhésion de la Turquie”, *Le Figaro* 07 April 2009, Available at <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2009/04/07/01002-20090407ARTFIG00262-l-elysee-pret-au-debat-sur-l-adhesion-de-la-turquie-.php>>

to principles like economics, welfare state that are already internalized and *sine qua non* goals in every European state. He takes clever steps by highlighting the factors that may prevent the accomplishment of these goals or even, may devastate existing achievements. The intention is not to create new worries but to exploit phobia patterns already existent in the minds of the voters.

Sarkozy had insisted on developing a strategic partnership framework for EU-Turkey relations, as to be an alternative for full membership. During his campaign rally, he was enthusiastic about his visions about a Mediterranean Union prospective in the near future. This was not only an opportunity to attain peacemaker leadership role in the Mediterranean region, but also to gain votes from his citizens for having presented a feasible “solution” that would serve to canalize Turkish aspiration.

“The Union for the Mediterranean” (UfM), succeeds the Barcelona Process of 1995 within the context of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) policy of the EU. UfM, was launched on 2008 under the leadership of Sarkozy. The French state was cautious to not discomfort the Turkish side. Turkey was determined to not take part of this Union as long as it is introduced as a replacement for EU membership. The French state made an official declaration to appease any suspicion on the issue. Turkey requested a guarantee that the UfM membership would never replace and prohibit EU membership. Turkey took part of UfM since its launch once its doubts were dissipated by official pledges within the EU.

The European Commission has three perspectives considering the membership candidates<sup>33</sup>. Firstly, member states shall be devoted and conducive to prepare a negotiation framework for the candidate. Secondly, the candidate state shall be encouraged for and supported during the internal reform process. Thirdly, political and cultural dialogue between the candidate states and the EU shall be strengthened.

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<sup>33</sup> Laden Yurttagüler, “Toplum Diyaloğunun Harekete Geçişi: Sivil Toplum Atölyesi Dizilerine Yönelik bir İnceleme” [“Civil Society Dialogue in Action: A Review of Civil Society Workshop Series”] in Senem Düzgüt and Ayhan Kaya (eds.), *Fransa ve Türkiye Arasında Sivil Toplum Diyaloğu: Önyargıları Aşmak*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009, p.9.

Considering this context, Sarkozy's approach towards Turkey could be considered as damaging these.

At this point, the speech he gave in the Fifteenth EU Ambassadors' Conference held on 27 August 2007 should definitely be assessed:

I think this idea of association will one day be recognized by everyone as the more reasonable one. Meanwhile, like Prime Minister Erdogan, I hope that Turkey and France will restore the special relations they established over a long shared history.

I didn't want to raise this issue before that of the simplified treaty, because it would have created a total deadlock. You can't resolve problems by creating a total deadlock. You resolve them by finding solutions. Of the 35 chapters that remain to be opened, 30 are compatible with association. Five are compatible only with accession. I told the Turkish Prime Minister: let's deal with the thirty that are compatible with association and then we'll see.<sup>34</sup>

It is not surprising that just before this speech, Sarkozy lobbied for five chapters to be vetoed concerning Turkish accession. Namely, "Agriculture and Rural Development (Chapter 11)"; "Economic and Monetary Policy" (Chapter 17)"; "Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments (Chapter 22)"; "Financial and Budgetary Provisions (Chapter 33)"; "Institutions (Chapter 34)" were the chapters France prevented to be opened by the European Council<sup>35</sup>. Indeed, Sarkozy had mentioned these chapters are directly correlated with membership. This reasoning is a way of consolidating Sarkozy's insistence on Turkey's "privileged partnership" instead of EU membership. This first step made by Sarkozy constituted the general outline of what the following years would bring about in favor of Turkish-French relations: lots of dead-ends.

In the aftermath, Sarkozy seemed to avoid displaying a stance that would label him as the "villain". This was not a turning point in his ideas but rather, a strategic step

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<sup>34</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy, Speech at the Fifteenth (EU) Ambassadors' Conference (27.08.2007), Available at <https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/editorial/actual/ael2/bulletin.gb.asp?liste=20070829.gb.html&submit.x=5&submit.y=11&submit=consulter#Chapitre1>

<sup>35</sup> Türkiye Avrupa Vakfı, "Current Situation in Turkey's Accession Negotiations", Available at <http://turkiyeavrupavakfi.org/current-situation-in-turkeys-accession-negotiations/?lang=en>

that is part of benefit calculations. First of all, the basic motive could be to avoid adopting standpoints that contravene the EU principles of membership processes, mentioned above. A power which aspires to protect the leadership role in the Union should at least create the impression it is eager to administer integrative policies and in this respect, to handle the role of good offices when necessary.

Secondly, the ambition for a powerful status in the Euro-Mediterranean region had been another motive. The UfM was a vital project for a France who wanted to take the role of vigorous actor in the region. This necessitates being careful in its relations with the members. Turkey was also aspiring for a leadership role in regions other than Europe and was dedicated to integrate itself with the Middle Eastern and North African countries more than ever. In such a period, running up against Turkey would have been a misstep for Sarkozy. By setting Turkey aside, France would not only contemplate a decline in the support of the remaining members but could also clash with indigenous negative public opinion within the region it aimed to impact. Therefore, for Sarkozy, delaying policies remained to be the best tactical option. Putting forward such projects could help France to smooth its negative image vis-à-vis Turkey and could occupy the agenda between Turkey-France rather than bringing up the intense issue of EU membership.

Obviously, it became obvious Sarkozy's thoughts on Turkey would never alter:

J'ai toujours été opposé à cette entrée et je le reste. Je crois pouvoir dire qu'une immense majorité des Etats membres est sur la position de la France.<sup>36</sup> (I have always been against this adhesion and still am. I think a great majority of the member States think the same as France; my translation)

He constantly reminded his target group he will utilize the referendum option to block Turkey's path at the very end. The referendum would have been the tactical move to delay any possible progress in Turkish-EU relations. This discriminatory nature of Sarkozy's attitude was also noticeable in the statement he made over the referendum amendment:

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<sup>36</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy, in "Sarkozy et Obama s'opposent sur l'Entrée de la Turquie dans l'UE", *Libération* 05 April 2009, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/monde/0101560325-sarkozy-et-obama-s-opposent-sur-l-entree-de-la-turquie-dans-l-ue>>

C'était une erreur de rendre le référendum automatique... On ne peut pas avoir une France qui dit à ses 26 partenaires européens: 'Excusez-nous, on ne peut décider de rien à cause du référendum.'<sup>37</sup> (To make the referendum automatic was a mistake... We cannot have France that tells its 26 European partners: "Excuse-us, we cannot take any decision because of the referendum criterion"; my translation.)

The main argument in this statement is that the referendum option shall not be automatic but shall be kept as a maneuver to be benefited from only when needed. It is not difficult to cognize the intention; Turkey will be the first and maybe the last lucky candidate that will have to win the hearts and the minds of the French public. The next step, then, had been to include a clause in the Article 88-5 that would enable such a maneuver. The new clause rendered referendum obligatory to be hold for a prospective member state whose population exceeds by %5 of that of the Union. The French National Assembly approved the bill on 29 May 2008. Before it was sent to the Senate to be voted, many criticisms were expressed both within the UMP and the opposition. It was considered as an attempt to constitutionalize hostility towards a particular country.<sup>38</sup> The words of Senator Jacques Blanc, a UMP member, encapsulate the main critique expressed by many: "On ne montre pas du doigt un pays ami."<sup>39</sup> The Senate dropped the bill on 24 June 2008 by 297 votes against 7.

Despite deadlock calculations, eight *acquis communautaire* ("The EU Acquis") chapters have been opened since Sarkozy took office. It is necessary to underscore that the opening of every *acquis* chapter demands unanimous decision of the Council of the European Union. Besides, two of these eight chapters were opened during the French EU Presidency in 2008. The common prediction was that France would use this momentous opportunity to complicate the negotiation process.

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<sup>37</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy, "'Un Référendum' sur la Turquie dans l'UE 'si la question se posait'", *Le Monde* 26 April 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Bernard Guetta, "Pourquoi Gifler les Turcs?", *Libération* 04 May 2008, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/tribune/010182345-pourquoi-gifler-les-turcs>>

<sup>39</sup> "We cannot point our finger at a friend ; my translation." in Alain Auffray, "30% d'Accord avec l'Adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union Européenne", *Libération* 25 June 2008, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/instantane/010184002-30-d-accord-avec-l-adhesion-de-la-turquie-a-l-union-europeenne>>

### **3.2.1.2. French Presidency of the EU Council**

France took over the presidency of the Council of EU in July 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 till December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Even if the personal position of Sarkozy was to deny Turkey the right of full accession, France did not deadlock the procedure. During French EU Presidency, two *acquis* chapters had been opened on 19 December 2008: “Free Movement of Capital (Chapter 4)” and “Information Society and Media (Chapter 10)”.

Evidently, the official French preference regarding Turkish membership seemed to be a *rapprochement*, as tight as possible, by shifting and even by eliminating the chance of membership. The motive which restrains France to end up the negotiations is the belief that the membership process constitutes an essential lever for modernization and democratization in Turkey.

### **3.2.1.3. “La Saison de la Turquie”: A Dark Season?**

Turkey also encountered challenges through cultural relations during Sarkozy’s presidency. With the impact of tense incidents, Turkey’s chance to use its public diplomacy tool had been inhibited regardless of positive approaches present at the beginning of the particular event launched as the Turkish Season in France.

“C’est la Turquie nouvelle et sa saisissante diversité que les Français vont connaître”<sup>40</sup>: The French Culture Minister Frédéric Mitterrand had launched the Turkish Season with these words. At the opening ceremony, the press conference witnessed critical questions about possible effects the Season activities could have on the perceptions about Turkey. Could the Season change negative opinions about Turkey into positive ones? Mitterrand’s responded as “[n]euf mois c’est le temps

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<sup>40</sup> “The French will meet the new Turkey and her striking diversity” Frédéric Mitterrand’s speech at the Press Conference in Marc Semo, “Mitterrand, Lyrique avec la Turquie”, *Libération* 01 July 2009, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/culture/0101577241-mitterrand-lyrique-avec-la-turquie>> [sic.]

nécessaire pour faire naître un bel enfant”<sup>41</sup>. The label “new Turkey” and the belief that perceptions can alter in a positive way is worth consideration, especially because Mitterrand is, in one way, a representative of the Sarkozy government.

The Turkish Season was celebrated between July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. This cultural event represents an important phase in French-Turkish relations. The foundations of the Season were laid by Chirac during “*le Printemps Français*” (“The French Spring”) event celebrated in Turkey, in 2006. With his Turkish colleague, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the Turkish President at that time, they planned to reserve a budget of 23 million Euros for this anticipated cultural celebration.

For the opening ceremony then Turkish President Abdullah Gül visited the French capital, Paris. This visit matters for being the first official visit a Turkish president gives to France since 1998. It is interesting that Turkey, while criticizing the French attitude that much, did not urge for engaging in high-level diplomacy and preferred to consume its energy by developing threatening strategies. Still, France annotates that the Turkish Season contributed to the amelioration of their bilateral relations with Turkey. Equally, there are some tricky features that have to be pointed out.

This event of nine months is not entitled as “year” but “season”. If unique, this designation would not be subjected to deconstructive reading. However, a precedent example of another cultural occasion confuses the minds. Between 21 September 2006 and 14 July 2007, Armenian culture celebrations in France were launched under the motto “*Arménie, Mon Amie*” (“Armenia, My Friend”). The term “friend” reflects the strong amity between France and the Armenian people, a result of the efforts made by the Armenian diaspora. In addition to this significant detail, French favoritism can be noticed in the official name of the cultural event “*L’Année de l’Arménie*” (“The Year of Armenia”). Likewise, one year later after the Turkish Season, in 2010, France and Russia bilaterally celebrated “The Year of Russia” and “The Year of France”. The tensions in bilateral relations seem to have affected even

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<sup>41</sup> “Nine months are the necessary time for a beautiful kid to born”, Frédéric Mitterrand in Marc Semo, *ibid.*

the name of this cultural event. Has the Turkish Season really been victim of discrimination?

The Turkish Season comprised more than 400 activities in 77 French cities. Yet, Turkey criticized France for not mentioning and promulgating sufficiently the news on the Season before and after its onset. Was Turkish reaction a sign of oversensitivity? Could France be the only side to blame? The Turkish Season had been identified as a burden and burdens do not worth special attention: “the Turkish season is... a poisoned present Chirac had given to Sarkozy”<sup>42</sup>. This idea explicates why Sarkozy was inattentive in highlighting the benefits the Season could have. He was so inattentive that his behavior during the Season activities was also criticized by the French media.

*Le Monde* commented that the Turkish President had not been received with necessary care and gives many details.<sup>43</sup> The dinner given on October 07 (2009) by the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI; French Institute of International Relations) in honor of Abdullah Gül, did not witness the participation of any French ministers. In diplomatic manners, this is a disrespectful comportment. Furthermore, Sarkozy has been depicted as impertinent because of his behavior at the exhibition “*De Byzance à Istanbul*” (“From Byzantium to Istanbul”). Sarkozy refused the narration given by the Turkish curator and Assistant Organizer of the Turkish Season, Nazan Ölçer. The same scene was defined as “indelicate” by the *Libération*.<sup>44</sup>

Maybe not that indelicate, but certainly a bad strategy: the reactionary steps made by the Turkish leaders only made the things more complicated. Just two weeks before the opening ceremony, the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed he

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<sup>42</sup> Dorothee Schmid quoted in Guillaume Perrier, “La Saison Culturelle Turque en France est Incertaine”, *Le Monde* 18 June 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Arnaud Leparmentier, “Service Minimum à l’Elysée pour le Président Turc”, *Le Monde* 08 October 2009, Available at <[http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2009/10/08/service-minimum-a-l-elysee-pour-le-president-turc\\_1250841\\_3214.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2009/10/08/service-minimum-a-l-elysee-pour-le-president-turc_1250841_3214.html)>

<sup>44</sup> Vincent Noce, “Turquie Express pour Sarkozy”, *Libération* 12 October 2009, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/culture/0101596496-turquie-express-pour-sarkozy>>

could cancel the Turkish Season. Erdoğan defined Sarkozy's declarations and the dominant anti-Turkish sentiment in France as the causes of his snap decision. Hopefully, this statement remained solely as an excessive and uncalculated reaction. Unfortunately, Gül's decision did not result in a beneficial way. Gül cancelled the dinners where Turkish businessmen would gather together to generate a solid financing for the Season. Turkey's share of the common budget created (a total of 23 million Euros) to cover the expenses was 11 million Euros. The cancellation of the dinners did not only endanger the feasible increase in the budget but also gave the impression the Turkish side was not enthusiastic at all.

During Sarkozy's presidency Turkish-French relations faced a turmoil and the Turkish side -together with its governmental officials and population, had embraced the idea that France has become and would remain the player who would do whatever possible to get Turkey outside the EU game. Certainly, the French attitude during Sarkozy's years made Turkey more suspicious about the EU in general.

### **3.3. François Hollande Period (2012-2017): The Transition Phase**

Elected as the 24<sup>th</sup> French president by defeating Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande had adopted a more progressive discourse towards Turkey. It is very interesting to see that Turkey's membership to the EU has always been a critical question all candidates are expected to answer; in this perspective, when Hollande's discourse is analyzed it is noticeable that he had not put a direct, negative position against Turkish accession. The framework of his standpoint was built upon the existent status of the negotiation process ongoing on between Turkey and the EU. Indeed, Hollande highlighted the negotiations started long time before and that no "major condition" had been achieved yet.<sup>45</sup>

As mentioned, during the presidential campaign, Hollande did not put an emphasis on Turkish candidacy, even though he also had ambitions for European leadership

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<sup>45</sup> "Hollande: Pas d'Adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE dans le Prochain Quinquennat", *Le Point* 11 April 2012, Available at <[https://www.lepoint.fr/politique/hollande-pas-d-adhesion-de-la-turquie-a-l-ue-dans-le-prochain-quinquennat-11-04-2012-1450615\\_20.php](https://www.lepoint.fr/politique/hollande-pas-d-adhesion-de-la-turquie-a-l-ue-dans-le-prochain-quinquennat-11-04-2012-1450615_20.php)>

just as his predecessors<sup>46</sup>. And even, after being elected as president, he did not refrain to out forward his intentions about solidifying economic relations with Turkey, which were alleged to have been damaged during Sarkozy's quinquennium. Hollande was signaling a normalization period in Turkish-French relations. Indeed, the strategy of Hollande was to "get back" the heart of Turkey. The fastest way to do this was to give an official visit to Turkey. He visited Turkey on January 2014; first time ever after then President François Mitterrand's visit in 1992. During his speech to French community residing in Turkey, Hollande highlighted the importance of bilateral economic relations at first. He had opened his speech with a striking point that could lead to a public debate: "*Bien sûr que la Turquie est en Europe. (...) Il est de la responsabilité de la France de tenir sa parole; c'est-à-dire de permettre qu'il y ait des chapitres qui s'ouvrent.*"<sup>47</sup> He mentioned then, that France was in favor of opening other chapters. It is noteworthy to denote that one of the chapters that had been suspended during Sarkozy's presidency, i.e. "Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments (Chapter 22)" was opened after Hollande took office.

During his visit, Hollande had also visited then Turkish President Abdullah Gül and made it clear that French people would own the last word on Turkish accession. Additionally, he had mentioned the accession talks could help Turkey to evaluate and could reveal an opportunity for Turkey to demonstrate its capabilities.<sup>48</sup> Hollande had cited the French share in Turkish market dropped to %3 and had reminded his will to increase the number of French companies in Turkey, while inviting Turkish business people to invest in France too.

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<sup>46</sup> "Les 60 Engagements de Hollande", *Libération* 26 January 2012, Available at <[https://www.liberation.fr/france/2012/01/26/les-60-engagements-de-hollande\\_791303](https://www.liberation.fr/france/2012/01/26/les-60-engagements-de-hollande_791303)>

<sup>47</sup> "Turkey is of course in Europe. It is up to France to keep its words; which means to allow the opening of new chapters" Hollande's speech in "Allocution Devant La Communauté Française à Istanbul", *Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères* 26 June 2014, Available at <<https://tr.ambafrance.org/Cumhurbaskani-Francois-Hollande>>

<sup>48</sup> "Hollande Evoque l'Adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union Européenne", *L'Express* 28 January 2014, Available at <[https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/video-hollande-evoque-l-adhesion-de-la-turquie-a-l-union-europeenne\\_1317928.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/video-hollande-evoque-l-adhesion-de-la-turquie-a-l-union-europeenne_1317928.html)>

Even though (or particularly the arrestation of French journalist Olivier Bertrand on November 2016), Gezi protests in 2013, the 2016 coup attempt and the measures taken and the discourses (especially about the death penalty) afterwards made Hollande's cabinet to be reluctant to speak favorable as before.

The referendum on constitutional change in Turkey were also criticized by the French. Combined with Hollande's priority given to the upcoming internal elections and the call for the recognition of the so-called Armenian genocide (2015) deteriorated the positive influence in bilateral relations, if not eliminated.

#### **3.4. Emmanuel Macron (2017-still in office): “Privileged” Relations**

The presidential campaign in 2017 in France was mostly dominated by economic and security concerns. Both the demands of the voters and the discourses of presidential candidates gave priority to economic arguments as the country had been facing an increasing debt on the budget.

Hence, the Turkish candidacy did not seem to occupy intensely the political debates during the presidential campaign of the candidates as it did on previous elections. One of the reasons could be underlined as the internal agenda of French socio-political scene which was mostly dominated by economic developments. In addition to this factor, the slow pace of negotiation talks and most of all, the “mental disengagement” of Turkey towards European membership made Turkish candidacy largely alienated from public attention and leaders' discourse in France.

Emmanuel Macron statements about Turkey's adhesion during and after his presidential campaign were constructed upon the actual status of Turkey-EU relations. The European leaders' perspectives on Turkey were afflicted by the political atmosphere following the 15 July 2016 coup attempt, mainly the state of emergency measures, along with the detainment of foreign journalists as those developments blurred their foresight about Turkey's future in many terms. This has signaled a slowdown in the EU-Turkish relations before Macron started his campaign. During Macron's first days in office, the EU Council was already declaring that it would adhere to its decision of not opening any new chapter in

negotiation talks and that the future of the talks would depend on Turkey's next steps.

Macron's discourse basically superposes on the arguments of his predecessor Hollande who, during his final period in office, had embraced an attitude criticizing the challenging issues in Turkish internal politics. Put in other words, Hollande's discourse prepared a politico-psychological framework for a more restrained official stance regarding Turkey. This conjuncture seems to have served Macron in structuring his position about Turkish membership without the need to put forward a debate on argumentative concepts (such as Europeanness of Turkey) that occupied the public discussions during previous quinquenniums.

A tactical reasoning has been implemented easily by Macron as Turkey had not been showing a clear motivation for EU membership as she did a decade before. This alleviates the burden that could have been on Macron because of his non-supportive stance towards Turkey's membership. As long as Turkey does not indicate and pursue a dedicated political schedule about her EU roadmap, it appears she loses interest within French political and public debates.

During the visit of Turkish President Erdoğan to Paris on 05 January, 2018, Macron had mentioned "strategic partnership" with Turkey should be considered instead of an ultimate membership. At first glance, this statement does not seem to tell a new story as Turkey had faced similar connotations through Sarkozy's rhetoric. Yet the way he puts this "suggestion" in words is worth analyzing.

"Il faut...regarder si on ne peut pas repenser cette relation non pas dans le cadre du processus d'intégration mais peut-être d'une coopération, d'un partenariat avec une finalité...c'est de préserver l'ancrage de la Turquie et du peuple turc dans l'Europe et de faire que son avenir se construise en regardant l'Europe et avec l'Europe...Nous devons sortir d'une hypocrisie qui consiste à penser qu'une progression naturelle vers l'ouverture de nouveaux chapitres (de négociation) est possible.<sup>49</sup> (We should...see if we cannot rethink this relationship, not in the framework of the integration process, but perhaps a

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<sup>49</sup> "Macron Propose Un 'Partenariat' de l'UE avec la Turquie à Défaut d'Une Adhésion", *France 24* 05 January 2018, Available at <<https://www.france24.com/fr/20180105-macron-propose-partenariat-lue-turquie-a-defaut-dune-adhesion>>

cooperation, a partnership, with a finalization... it is to preserve the anchoring of Turkey and the Turkish people in Europe and to make its future built looking toward Europe and with Europe. We should quit the hypocrisy which consists of thinking that a natural progress towards the opening of new chapters is possible; my translation.)

Macron straightforwardly denied Turkey-EU negotiation process would continue with a natural pace that would eventually end up with a membership. The word “hypocrisy” should not be considered only as a self-assessment but also, and most importantly, as a way to consolidate the existing French governmental stance by resetting pro-Turkish stances of previous French governments/political leaders.

#### **3.4.1. The Pace of Relations**

Macron had highlighted that Turkey was an important economic partner that should not be lost. By the emphasis on economic relations, Macron fictionalizes a privileged position for Turkey, without mentioning harshly “privileged partnership” like did Sarkozy but by getting the attention on positive arguments in his discourse about how Turkey is crucial in regard with several issues.

Indeed, the economic relations constitute the basic topic that both presidents put forward in official visits/declarations. Macron’s discourse strategy suggests to underline what has been already established in a successful manner. This means, partnership in fight against terrorism, NATO and Council of Europe memberships, engagement in European Convention on Human Rights are the main components Macron had tried to get the attention on. In their joint declaration, both presidents emphasized good economic relations and expressed their will to reach a bilateral trade level of 20 billion Euros by the end of 2019.

Basically, Macron has the same opinion as Sarkozy on the question of Turkey’s membership. However, he manages a different tactic than precedent discourses that had been adopted against Turkish membership. Instead of repeating negative arguments on Turkey that would risk bilateral relations, he takes over the subjects that would provide a win-win situation for both countries. Taking into account that Turkey, no matter what, accepted to protect beneficial, long-established economic relations, Macron’s strategy will certainly prove itself.

During his presidential campaign Macron had promised the Armenian diaspora in France he would commemorate 24 April, a date symbolic for the diaspora used as a remembrance day for the events of 1915. On February 2019, while attending a dinner at the “Coordinating Council of Armenian Organisations of France” (CCAF) in Paris, he had announced the commemoration day would be declared soon. Interestingly, he had also mentioned he informed Turkish President Erdoğan on the issue, prior to his declaration.

In his speech, Macron had stated that French nation were among those who denounced “the murderous hunt of the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire”<sup>50</sup>. Few weeks later, in 11 April 2019, 24 April has been officially made the national commemoration day of the so-called Armenian Genocide, in France. Such decision could be articulated as France prioritizes the Armenian diaspora’s demands more than valuing Turkey’s discomfort about this particular issue. However, the dimension that could be noticed from this incident is that the Armenian issue itself is alienated from Turkey’s EU adhesion.

Within the same speech back to his speech at the CCAF, Macron emphasized France should protect its good relations with Turkey. However, the 2016 coup attempt, the state of emergency measures, the detainment of another French journalist aggravated suspicions towards Turkey and its democratic institutions. The general interrogation about Turkey is valid for the French ruling elite too: does Turkey really want to join the EU? At the point of frozen relations with the EU, Macron and France seem to prefer leaving the debate on Turkish EU membership to the EU Council and prefer to manage good economic, cultural relations for a long-term benefit.

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<sup>50</sup> “Macron Declares April 24 Commemoration Day of Armenian Genocide”, *Reuters* 06 February 2019, Available at <<https://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKCN1PU2IA>>

## CHAPTER 4

### THE INSIGHT: PUBLIC OPINION

French public has conspicuous ideas and imagery about Turkey in different areas of socio-political examination. Public opinion is a very significant force in the political domain. French politicians refrain to take decisions that would ignore public priorities and pleas. Even those who stand more or less on the pro-Turkey camp admit they cannot controvert their citizens' opinions.<sup>51</sup> Turkey should primarily observe the public opinion in order to envisage what arguments it should use to get closer to membership.

#### 4.1. Hearts and Minds: Identity and Belonging

##### 4.1.1. French Citizenship, Immigration and Integration

French prefer portraying themselves with their national identity rather than with a supra-identity. An interesting point which might seem to be contradictory to the former emphasis, is that French designate their national identity with references to European history. This is rooted in the widespread cognizance that French culture – from politics to art, did great contributions to European history and hence, the formation of a European identity. It is beneficial to focus on French nationality law to compare French conceptualization of European identity with their interpretation of Turkey's assets.

French citizenship does not consider the ethnic origin of the individual. Citizenship and nationality are bound together. The French Civil Code classifies nationality

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<sup>51</sup> See the speech of Pierre Moscovici, Member of the Socialist Party in EDAM Report, *The Franco-Turkish Relationship*, p.15.

acquisition according to two main circumstances<sup>52</sup>. As in many nation-states, the first condition indicates the automatic acquisition. This type of acquisition is defined by principles of *jus sanguinis* (law of blood) and *jus soli* (law of soil). The second condition is naturalization which embodies legal patterns of marriage (which can be evaluated as a separate condition)<sup>53</sup>, residency period or adoption.

With respect to this democratic spirit, French interpretation of conformity of Turkish identity for European membership comes about being paradoxical. Beyond this paradox, when the interpretations are evaluated from another perspective, French attitude turns out to violate EU principles.

French question Turkey's aptitude to become an EU member. In their minds, EU membership corresponds to being European. EU membership appears as a supplementary asset for every European country that aspires to be part of the political family. This is related with the idea that each society in the European peninsula belongs to the European family that is formed upon socio-cultural ties. Do French feel European? What does Europeanness mean for them?

The understanding of French citizenship does not make any distinction between minorities, ethnic groups but recognizes every French citizen (whether the citizenship is acquired naturally or by naturalization) equal. In practice, individual rights are wide enough to such an extent that there is no need to generate minority rights separately.

The civil riots of October and November 2005 ("*Emeutes de Clichy-sous-Bois*") in the suburban district Clichy-sous-Bois of Paris, had a traumatic effect on the public perception of national identity. The triggering event was the death of two young people, Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré, caused by electrocution while they were

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<sup>52</sup> République Française, "Nationalité Française" (publication: 30 December 2010), Available at <<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/les-francais-a-l-etranger/vos-droits-et-demarches/nationalite-francaise>>

<sup>53</sup> République Française, "Comment Devient-On Citoyen Français?" (publication: 24 April 2007), Available at <<http://www.vie-publique.fr/decouverte-institutions/citoyen/citoyennete/citoyen-france/comment-devient-on-citoyen-francais.html>>

hiding in a substation as they were escaping the police. The riots were organized by the second and the third generations of the immigrant families. Three weeks of riots cost more than ten thousands of cars being burned, public buildings and schools being targeted. Then the Interior Minister Sarkozy's statements categorized the rioters as *racailles* (scums) to be get rid of: "Ce sont des voyous, des racailles, je persiste et je signe"<sup>54</sup>. The outcome of such labeling is the implementation of "selective migration" policies which favor *qualified* foreigners to immigrate and demand non-qualified ones to return back their home.<sup>55</sup> In the light of his discourse and decisions made, Sarkozy has been accused of encouraging "communitarianism", the dissociative concept which can complicate state-individual, community-state and inter-communitarian relations.

The shocking aspect was that these young immigrants who are legally French citizens could harm their *concitoyens* (fellow citizens) and practically deny and revolt against state power. The violent nature of these reactions is not of a democratic manner that the French political culture and national mind can tolerate. When compared to other European states, French society is highly politically conscious and active. They owe this consciousness to their historical legacy. It is the same historical legacy that confide them the keystone notion of *concitoyenneté*. In this context, these incidents are of an upsetting nature for the French socio-political sphere which did not face any troubling social acts since the May 1968 student riots.

Contemporary security understanding concentrates on societal dimensions and widens the threat spectrum. From such a perspective, any act that targets the peaceful social equilibrium is considered a threat that should be prevented. Subsequently, the 2005 riots are put under this threat category. To find efficient measures to combat such threats, the underlying causes had to be discerned.

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<sup>54</sup> "They are hooligans and scum; I persist and I sign" Sarkozy's speech in the News Channel France2, Emission "A Vous de Juger" broadcasted on 10 November 2005, quoted in "Nicolas Sarkozy Continue de Vilipender 'Racailles et Voyous'", *Le Monde* 11 November 2005, Available at <[http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2005/11/11/nicolas-sarkozy-persiste-et-signe-contre-les-racailles\\_709112\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2005/11/11/nicolas-sarkozy-persiste-et-signe-contre-les-racailles_709112_3224.html)>

<sup>55</sup> See The French Immigration Bill of 2010 Available at <<http://www.english.rfi.fr/node/49418>>

When inspecting the causes, French did not only fear but also began to questionize their integration model. This is a challenging process especially when Islamophobia has already emerged as a perilous syndrome around Europe intensely after 2001. There is a vicious circle in this picture which jeopardizes Turkish membership.

Islamophobia became a popular subject occupying public debates. This popularity could have two differing results. A constructive result would be the society will face its problems and try to determine the causal dynamics to resolve them. However, this might have a dangerous effect as the minorities can feel discriminated. This is the point where the vicious circle forms itself. Felt alienated, the minorities, consciously or not, will adopt self-exclusionary behavior patterns. As the minority groups detach themselves from the *host* society, the majority will face difficulties in communicating with and acquiring information about them. Symptoms such as fear, alienation and discrimination augment where communicatory relations are reduced. The unknown scares people and this fear is reciprocal. If not surmounted, fears become ossified and turn into socio-cultural traumas that repeat themselves.

The French society has been undergoing an identity crisis. This crisis affected French perceptions about Islam and inevitably, Turkey. Since the Islamic identity appears as a common feature in both communities, Muslim minorities became a reference point for the French in their discovery and interpretation of the Turkish culture. Sarkozy's commentary on the 2005 riots recapitulates this correlation:

(our revenir à la Turquie, la liberté de circulation des personnes et des biens avec l'Anatolie centrale, c'est une grande difficulté. Parce que l'on a quand même un problème d'intégration des musulmans qui pose la question de l'Islam en Europe. Dire que ce n'est pas un problème, c'est se masquer la réalité. Si vous faites rentrer cent millions de Turcs musulmans, qu'est-ce qu'il en sera?<sup>56</sup> (If we speak about Turkey; the freedom of circulation of the citizens and of the goods with Central Anatolia causes a big problem. We already have problems integrating Muslims and this reveals the issue of Islam in Europe. Pretending that it does not constitute a problem is hiding the truth. If you let one million Muslim Turks join (the EU), what would happen?; my translation.)

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<sup>56</sup> See Interview with Nicolas Sarkozy in *Le Meilleur des Mondes*, no.2 (Fall 2006), quoted in Alain Gresh, "Nicolas Sarkozy, Les Musulmans, L'Islam et Le Colonialisme (II)", *Nouvelles d'Orient*, 29 September 2007, available at <<http://blog.mondediplo.net/2007-03-29-Nicolas-Sarkozy-les-musulmans-l-islam-et-le>>

Which one is the cause of the problem: Islam itself, the Muslim community or the integration model? Sarkozy's statement is ambiguous. Denoting they are facing problems in the integration process of the minorities is a constructive approach, however, the pronoun "we" is risky. Who is "we"? This usage is likely to divide the actors into two as "they" and "we"; "non-Muslims" (or "Christians") and "Muslims". Sarkozy seems to have confused membership with immigration. "The Muslim Turks" do not ask for an immigration permit but for an EU membership which they expect will carry them to a higher level in several areas.

The description "the issue of Islam" reduces Islam to a problem and this only serves to delineate the differences as non-compatible identity features. This is not to tell that the communities can isolate themselves from the larger society since this is a massive problem in contemporary multicultural societies. Communication is crucial in combating reciprocal discrimination. The extent the Turkish community participates in communicatory relations with the French society is vital. Essentially, the question is as the following: is the Turkish community part of the society? Is it able to engage and to take active role in socio-political arena?

On the other hand, the migrant/refugee crisis beginning in 2015 triggered by the war in Syria, attacks of international terrorism targeting civilians on the soil of France (Charlie Hebdo attack, 2015 Paris attacks are just a few to mention) would only elevate the identity crisis. The preferences of the voters in France as well as in Europe seemed to have changed, compared to the previous years when voters' were motivated by economic developments (see figure 3).

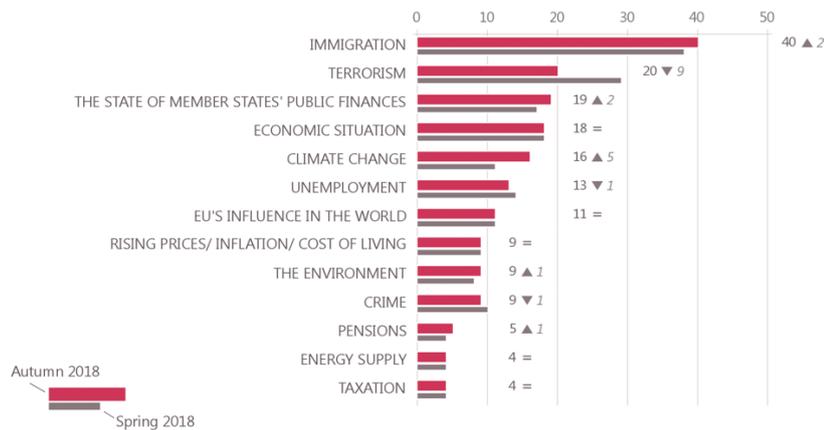


Figure 3. Problems Facing the EU: “What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment? (%-EU)”

Source: *Standard Eurobarometer 90*, “Public Opinion in the European Union”, Autumn 2018, <eb90\_FiR\_en.pdf>.

#### 4.1.2. The Turkish Community in France

The sensitive issue about migration is that the behavior patterns of social actors may cause a vicious circle. The sense of alienation would make the migrant stick into her/his traditions by glorifying them as taboos. The beginning of this sensation requires a delicate analysis which may be excessively challenging. Is the *hosting* society not integrationist enough? Or, is the migrant culturally frustrated to adapt herself/himself to a European society? When individuals voluntarily segregate themselves, their chances of encountering discriminatory approaches toward their community would increase. Similarly, discriminatory practices would oblige the communities to alienate themselves. In both cases, these two parts of the society will attain, not even negative but false knowledge about each other as it is extremely intricate to discover and understand the other when there is no (positive) interaction. False knowledge will inevitably nourish misinterpretation and thence instigate prejudice formation.

Being a part of a society involves two dimensions: individual feeling of belonging and individual or group involvement in societal and public arenas. Belonging is a difficult feeling to express and therefore, to be measured. However, involvement in societal and public arenas is all alone an important indicator of the interaction between the individual/group with the society.

The Turkish community does not appear to aspire for taking active roles in political and cultural spheres of French social life. This is also observed in the marriage relations within the community. Marriage comes forth as a relationship form that the community could benefit from its social connector power. Marrying someone from Turkey indicates the desire of migrant families to stay in touch with Turkey and also, to protect their cultural values such as honor and dignity.<sup>57</sup> The principal argument of the migrants is built upon the presence of moral divergences outside their community which, for them, derive from cultural differences. However, paradoxically, the dignity and the honor of the community are vis-à-vis the risk of disreputation.

When there is minimum or none interaction, the negative comportments of the migrants in the merest encounter attract more attention. Illegal act done by a migrant (or even her/his children born in the country in question) is not evaluated in the same way the compatriot's acts are considered. In such a situation, there is the risk of correlating these illegal acts with his/her ethnic identity. The words of a Turkish man residing in France give clues about how sensitive the issue is: "We are not honest. Turks evade tax, make fake bankruptcy; they know exactly how to cheat...There are unemployed Turks who own luxury cars. They purchase with black money; and the French call to account about it"<sup>58</sup>.

Neither in France nor in Turkey, the Muslim trait of the Turkish identity does not help the Turks either. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, French are prone to confound the peculiarities of the Turkish community in relation to other Muslim minorities. As a result, being Turk equals being Muslim in their minds. The reason of this confusion may due to the fact that in a wide geographical region, Islam is

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<sup>57</sup> "Türkiye'den biriyle evlenmek, açıkça göçmen ailelerin Türkiye ile temas halinde kalma ve aynı zamanda namus, şeref gibi kültürel değerlerini koruma isteklerine işaret eder." (Marrying someone from Turkey clearly point outs the will of the immigrant families to keep contact with Turkey and also, to protect their cultural values such as honor, dignity; my translation.) in Ayhan Kaya and Ferhat Kentel, *Euro-Türkler: Türkiye ile Avrupa Birliği Arasında Köprü mü, Engel mi? Almanya-Türkleri ve Fransa-Türkleri Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005, p.153.

<sup>58</sup> Kaya and Kentel, *Euro-Türkler*, p.118.

practiced without any substantial alteration. In fact, the Turkish Muslims can be differentiated from other Muslim communities in terms of their practices. The political culture in Turkey –which is also different from that of many Muslim countries, has a diversifying effect on the religious beliefs of the Turks. Additionally, the Turkish community in France does not feel any cultural proximity with the other non-Turkish Muslims and avoid (consciously or not) reciprocal contact. They do not live in the same neighborhood and do not even share the same cemeteries.<sup>59</sup>

## **4.2. Turkey in Focus**

### **4.2.1. Geographical Groundings**

Turkey's location constituted a reference to determine its eligibility for the European membership. To exploit the field of geography is one of the easiest ways the politicians prefer when they formulate strategic arguments. Could this tactic achieve any success? Gaining a preeminent position through an argumentative debate based upon geographical grounds is clearly a remote possibility. Geographical classification is a highly controversial concept especially when an idea of cosmopolite civilization stands out there to be cherished.

Order and stability are necessary components for any politico-economic structure to progress. Borders emerge as one of the measures that would guarantee these components. Put it differently, every civilization should have its borders defined and these borders should only enlarge to a limited extent. A political formation with indeterminate borders could not have a prosperous future. Any form of imperial expansionism should be abandoned. In correlation with the civilizational idea of EU, every rapid and overcharged enlargement would trigger a slowdown, a decline period and maybe even the collapse of the Union. This view is also dominant in the French minds. Relatively, France is one of the countries declaring it experiences the fatigue of enlargement. The reluctance of French on further enlargement in the near

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<sup>59</sup> EDAM, *The Franco-Turkish Relationship in Turmoil*, (report publication: January 2007), Available at <[http://edam.org.tr/document/EDAM\\_Franco-Turkish\\_Report\\_2007.pdf](http://edam.org.tr/document/EDAM_Franco-Turkish_Report_2007.pdf)>

future can be detected in Sarkozy's commentaries on the Treaty of Lisbon after it has been subject to referenda in EU states and been rejected in Ireland (12 June 2008).

At the EU Summit (19 June 2008), only few weeks to take over the EU presidency (1 July 2008), Sarkozy highlighted the necessity to adopt the Treaty with these words: "without the Treaty of Lisbon there won't be any enlargement"<sup>60</sup>. The Treaty promised institutional reforms and this explains why Sarkozy had stood firm on this issue.

Over the dialectic of deepening and enlargement, France emphasizes in the official discourses, its demand for an intense deepening of the EU. Deepening refers to restructuring and solidifying EU institutions. French ascribe a stabilizing power to the institutions<sup>61</sup>. A power which makes the Community a Union. The French Senate recognizes how enlargement complicates the decision-making system and put remarks on its threatening effect. An interesting component in this attitude is that the threat is not perceived as a factor solely directed to the fate of the Union but also to the power of French influence within the EU procedural mechanisms. Every new member delays France's round for taking over the EU presidency: "était-il acceptable que la France, l'Allemagne ou l'Angleterre n'assurent cette présidence qu'une fois tous les quinze ans?"<sup>62</sup>.

Alongside these facts, undefined borders will complicate the creation of a common, supranational European identity. An organic bond between the citizens and the conceptual identity demands the citizens to have a clear understanding of what the Union is. A dynamic spirit would certainly be an asset for the Union to gain a compelling rank within the international scene. The critical point here is to not seek

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<sup>60</sup> "Sarkozy Warning on EU Expansion", *BBC News* 20 June 2008, Available at <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7464879.stm>>

<sup>61</sup> Le Sénat de la République Française, "Rapport d'Information no.188: Le Traité de Lisbonne" (publication: 30 January 2008), Available at <<http://www.senat.fr/rap/r07-188/r07-1880.html>>

<sup>62</sup> "Is it acceptable that France, Germany or the UK takes over this presidency only once every fifteen years?", *ibid.*

a dynamic enlargement policy. Constant transformation of the borders simply prevents the citizens from developing an appropriate EU imagery in their minds. What the EU is all about? Are there any definite goals that have been set and what projects are promoted to attain them? Could the performance of the EU mechanisms be effective enough to carry out these projects even if the system is restrained by everlasting enlargement? These would be some of the questions the citizen would raise with suspicion, each time a new member joins the club. Sarkozy is conscious that it is very likely the EU would stumble once the citizens develop confused ideas about the reason for its existence and lose faith on its future thereof. The course of the EU should be designed along with the confidence of the citizens. Considering the reliance on deepening and on institutional reform accompanied with the will for the creation of a common European identity, Sarkozy necessitates a geographical definition for the EU. At this stage, the theme of Turkish membership comes out as an opportunity to set this definition. Turkey could serve to indicate the limits of the EU geography regardless of whether it is defined as a bridge or a borderline.

Yet, focusing on civilizational reasons would be more accurate than introducing geographical parameters. Europeanness shall not be determined through land locations and by calculating the percentage share of land proportions. The debate would be deadlocked. A multidisciplinary approach would be sufficient to introduce counter-arguments against the racism-prone territorial identity debate. Simply, one may even refer to the geography discipline and explain tectonic land movements (and the prehistoric land mass Pangaea) in order to highlight how ephemeral the imaginary geographical lines are.

Skepticism about Turkish membership popularizes the argument that Turkey is an Asiatic country simply because %90 of its land is situated in Asia Minor and therefore could not become an EU member. If Turkey had no frontier with any country from the continental Europe and been located in Central Asia or in the Middle East, this argument could become significant to a considerable degree. However, after the membership of Cyprus, such an argument becomes invalid in essence. In addition to this aspect, Turkey has the chance to identify itself in a distinguished way in equal with its special geopolitical location. Turkey could be

the eloquent example of a Eurasian identity. Such an identity acquisition should be supported and only could happen through successful internal development at the level of each state organ. This is how Turkey can highlight its authenticity. If it fails to secure a developmental stance, its distinctive features could be considered only as destabilizing risk factors. Turkey suffered enough to acknowledge that differences could become conflicting powers if the societal and judico-political systems do not allow democratic structuring. A well-reasoned democratic civilizational itinerary is essential in order to avoid any sarcastic geographical identity ascriptions.

Jacques Chirac was vigilant in determining Turkey's geographical identity and tended to direct the attention to its eligibility by highlighting the judico-political liaison between the Turkish state and the European system in general. In this perspective, his discourse concentrates on Turkey's dedication to gain ground in the European system even if it encounters troubles on the road.

In contrary to Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy's discourse stands severe. Could Turkey be considered as a European country? For Sarkozy, Turkey is simply in Asia Minor and the frontiers of Europe should be determined in consistency with historical European maps. Sarkozy reflects this intent by expressing that he did not want to be the one telling the French students that the borders of Europe extend to Syria<sup>63</sup>.

Certainly, it would be more difficult to instruct them that Europe neighbors an Asia Minor country like Turkey. The problem with neighboring countries like Syria is related to the fact that this region constitutes a source of concern for the Europeans. Evidently, in an interconnected world politics it is inaccurate to expect Europe will be immune from threat flows. Ironically, as observed in the example of France taking role in the 2011 Libyan crisis, most of the European states did not abstain from engaging themselves in cross-border operations and indigenous political conflicts in distant regions. Subsequently, citizens of the European country in

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<sup>63</sup> "A Strasbourg, Sarkozy Demande Des Efforts pour l'Europe de la Défense", *Agence France-Presse (AFP)* 13 November 2007, Available at <<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5itGc5pVotzTKzgqfh3wxGOeXBK4Q>>

question would be negatively affected by these preferences economically if not physically. In this respect, arguing that because of neighboring conflictual geopolitical area, Turkey would militarily and in correspondence, economically encumber the EU budget remained an attitude inconsistent in itself.

#### **4.2.2. Demographics**

The number of representative seats a state has in the European Parliament (“Parliament”) is determined on a pro rata basis in accordance to the population size of the country. Albeit the Parliament hosts deputies by allocating them into main political groups regardless of their nationality, the population size still remains a beneficial feature. Germany, being the most crowded country in the EU with its population of 82 million<sup>64</sup>, has 99 members of the Parliament (“MEP”)<sup>65</sup>; while France has 72 MEPs<sup>66</sup> with a 64,3 million<sup>67</sup> population. Denoting the method of degressive proportionality, once it becomes part of the EU, Turkey will have more MEPs than France. Envisaging this system, France would not want its numeric superiority to be snatched by Turkey and to descend in third place. The Lisbon Treaty regularizes the parliamentary representation system and puts a limit of 96 to the number of parliamentary seats a country can acquire. As the system will discount any increase in its population size, Turkey’s number of seats in the Parliament could never surpass 96. This means France could always have the chance to reach the same advantage as Turkey if its population size equals that of Turkey, even if the latter records high rate of population growth. This possibility could ease French

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<sup>64</sup> European Union, “Member Countries: Germany”, Available at <[http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/germany/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/germany/index_en.htm)>

<sup>65</sup> European Parliament, “List of the Members of the European Parliament: Germany”, Available online at <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/groupAndCountry/search.do?country=DE&language=EN>>

<sup>66</sup> European Parliament, “List of the Members of the European Parliament: France”, Available online at <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/groupAndCountry/search.do?country=FR&language=EN>>

<sup>67</sup> European Union, “Member Countries: France”, Available at <[http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/france/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/france/index_en.htm)>

concerns to a certain extent. The French support for the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty is worth a recall. However, if the anxiety of France comprises larger areas than the parliamentary field where Turkey will prove superiority, these population calculations will eventually have no appeasement effect.

On the whole, the Turkish population does not constitute a source of concern solely for its effect in the Parliament but also for economic reasons. As the succeeding chapters evaluate it, the worries of the EU states' citizens about losing their jobs augment proportionally with the population size of the new EU members. Additionally, the discourse which correlates each new citizen with supplementary taxes for the current citizens duplicates the worries.

#### **4.2.3. Cultural Compatibility**

National culture is the immediate reference point used to discover and identify the "other". This discovery process could reveal similarities and differences, being whether positive or negative. The concept of "other" is structured through the ascription of these identified features. It gains a negative connotation when the related culture is mostly attributed or only remembered by "disturbing" differences. Since discovering a culture is an ambiguous journey, any attribution to a culture is controversial in itself. In this sense, these attributions could not disturb the nation in question by their own. However, the moment when nation-states or individuals of particular nations encounter each other reveals the vulnerable aspect of intercultural communication. Unfortunately, negative connotations are inclined to be hardened and/or to form prejudices. These perceptions at the public level are effectual enough to impede the nation-state's actions in international arena as the leaders are never alienated from their societies. Equally, French perceptions on the Turkish culture are an illustrative of how cultural differences could cause the construction of a cultural barrier between the states. Turkish culture affiliations pose a handicap in Turkey's EU accession as the public approval becomes a must in the accreditation of a membership.

The dominion of the social class of *aghas* (or *agas*) in eastern region in particular, is seen as the signal of the weakness of the state's central power. Inability to implement justice within the districts under the "administration" of the aghas, inequalities deriving from patronism and the state's inability to overcome these imbalances, are one the main features French cannot conceive. This system is compared to the European feudal system of the Middle Ages. When the negative connotations the feudal system is combined with the socio-cultural criterion, this example of agha system promotes the argument "the European membership requires a radical change in societal attitudes"<sup>68</sup>.

On the political field, French leaders and intellectuals were interested in the political interference of the Turkish army. The shadow of the military over the political decisions was always condemned and determined as an obstacle for the EU membership. The relationship between the civic and the military is defined through the role the latter undertakes. French denote the Turkish military assumes as being the guarantor of the secular system in the republic. The secular system, inspired by the French *laïcité*, is no good reason to defend the omnipresence of the military in the politics. The military control is an intolerable anti-democratic political act under the EU laws or simply under universal democratic thought. In this perspective, the democratization process triggered by the EU accession talks propels Turkey to interrogate the militarist tendency in its political culture. The last decade witnessed a drop in the army's political influence. Paradoxically, French intelligentsia becomes concerned about the future of the Turkish secular tradition after the election of a political party which has Islamist roots. They hypothesize that with the retreat of the supervision function of the army, secularism faces the danger of deterioration. The enthusiasm of the AKP government about the EU accession process is perceived as a will to exploit juridical Europeanization for their Islamist ambitions<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> Rocard, *Avrupa Birliği Yolunda Türkiye*, p. 39.

<sup>69</sup> "L'Europe est perçue par les islamistes turcs comme un véritable 'parapluie juridique', capable d'empêcher les militaires d'anéantir une nouvelle fois leurs ambitions." Alexandre del Valle, *La Turquie dans l'Europe*, p.146.

France always sustains the idea that secularism is a political concept compulsory for the promotion and the protection of the religious and cultural plurality. With the fact that the EU is also a secular body, the French opposition to the Turkish membership because of its Muslim identity, represents inconsistency<sup>70</sup>. The notion “secularism *alla turca*” is instructive at this point.

The Turkish “version” of secularism is different from the French manner in terms of the origin point and the implementation method. French intellectuals resume that the state-public tensions emerging in the area of religious freedoms, are due to the fact that secularist lifestyle was not put into practice after long debates held at societal and political levels but instead, was imposed as a state policy. This kind of conclusion may even include the assumption that the philosophy of secularism is not compatible with the nature of Turkish societal culture. French politico-intellectual platforms are busy with debates on whether or not the ritual practices of Islam could allow the implementation of a secular system. These debates conclude that the tensions in the Turkish political scene may be the indicator of a clash between Islamic practices and the secular standards. The motive of the French secular practice is to endorse tolerance between religious and ethnic differences. Within this perspective, *alla turca* secularism is interpreted as a standardization method using interdictory measures and this manner contradicts with the French conception of secularism. All these added up together, Turkey illustrates the case France should try to avoid.

Certainly, the determining effect of the religion on the civilizational formation is incontestable. However, it is impossible to expect the formation of a single, holistic model of civilization. There are many civilizations under which lay sub-civilizations<sup>71</sup>. Each sub-civilization differs from the other by indigenous factors. Classifying the civilization as “Islamic” or “Christian” is inaccurate and misleading. Each civilization system prevails like a widespread supra-identity. In this manner,

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<sup>70</sup> Aık, *Gemiřten Gnmze Trkiye-Fransa*, p.519.

<sup>71</sup> Numan Hazar in UNESCO, *Culture du Dialogue en France et en Turquie: Quels Projets pour Aujourd’hui?*, Paris: UNESCO, 2005, p.84.

each society acquires some of its aspects and then, creates its own particular culture. Each society creates its own fine arts; has its own dynamic language, own literature, own (traditional) music and many other cultural peculiarities which generate a *sui generis* civilization –i.e., sub-civilization. French should envision that Muslim societies may differ from each other and that Turkey cannot be classified under a single labeling of “Islamic civilization”. This labeling hinders a proper analysis of Turkey and its compatibility to the EU system.

Even if some of the French admit Turkey has a peculiar culture within the Islamic world, they did not disregard the presence of Islamic movement that could standardize Turkish social and political patterns as a stereotyped Islamic culture. This is why, the French public claim that Turkey will be more and more Islamized after the 2002 elections and the success of the AKP. Moreover, it is assumed that AKP will follow a Trojan horse strategy and through EU membership, it will subvert occidental values in order to disintegrate the European-oriented Kemalist experience in Turkey and then, the EU itself.<sup>72</sup> What may seem discriminatory, is that none of the radical movements within the European borders, such as Nazism and radical Christianity, is regarded as threatening for the existence of democratic values. The difference is due to the fact that Turkish secular system is always determined as fragile but that of the European states are entrenched enough to deal with such radical political threats. Turkey should attempt to solidify its democracy and should prove stability.

The discourse of the Turkish leaders promulgating the idea that Turkey’s entrance to the Union will demonstrate that the EU is a harmonizing entity, is criticized by implying that the EU could not be used as a field of experimentation for Islamo-Occidental friendship.<sup>73</sup> Comparatively, the Turkish argument that denotes the

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<sup>72</sup> “La stratégie déployée par les leaders de l’AKP s’apparente enfin de compte à une stratégie du cheval de Troie islamiste consistant à subvertir les valeurs occidentales et à pénétrer l’Union européenne pour mieux mettre fin à l’expérience d’essence occidentale et européenne par excellence que fut le kémalisme.” Alexandre del Valle, *La Turquie dans l’Europe*, p.23.

<sup>73</sup> “...comme si la construction européenne avait vocation à être un champ d’expérimentation de l’amitié islamo-occidentale!” (...as if the European construction had to be an experimentation field for islamo-occidental friendship; my translation), *ibid.*, p.53.

rejection of Turkish membership would reduce EU to a Christian club, is also countered with the evidence of proportion analysis about the minority population living in Turkey and in France. Non-Muslim population in Turkey forms %1<sup>74</sup> of its total population; whereas, the Muslim community living in France corresponds to %8 of its total population. These percentages are significant when the total populations of the two states are compared; 62,8 million (France) versus 79,7 million (Turkey).<sup>75</sup> Considering these data, the argument suggests Europe is a post-Christian and multi-religious community.<sup>76</sup>

Besides non-Muslim communities, the whole minority groups in Turkey become areas of focus for France. The main argument links the source of terrorism with the ineptness in promoting minority rights. Democratic reforms are recommended as a solution to surmount political instabilities and insecurities.<sup>77</sup>

The other field of socio-political life that raises opposition to Turkish candidacy is the issue of women's rights. This is a field where contradictions in the Turkish political scene can be observed. Being one of the countries where women take active role in the intellectual and social scenes, France pays special attention to the status of women in Turkey. In this particular domain, the honor killings are social crises that deeply affect the opinions about Turkey and its cultural facet. These crimes are signs of the ongoing anti-humanistic social attitude towards women. It is harder to refine ossified socio-cultural attitudes than to revise state laws. The frequently used Turkish official historical discourse on women suffrage could only be valued as a paradox. Being one of the leading states to give women the right to vote and to stand for election, even before many other European democratic states, is a reputable mark

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<sup>74</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "USCIRF Annual Report 2011 - The Commission's Watch List: Turkey", 28 April 2011, Available at <<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dbe90b611.html>>

<sup>75</sup> United States of America, Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook", Available at <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>>

<sup>76</sup> "La réalité, c'est que les chrétiens sont aujourd'hui moins nombreux dans toute la Turquie que ne le sont les musulmans dans un seul département français." Alexandre del Valle, *La Turquie dans l'Europe*, pp.279-280.

<sup>77</sup> EDAM, *The Franco-Turkish Relationship*, p.53.

in the Turkish political history. However, the Turkish societal platform records many examples that infringe this reputation. The inability of the state to take preventive measures indicates this paradox. Women rights is a field that demonstrate, for the French, the gap between the democratic laws and the cultural practices. What is unfortunate for Turkey is that these crimes which are concentrated on specific regions are attributed to the entire Turkish culture. This attribution outlines the claim resolving the European democratic level and the Turkish informal social norms. The inspections over the identity perceptions of the Turkish public reveal that even the Turks do not consider themselves as European:

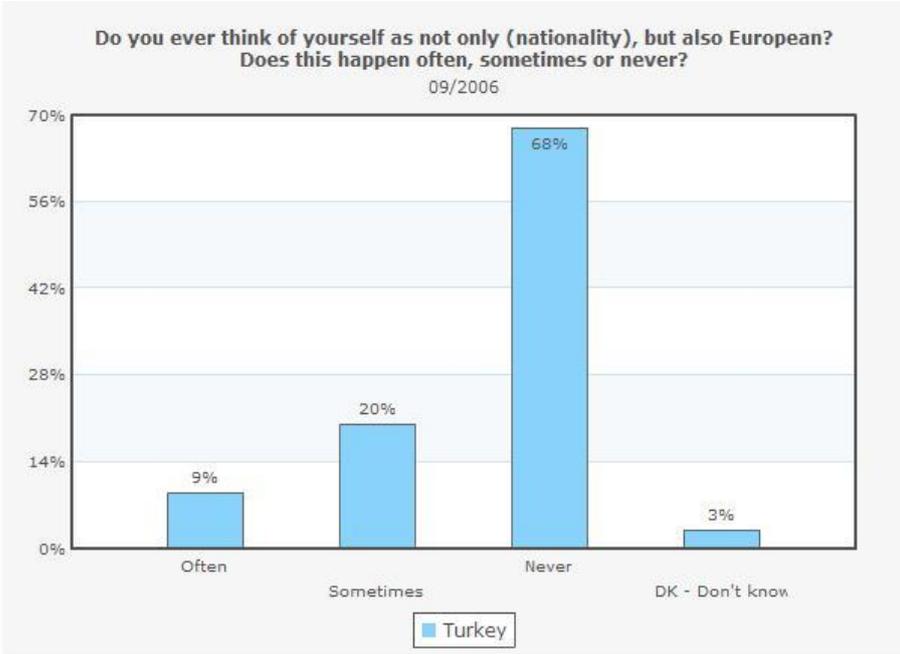


Figure 4. Identity: Turkish vs. European; “Do you ever think of yourself as not only [Turkish], but also European?”

Source: European Commission, September 2006<sup>78</sup>

All these socio-cultural problems put Turkey within the category of semi-democracy. Additionally, treating these problems provide France to delineate its political culture and the contribution this had in the creation of the EU. It glorifies the historical self-attribution of France: “le pays des Lumières” (the country of

<sup>78</sup> European Commission, “Do You Ever Think of Yourself as not Only (Nationality), but also European? Does this Happen Often, Sometimes or Never?” (publication: September 2006), Available at <[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/step1.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/step1.cfm)> Path: “39-Feel European”; “Turkey”; “2006.09”.

Enlightenment). It is the place where universalized European values have been rooted.

#### 4.2.4. Secularism

The Turkish political culture has been subject of attention for two reasons. One of these reasons is *l'affaire du voile* (the Islamic veil affair) triggered by the undergoing French identity crisis. The second one is the interrogative approach toward Turkey's aptitude for EU membership. In both cases, the focus point is the political doctrine of secularism which is applied in Turkey.

Being home to the largest Muslim population in Europe, the French state faces problems within the public sphere, about the practice of religious beliefs. Before facing internal debates about this issue, France had been very critical about Turkey's sanctionary stance about Islamic veil. Indeed, French media had always a keen interest about legal practices and judicial measures.

This internal socio-political crisis makes it difficult to generate a positive opinion about Turkey. On the other hand, it inclines French politico-intellectuals to analyze Turkish secularist system in depth. Is the equilibrium between different religious segments and the state ensured, if so, how? What political dilemmas Turkey had confronted and why? Can principles of Islam and secularism coexist in an integral system? Such questions serve to distinguish where Turkey made mistakes and to envisage possible measures. Some members of the French intelligentsia are disturbed by this idea of analyzing a country that has adopted their secular system by customizing it and of learning from its mistakes. However, at the point where even Sarkozy is able to discuss and to suggest a revision in the Law of 1905<sup>79</sup>, French should not miss the chance to study a perfect example, Turkey.

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<sup>79</sup> “Loi du 09 Décembre 1905 Concernant La Séparation des Eglises et de L’Etat”, Available at <<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000508749>>

What the veil affair reveals about French attitude is that France somehow finds a suspicious parameter in its analysis on Turkey. In fact, Turkey had been criticized of being not democratic enough because of more tense legal measures that would ban the veil to be more in public offices, and then now France interrogates itself on the veil issue, trying to evaluate to what extent freedoms could allow Islamization in their soil.

#### **4.2.5. Economic Arguments**

Contemporary security understanding evolved in a way to comprise multidimensional features. An ensured economic security is one of the fundamental criteria that settle the level of individual security.

Within the Turkish-EU relations, economy embraces a great percentage of the debate. It is almost impossible to find an EU member that has no worries about EU's economic ability to absorb Turkey. Necessarily, economics is a very popular topic in Turkish-French relations. Being one of the pioneers of European economy, France is also highly concerned and more than that, objects Turkish economic burden.

Economic burden comprises two parameters. The most cliché argument of the first parameter is about the strength of the Turkish economy. The general opinion considers Turkey as lacking accurate economic accoutrements necessary for it to stand firmly in the highly competitive EU markets. The EU members were not enthusiastic at all to carry the responsibility of igniting the Turkish economy by liquidity subsidies and loans, because such an undertaking would mean heavy burden on the EU budget. The financial crisis that constrained Europe, would have inevitably augmented the suspicions towards any future enlargement. Comparatively, despite the current-account deficit being approximately %9 of its gross domestic product (GDP), Turkish economy did well during Eurozone crisis. Its 2011 annual GDP growth rate of %7,5 was six times that of the most EU

countries. Turkey's 2009 datum of GDP is \$8,554 and \$10,094 in 2010.<sup>80</sup> Comparatively, Romania which acquired its membership permit in 2007 recorded \$7,500 GDP per capita in 2009 and \$7,539 in 2010.<sup>81</sup> Another data worth to be compared with Turkey's records, are those of Greece's. Greece's economic performance indicated \$28,521 in 2009 and \$26,607 in 2010 GDP per capita. Ironically, this performance could not save Greece from crumbling in economic crisis.

However, despite performing well during Eurozone crisis, Turkey's internal political disturbance after 2013 and specifically after 2016 coup attempt, had detrimental economic impacts, if not "fatal". More than ever, Turkey needed to prove Europe it would economically survive.

Indeed, one of the main arguments used to form a negative conceptualization of Turkey's economic performance remains about its basic economic indicators. Turkey has always been number one in having the largest current-account deficit among G-20 countries. This fragile financial feature has been considered the Achilles tendon of the Turkish economy. Yet this is not the only economic flaw indicator that Turkey has to deal with. It has to reduce the inflation rate to a more accurate level and increase the employment rate to satisfy the needs of its fast-growing population.

Correspondingly, even if Turkey accomplishes these "tasks", its economy should prove a significant level of stability. This testimony on economy could only be given in the long-run. Indeed, a long-term analysis is compulsory to test and prove economic stability and development. This necessity is still valid as global actors always keep in mind the risk of having Turkey's economic parameters upside down after it becomes part of the EU system. The experience of Euro-zone financial crisis in 2009 obliged economic actors to be vigilant more than ever. Member states will

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<sup>80</sup> See World Bank, "GDP per capita (current US\$)", Available at <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>>

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

be even more reluctant to embrace Turkish membership under the presence of such a risk.

By the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the EU had to deal with the worst economic circumstances in its half-century of existence. Along other member countries vis-à-vis the threat of economic crisis, Greece, by being drifted at the edge of declaring a debt moratorium, has been the key country that triggered mistrust on EU financial dynamics. The minds began to question EU's economic capacity since a member country encounters fiscal crisis and is unable to take essential remedy measures within a system symbolizing both political and economic stability. Under these circumstances, a new member will face struggles when trying to assure European actors because fulfilling economic criteria will not be considered as a sign of confidence. Turkey's economic history is full of instability records. Indisputably, member states will have great suspicion about allowing this country to join their club. Indeed, there is no guarantee that Turkey would be able to prolong its good economic performance once having met the major fiscal targets and becoming an EU member. The EU budget would inevitably face struggles and even, be unable to deal with a Turkish economic crisis because the country in question distinguishes itself by a striking feature.

The factor of population would constitute great handicap in ensuring the efficiency of the recovery packages. Greece is an EU country that has been incapable of satisfying the demands of its ten million citizens through EU-based austerity measures and of preventing the situation from worsening. Within this perspective, many Europeans doubt both EU's and Turkey's capacity to deal with the needs of the seventy million Turkish citizens when necessary. Then the scenario which is largely valid in the minds is simple: if a situation similar to what had happened in Greece occurs in Turkey, it would be impossible to avoid bankruptcy because no budget will ever be able to finance adequate resources for such a large population. Visibly, the size of the Turkish population is and will remain for a long time, a menacing issue by awing both the European bureaucrats and their fellow citizens. For the citizens it is a menace, not only under the circumstances of a prospective

economic downturn but also in the daily working life even when the economic wheels turn full circle.

Concerns over the population factor structures the second parameter. The second parameter related to the economic burden the Turkish membership would bring into, includes employment concerns of the French citizens. Basing arguments upon this concern is an old, ordinary way to be exploited in order to alternately influence authorities and citizens.

The free movement of the labor and of the services have been issues of concern since many feared of losing their jobs because of the incoming ‘neighbors’. What if these Euro-citizens would be more qualified than her/him and take up high positions in the most wanted job segments? Or simply, what if they would agree to become low wage workers? French, as their other European fellows, fear of having their jobs stolen by the Turks. Are these concerns really accurate?

The right of free movement of labor does not reveal a concern only when Turkey is under focus. This public fear would be present as long as every foreign worker has the chance to work in France –regardless of whether they are EU citizens or not. However, Turkey differentiates itself from any other country in terms of population. For the French, a high level of population equals higher chances of losing their jobs -even though it is illogical to expect a massive Turkish migration.

The EU signifies wealth, higher standards of living and economic stability for the majority of the Turks. Even if there would be struggles during the attainment and the solidification of these ideal civilizational levels, inevitably, conspicuous developments would gradually affect numerous fields of everyday life. The effect of the EU membership at the motivational level could not be disregarded. Expecting the Turks to accelerate economic and political changes with the impact of this achievement motivation would not mean dreaming. A country which beats a path to the EU’s door for nearly fifty years, would certainly be highly motivated after having achieved one of its utter objectives. Under such reasonably good circumstances, why would Turks prefer to leave their home for another country

which does not promise any better life conditions? Improving living standards would certainly satisfy Turkish citizens and constitute an assurance for future economic progress. The sixties are over; Turkey is not the same country as it was then and no European country requests unskilled workforce. It is obvious a mass migration would not occur. Examples of physical labor and intellectual workforce transfer would be observed only at individual basis and these instances would be in limited numbers.

#### ***4.2.5.1. Is A Safe Zone Possible for Economic Relations?***

The economic area stands as the most convenient field for cooperation between Turkey and France. Turkey is the third-largest country (excluding EU and Switzerland) importing from France, while France is Turkey's sixth-largest customer. With a trading volume of 14,2 billion Euros in 2017<sup>82</sup>, both sides essentially prefer to maintain good economic ties with each other. The general tendency of France, in line with the idea of "privileged partnership", is to free economic parameters from the impact of political tensions. For France, Turkey becomes an important economic partner instead of being a potential burden for the Union, "if" she stays out of the "European Club".

"Privileged partnership" is a framework that would stress tightened economic relations. It is obvious there is a psychological dimension in this approach; French might have expected the Turkish side would choose the easy way and prefer engaging themselves into a partnership which does not demand any political concessions, contrary to the EU membership process. Why would Turkey ignore the beneficial features of the partnership and the potential gains it promises? Supposing the EU process is and will continue to be psychologically exhausting for Turkey, French desire to transmit this tactical message to the public. Put it differently, if the Turkish public loses its faith on the EU process believing this is an open-ended and even a dead-end journey, the public voice might enforce the bureaucrats to accept

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<sup>82</sup> République Française, "Relations Bilatérales" (publication: 24 July 2018), Available at <<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/turquie/relations-bilaterales>>

the alternative way recommended by the major EU actors. Is it possible for Turkey to abandon its membership goal for a special partnership?

Accordingly, the French proposition for a “privileged partnership” is concentrated upon the economic power of Turkey. Turkey, being a developing country with an economy promising a performance in the near future as good as it is today, and which politically involves itself in its geography with prominent competence and tenacity, becomes a value that France could not miss the opportunity to benefit from through an intensified economic relationship with it. Interest groups, economic actors and the French politicians highlight such kind of a partnership by believing and emphasizing that this could be an opportunity for both sides without triggering the risk of mounting political tensions. A focus on this type of a compressed (economic) relationship should be used as a means to annihilate negative impacts that the EU process has on Turkish-French relations. French expect privileged partnership to forestall any economic and social burden Turkish membership could cause in their national domain. Similarly, a burden-free member state necessitates a Union which enjoys political and economic development. This sort of approach involves the apprehensive idea which is that Turkish membership could block this developmental process. Considering the economic and political crises the Union has to deal both at supranational and national levels, an unrestrained broadening could pose a great handicap to attain ultimate objectives. French assume Turkish membership would be a cost-benefit miscalculation and thus, a mistake. Hence, France promotes “privileged partnership” as the best option which would benefit every single side involved by setting the risks aside.

As long as Turkey is not renounced from membership by consensus, France will try “tolerable” means to disallow -if it is not possible to hinder, Turkey to take confident steps and get closer to its European dream. Accordingly, UMP delegates tried to prevent the EU financial assistance of 3,9 billion Euros which was planned to cover the years between 2007-2012 from being granted for Turkey. This budget equals

two times the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA)<sup>83</sup> loan given to Serbia and four times the IPA allocated for Croatia. This quantitative difference also constituted a source of disturbance for France and could easily be abused in order to hinder Turco-skeptic opinions and to augment objections regarding Turkish membership.

Outside EU framework (i.e. processes such as the IPA), the economic relations outstand as a balance board through which both countries try to compensate their political decisions. France tries to put forward the beneficial aspects of Turkish-French economic relations, expecting this comportment smooths the political relations tensing up at several occasions. In return, Turkey did not refrain from declaring that commercial area would be a crucial element in its retaliatory measures against France, each time there is a political decision especially on the Armenian issue.

The first and most striking reaction in this perspective was given in 2001 (*please see* 4.2.6. The Armenian Question). After French Assembly's recognition of the 1915 events as "genocide", Turkey had pursued a series of diplomatic measures and sanctions regarding military relations. French joint venture companies had been banned from entering Turkish military tenders for a specific time period; both military and ministerial visits had been suspended.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly, Turkey had announced sanctionary steps after the 2011 decision. Turkish Ambassador to Paris had been called back, trade relations had been slowed down by postponement of meetings such as that of Joint Economic and Trade Committee

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<sup>83</sup> European Commission, "Planning of the IPA", Available at <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/planning-ipa\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/planning-ipa_en.htm)>

<sup>84</sup> "Fransız Firmasına Askeri İhale Yasak", *Hürriyet* 09 February 2001, Available at <[http://bigpara.hurriyet.com.tr/haberler/politika-haberleri/fransiz-firmasina-askeri-ihale-yasak\\_ID355973](http://bigpara.hurriyet.com.tr/haberler/politika-haberleri/fransiz-firmasina-askeri-ihale-yasak_ID355973)>

(JETCO) and by cancelling any other visits concerning bilateral commercial affairs.<sup>85</sup>

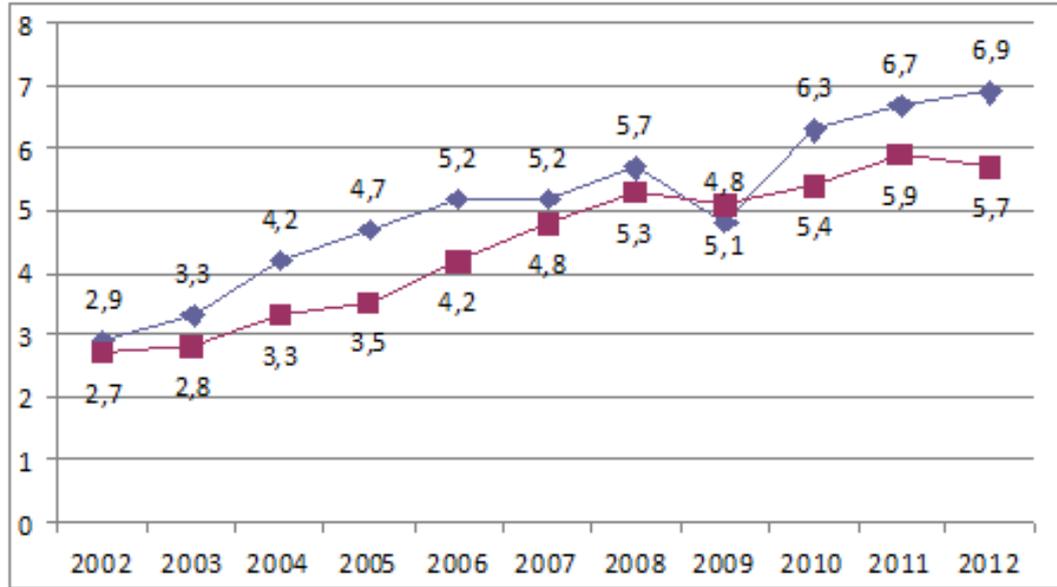


Figure 5. Bilateral Trade Between France and Turkey (billion Euros)

◆ Export to Turkey  
■ Import from Turkey

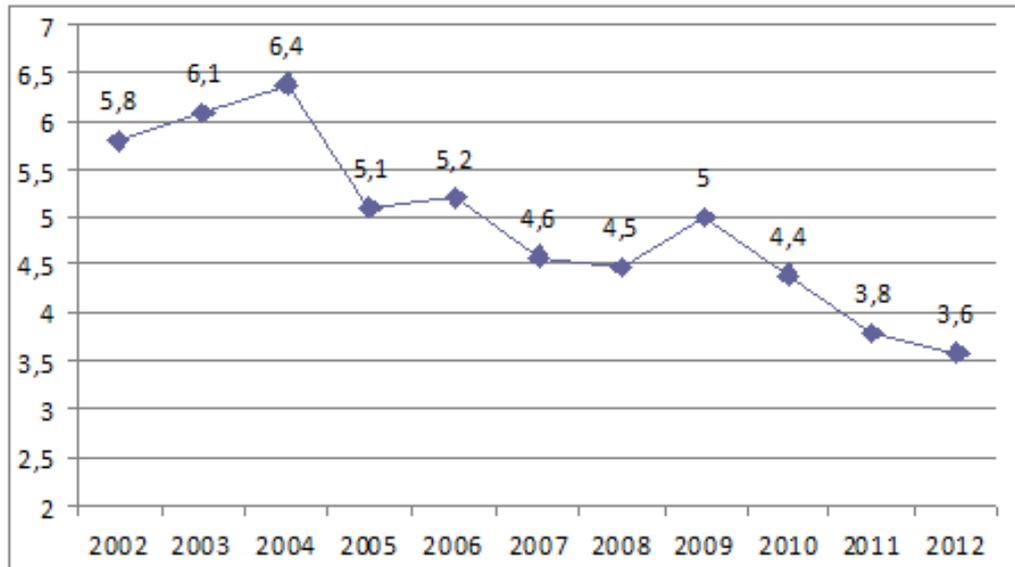


Figure 6. Market Share of France in Turkey (%)

Source (for figures 5 and 6): Report no: 716, *The French Senate*, 03 July 2013, <[https://www.senat.fr/rap/r12-716/r12-716\\_mono.html](https://www.senat.fr/rap/r12-716/r12-716_mono.html)>.

<sup>85</sup> “Türkiye’den Fransa’ya 8 Ağır Yaptırım”, *NTV* 22 December 2011, Available at <[https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/turkiyeden-fransaya-8-agir-yaptirim,locM9Az\\_g06luOILZ26zyQ](https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/turkiyeden-fransaya-8-agir-yaptirim,locM9Az_g06luOILZ26zyQ)>

With data (see figures 5 and 6) analyzed, bilateral trade does not seem to be affected by the 2001 political tension, however, market share of France in Turkey had faced a decline from 2001 to 2012. The decline in French market share could be read in different ways. The French arguments propose that Turkey's integration in new markets such as the Middle East, Central Asia is the main cause behind the decline<sup>86</sup>. On the contrary, the integration of Turkey to such new markets can be explained as the search for alternatives *vis-à-vis* French export goods.

France sees Turkey as an important market and wants to get involved in strategic sectors, namely energy -envisaging that Turkey will be the third-largest European consumer of electricity<sup>87</sup>. With nearly over 400 firms in Turkey, France is still part of important investments -such as taking part in the construction of nuclear reactor in Sinop (through consortium with Japanese firm) and aspires for more.

All these data demonstrate that although some counter-measures had been taken in the aftermath of political tensions, the tense periods are always followed by a normalization of the relations through trade.

The will to protect the long-term relations between the two countries could be considered as what stimulates both sides to minimize the impact of political tensions. Another noticeable factor is that the normalization is also triggered by the change in governments. AKP's accession to power in 2003 (in Turkey), the beginning of François Hollande's presidential era in 2012 (in France), gave an opportunity to refresh the relations as these government/presidency changes occurred nearly just after tensions had aggravated. These changes may seem positive at first sight as they really had ease the tensions between the two countries, however, they may also signal that the course of the relations can always get influenced by governments' or specifically, leaders' preferences. Whether this dimension could be considered as an ambiguity that would thrive insecurities in economic relations is crucial in order to estimate the future of the relations and the prospective behaviors

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<sup>86</sup> Economic Service of the Embassy of France in Ankara, "Fransa ve Türkiye İkili Ticari İlişkileri" (publication: 2014), Available at <[https://istanbul.consulfrance.org/IMG/pdf/fransa\\_tu\\_rkiye\\_ticari\\_i\\_lis\\_kiler-1.pdf](https://istanbul.consulfrance.org/IMG/pdf/fransa_tu_rkiye_ticari_i_lis_kiler-1.pdf)>

<sup>87</sup> "La Turquie: Une Puissance et Un Partenaire Economique à Prendre en Considération", *ibid.*

of the actors involved. Macron's declaration of 24 April as the national day of commemoration of the (so-called) Armenian genocide, would be a testing point for the relations in the near future. Turkey may adopt a more discrete approach and postpone any severe reaction in favor of economic benefit.

As part of a long-term strategy, Turkey aims to gain prestige in the economic field and attaining a level of economic progress will certainly strengthen its hand in confronting negative economy-based arguments about its EU accession.

The first decade of the AKP government in Turkey is a period clearly displaying a country which moves safely and confidently towards achieving pre-established economic goals. Meanwhile, budget deficit constitutes from time to time a threatening factor that may constitute a handicap for attracting investors. In addition, economic growth does not guarantee economic development at societal sphere as unequal income distribution is a significant factor that challenges Turkey throughout the establishment of a reputable welfare state system. Despite these variables, Turkey engaged itself in conceptualizing sustainability measures and began to implement these measures in a steady and secure way. The economic progress is a step-by-step process as the structural dynamics that are the sources of motion for economic wheels depend not solely on internal developments but also on external ones. This structure requires prudent measures which do not strain the financial system.

#### **4.2.6. The Armenian Question**

A *sine qua non* and tumultuous issue in Turkish-French relations is the ongoing debate over the alleged Armenian Genocide. The term "alleged" shall accompany the concept of genocide since there is currently no binding international judicial decision regarding this issue. The debate represents a vicious circle since there is no collaboration to reach a consensus on what the history tells. The current attitudes of the parties involved do not promise an optimistic outcome in the near future. This subtitle does not examine the validity of the arguments debated with reference to

international documents and exemplary judicial decisions. Rather, it merely evaluates how the actors approach the issue.

Just as in the matter of Muslim population size, France is also home to the largest Armenian community in Western Europe. About 500,000 Armenians, or “French Armenians”, reside in France. Comparatively, the Turkish population in France is quantitatively close to that of the Armenians. The estimated number is 400,000. Despite this numeric proximity, the Turkish community is not as active and influencing as the Armenian community. Armenians have been very successful in integrating into and in practicing a qualified communication with the French society since the beginning of their “residence” in France.

This community of the Armenian diaspora maintains two basic objectives<sup>88</sup>. The first is to protect and defend the citizen rights vis-à-vis the French state. The second aim implies defending the Armenian historical memory, which is dedicating most of the resources for the alleged Armenian Genocide of 1915, to be universally recognized. The diaspora is so enthusiastic about defending this cause that even terroristic measures had been used.

#### ***4.2.6.1. Armenian Propaganda in France***

Even if it does no longer exist, the terrorist organizations the “Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia” (ASALA) and the “Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide” (JCAG) give clues about the Armenian credibility in the French political scene alone. The clue resides in the official attitude of France through the judicial processes following the terrorist attacks in the national land. The point is not to interrogate complicated networks between the French authorities and Armenian terror organizations as obtainable conspiracy-free documents are of limited amount –contrary to argumentative documents on alleged Armenian Genocide. Yet, an analysis of brief statements made and the public ignorance before

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<sup>88</sup> EDAM, *The Franco-Turkish Relationship*, p.viii.

the acts, are adequate to comprehend the special relation between Armenian terrorists and France.

Around 51<sup>89</sup> of the 230 (approximately) ASALA/JCAG attacks had been realized in France. This quantitative fact calls into question the solemnity of the French authorities in taking preventative measures. Certainly, the frequency of the attacks is a disturbing and suspicious fact for a European country and does not deal with interior terrorism and promises its citizens a secure and welfare state. It is worth remembering that France was always home to the majority of the Armenian diaspora in Europe and in the light of this detail, France can be considered to be nonresistant to Armenian manipulations. Indeed, the desperation of the French security forces in preventing further, excessive number of attacks could only be explained as a loyalty to an untaken reciprocal accord. By considering the absence of preventive measures, Turks regarded France as a sympathizer of Armenian terrorism and eventually, this augmented their resentment and mistrust towards this state.<sup>90</sup>

The 1983 (July 15<sup>th</sup>) Orly Airport attacks (“the Orly Attack”) in Paris, is a turning point for the relationship between the Armenian terror and the French public. ASALA did not target only Turks but every individual who would be at the wrong place at the wrong time. According to official documents, eight people died while fifty-one people were seriously injured.<sup>91</sup> There were not only Turks among the casualties. The French media was reluctant to define ASALA with the idiom “terrorist organization” but rather preferred to introduce it simply by the epithet “organization”. The terminology reflects the success the Armenians gained in convincing the minds that the terrorist attacks are politically justifiable. Even if the terminology employed did not signal it, the French authorities would undergo a concerted investigation to demolish ASALA’s existence in France. The French

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<sup>89</sup> Francis P. Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism: The Past, The Present, The Prospects*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1991, p.234, table 2.7.

<sup>90</sup> Açık, *Geçmişten Günümüze Türkiye-Fransa*, p.534.

<sup>91</sup> Extract taken from the records of the Court of Cassation Val-de-Marne (France), no. 10/85 Verdict in the Orly Trial (03 March 1985), Available at <[https://www.unodc.org/tldb/pdf/France\\_CAValdeMarne\\_1985.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/tldb/pdf/France_CAValdeMarne_1985.pdf)>

intelligence agency *La Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* (DST; Directorate of Territorial Surveillance) chased the military chiefs of ASALA who took “refuge” in France and it is to say that such dedicative action could not be observed prior to the Orly Attack. It is no surprise that the supporting party would withdraw its assistance when faced with an indiscriminate act of violence which by chance or not hits its members.

France recognizes it was targeted although it was not an enemy of ASALA: “one did not need to be the main enemy of a movement to become one of its victims”<sup>92</sup>. Denoting that terrorist impetus considers every opposition as enmity, French declaration represents an indirect confession. The attack was also criticized by the Armenian diaspora which was the main financial and moral supporter of ASALA. It is clear that the Armenian cause would be definitively deprived from European support if it did not condemn this attack. Armenian terrorism assaults in France decreased by a significant degree after 1983. The same decrease is never experienced in the relations between the French society and the Armenian community. Despite the fact that France has never been hit by a radical Islamic-oriented attack after 9/11 crux, there is still circumspection and fear towards the Muslims in France by ignoring their non-involvement. Conversely, French public did not prove any hostility or fear towards the Armenians of whom their compatriots were actors of terrorist incidents occurred in French national soil and continued menacing French authorities related to the detention of their comrades. This detail approves the density of the Armenian-French relationship.

France could ideologically and officially support the will of the Armenians about the Turkish concession on genocide. However, a democratic country shall never support and approve –whether it is through declaration or passivity, any anti-pacifist manners of defending a cause, especially in its territory. This past experience of the Turkish public vis-à-vis the French position is helpful to understand Turkey’s fierce

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<sup>92</sup> La Documentation Française, “La France Face au Terrorisme” (publication: 21 June 2006), p.8, Available at <<http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/064000275/0000.pdf>>

retort it displays when France brings on genocide bills to its parliamentary agenda. Turkey suspects France pursues good will concerning this historico-political issue.

#### **4.2.6.2. “Genocide” Bills in the French National Assembly**

The French media and public opinion are directly exposed to Armenian allegations since decades and this does not seem to have changed in recent years. The flow of the events of 1915 is articulated only through the lenses of Armenian narrative. This narrative disclaims some details within the course of history, such as skipping the existence of Dashnak party within the Ottoman political scene and the painful symptoms of the Ottoman disintegration triggered by wars and threat perceptions of the period<sup>93</sup>.

With reference to the draft law presented in May 1998, the French Senate recognized publicly the 1915 phenomena as “Armenian Genocide of 1915” through the enactment of the law no. 2001-70<sup>94</sup> in January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2001 during Jacques Chirac’s presidency. In the French legislation process, the President’s approval is compulsory for a bill to be ratified. As stated earlier in the chapters therein, Chirac did not show any disagreement with the bill as he believes Turkey should deal with its past and shall define the events of 1915 as genocide. The law does not indicate Turks as responsible for the act of genocide but as reflected in the discourse of Chirac, this law was an appeal to link the EU membership to Turkey’s “acknowledgement” of the genocide. It is unrealistic to expect Turkey to take historical decisions by crediting foreign pressure.

As expected, Turkey did not abstain from taking retaliatory measures in the aftermath of the ratification. Since the Customs Union and the World Trade Organization memberships disallow Turkey to use embargo as a right to sanction, the only option left at the economic level was to disqualify French companies from

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<sup>93</sup> See “Il y a Vingt Ans, Les Députés Français Votaient La Reconnaissance du Génocide Arménien”, *Le Figaro* 29 May 2018, Available at <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2018/05/29/01003-20180529ARTFIG00112-il-y-a-vingt-ans-les-deputes-francais-votaient-la-reconnaissance-du-genocide-armenien.php>>

<sup>94</sup> “Reconnaissance du Génocide Arménien”, the legislative text is available at <<http://legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000403928>>

critical tenders. This attempt could be labeled as a boycott or an indirect embargo. The exclusion of the French company Gaz de France (GDF) in 2008 from the trans-Caucasian pipeline project Nabucco is a case in point. Considering the geopolitical and economic impacts this project will have, this deprivation constituted an economic casualty for France. At the market level, Turkish authorities had called for a civilian boycott of the French companies' products<sup>95</sup>. The other side of the mirror may reveal that these economic restrictions would negatively affect Turkey alongside with France. However, a policy of impassiveness would put a historical burden on the Turkish political records and it is more likely the effect of this attitude would be more difficult to be recovered from. As a matter of fact, the withdrawal of an economic partner from the internal market could be counterbalanced by other economic initiatives. All things set aside; the essential point here is to prospect the efficiency of these measures. The trade volume between the two states did not record any decline; on the contrary, the export from France increased and reached 6,107 million Euros in 2010.<sup>96</sup>

Turkish reaction astonished the French. The appeal for boycott was described as anti-democratic and inappropriate. French use this occasion to doubt the democratization process in Turkey. For France, Turkey's "reluctance" in recognizing the Armenian genocide by denying its history, only corroborates the argument that it is a non-European state. This argument is not more logical than Turkey's reflexive emotional response.

The upper stage of a genocide bill was to enact a law punishing the denial of the Armenian Genocide. On October 12, 2006, the French National Assembly passed the draft law on "punishing the negation of the Armenian Genocide"<sup>97</sup>. The draft

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<sup>95</sup> "Minister Incites Turks to Boycott French Goods", *Hürriyet Daily News* 22 December 2011, Available at <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/minister-incites-turks--to-boycott-french-goods.aspx?pageID=238&nid=9733>>

<sup>96</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Türkiye-Fransa Ticari ve Ekonomik İlişkileri". Available at <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-fransa-ticari-ve-ekonomik-iliskileri.tr.mfa>>

<sup>97</sup> Assemblée Nationale, "Texte Adopté no.610 Proposition de Loi Tendante à Réprimer la Contestation de l'Existence du Génocide Arménien" (12 October 2006), Available at <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/ta/ta0610.asp>>

law was adopted by 106 in favor versus 19 against and 4 abstain while 488 of 577 members of the Assembly did not attend the voting section. Even if Chirac supported the official recognition of the Armenian Genocide and described it as a precondition for Turkey's EU membership, he did not confirm the punishment of revisionism. This is why, he called the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to express he regrets the draft law. This attitude of Chirac reflects his good will, a mannerism which differentiates him from Sarkozy.

France has become one of the countries accentuating the Armenian question and taking legal maneuvers against Turkey<sup>98</sup>. Several other bills had been voted in the French Assembly and Senate. In 2011, the draft law no.647 penalizing the denial of the so-called Armenian genocide. According to this bill any person in France who would deny publicly the so-called Armenian genocide would be subject to a year in jail or be fined of 45,000 Euros. The French legislation requires a draft law to be accepted within the upper legislative organ, that is the Senate in order to be ratified. The French Senate debated on the draft law and adopted it on 23 January, 2012 without any modification made to the draft presented by the Assembly<sup>99</sup>. However, the Constitutional Council rejected the draft law denoting that the law would be against the Constitution on the legal ground for freedom of expression.

From the beginning of the debates on the alleged Armenian Genocide, Turkey suggests the formation of a special commission composed of history researchers and academicians who would solely research and discuss the events of 1915. If consensus is not reached this commission would, at least, contribute to the accumulation of trustworthy documents. Turkey needs such documents if it seeks taking the dispute to the jurisdiction of the UN-affiliated International Court of Justice (ICJ). In the absence of a binding ICJ decision, recognizing genocide through legal regulations at national level is not a humanistic facet but a non-democratic

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<sup>98</sup> Ömer Lütfi Taşçıoğlu, "Politics of France in the Period of Turkish Republic and Effects of These Politics on Turkish-French Relations", *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol.20, no.1 (2018), p.144.

<sup>99</sup> See The French Senate, "Proposition de Loi: Contestation des Génocides" (publication: 23 January 2012), Available at <<https://www.senat.fr/leg/tas11-052.html>>

imposition. International judicial scene witnessed major examples of genocide trials. ICJ-affiliated ad hoc international tribunals were instituted for giving the final decision on the crimes against humanity.

The case of the Srebrenica Genocide seen in the ICJ emerges as an example crucial both for the Armenian diaspora and Turkey for two main reasons. The first reason lies in the decision of the Court given on 26 February 2007 which characterizes the mass killings as genocide but does not accuse the respondent state Serbia for this humanitarian crime.<sup>100</sup> The Court states the responsibility belongs to military individuals like Ratko Mladic. This decision probably discourages the Armenians and inclines them to insist on using lobbying strategies at national parliaments.

The second reason is that Srebrenica case gives Turkey the chance to evaluate French intention on the issue of alleged Armenian Genocide. This is possible by focusing on the activities of the French National Assembly (“Assembly”). Did it make any declaration on the genocidal aspects of Srebrenica events, independently from any supranational judicial organ? What decisions were made in the Assembly after the ICJ decision? Unlike on the issue of Armenian Genocide, France was not enthusiastic to make any legal declaration about its stance on the Srebrenica Genocide. Information reports on the events of Srebrenica basically constitute the majority of the official documents concerning the Bosnia war. The French Assembly never drafted a law on the recognition of the Srebrenica Genocide, neither before nor after the ICJ judgment.

France was not that sensitive on paying homage to the Bosniaks who have been victims of genocide, through the enactment of law recognizing this incident. Bearing in mind that French had the “chance” to witness day to day these war atrocities which occurred only few kilometers away from their land, it is surprising they were not and still are not steady about including the Srebrenica Genocide to their agenda despite the supranational judicial decision. Today, France recognizes two

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<sup>100</sup> ICJ, Judgment in the Case Concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro (26 February 2007), Available at <<http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/91/13685.pdf>>

genocides: the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. A draft law prepared by UMP Deputy Roland Blum in 2002, suggests the insertion of the phrase “genocides recognized by France or by an international organization France is a member of”<sup>101</sup>. However, this draft law has been recommitted to the Constitutional Commission and still, there is no proposition to widen the draft law to include the list of genocides approved by international organizations.

The Assembly did not propose a draft law punishing the (public) negation of any internationally recognized genocide. Even the draft law on genocide approved by the Senate on 23 January 2012 comprises only the genocides recognized by French laws.

With its genocide bills, France puts the practice of dialogue aside. When your ally does not consider you as its collocutor and makes decisions which would entrust directly or indirectly your moves in the cross-national judico-political arena and which would affect your historical dignity, you would, inherently, take counteractions. The alliance between Turkey and France is rooted in the bonds built centuries before. This entrenched alliance has been broadened within the Atlantic Alliance and European judicial, political and economic formation (apart from EU) they take part. Denoting the democratic nature of politics pursued in these supranational platforms, to enact unilateral decisions concerning another member is simply disrespecting the esteem of the alliance relationship. France does not give Turkey the chance to object, to argue and to convey its own arguments. Although they are parliamentary-based, French measures are utterly of anti-democratic nature.

By this time, Turkey has failed to orient French political discourse on the Armenian Genocide to its own advantage because it only pursued a reactionary policy. Contrary to precautionary measures, this type of policy focuses on saving the day. In other words, it is prophecy after the fact. Turkey neglected the French public in the scientific, social and cultural spheres and besides a few propaganda books, did

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<sup>101</sup> Draft Law no.300 on the Fight Against Revisionism, Available at <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/propositions/pion0300.asp>>

not introduce them any considerable academic work on the Armenian Genocide written in French.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, Turkey should learn from these mistakes and should envisage a roadmap. A judico-political guide is definitely necessary to obtain a final satisfactory result. It is clear it would be easier to network the Turks living in France with a goal-setting roadmap; collective action is evidently more beneficial than disparate individual efforts. Indeed, Turkish immigrants and the second-generation Franco-Turks are seen as the absolute representation of the Turkish culture. The absence of a direct contact between the Turkish community and the French public supports the formation of negative opinions and also particular prejudices about the entire Turkey.

#### **4.2.7. Feeling European in the EU World**

The political scientist specialized in European politics, Michael Bruter divides the European identity under two categories according to their components: civic and cultural.<sup>103</sup> “The ‘cultural’ component represents...the sense of belonging of an individual citizen towards a particular group. (...) The “civic” component...has to do with the identification of citizens with a political structure, the State...the set of institutions, rights, and rules that preside over the political life of a community.”<sup>104</sup> The civic European identity covers state-based ideas and rights. The ideas of a borderless Europe; the free circulation of European citizens; the new policy making -in which citizens will be involved, and goals of prosperity are the basic components of the civic identity. The cultural European identity focuses mostly on social factors and idealist projections. Values and ideals such as, peaceful and harmonious system (being the main historical motive for the settlement of a European unity); the nonexistence of historical divisions and cooperation between similar people and cultures, create the cultural dimension of the European identity. The terminology

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<sup>102</sup> Açıık, *Geçmişten Günümüze Türkiye-Fransa*, p.547.

<sup>103</sup> Michael Bruter, “On what Citizens Mean by Feeling ‘European’: Perceptions of News, Symbols and Borderless-ness”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.30, no.1 (2003), p.30.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

“similar people, similar culture” reveals the sensitive yet challenging balance which identities are based upon.

It is more easy and “secure” to emphasize similar cultural indications when creating or solidifying a common (supranational) identity to be adopted by historically differentiated people. Less difference would bring more harmony. The basic mentality suggests that an individual will be more eager to relate himself/herself with a supranational identity if he/she finds similarities between this identity’s traits with her/his national one. The reason is identity is a socio-psychological variable. Indeed, any minor similarity may serve to increase the density of the person’s sense of belonging. At this phase, every individual will focus on different traits whether cultural, political or religious. Since cultural European identity refers to common heritage, every individual assigns different aspects to this heritage. This is due to the fact that every self-identity has its own peculiarities deriving from individual’s varying perceptions and preferences. Therefore, one way of constructing European identity is to outline a common denominator. At the first stage, this common denominator would be the civic attributes as these constitute a safety area when compared to more complex field of cross-cultural ties.

The process of European integration transforms the imagery of Europeanness in the minds of the European nations. Therefore, it is highly possible that in the long-run, the EU civic identity will blend with cultural, historical European identity. As mentioned before, this is a convoluted transmission. French public responses to this transmission give clues about how it may result. A Eurobarometer survey, dated September 2006, displays a ratio of %45 of the French who never felt themselves as European:

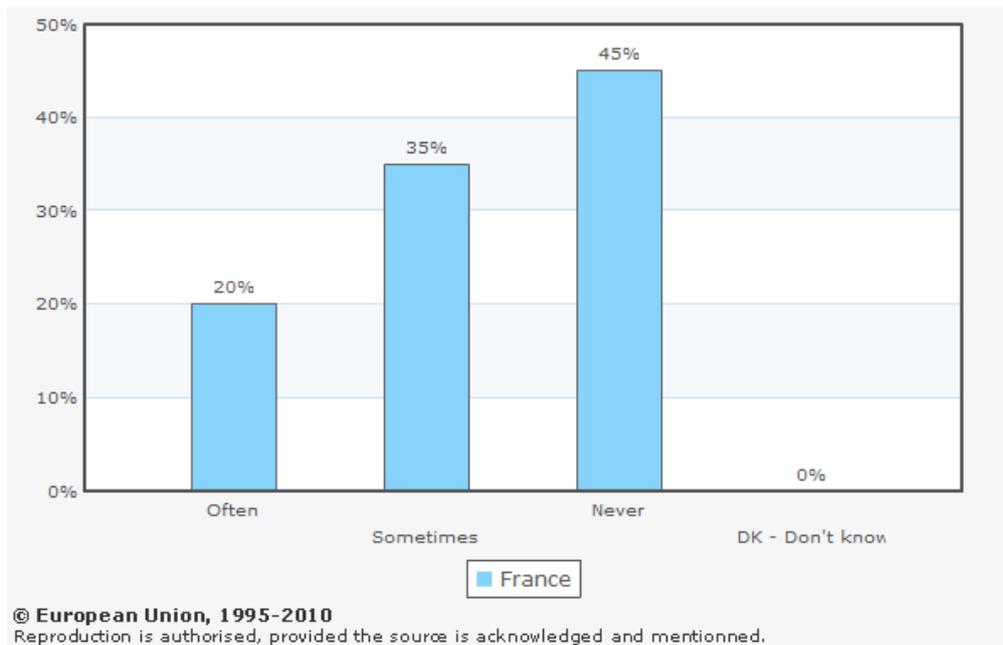


Figure 7. Identity: French vs. European  
 “Do you ever think of yourself as not only [French] but also European?”  
 Source: *European Commission*, September 2006<sup>105</sup>

The majority of the French expect a more social security-oriented and fully integrated Union. Interviews done with the citizens summarize these civic expectations. Véronique explains the reasons why she voted ‘no’ in the Referendum: “J’imaginai par exemple une sécurité sociale qui tirerait tout le monde vers le haut. Mais on a branché l’Europe sur l’économie, en tirant tout vers le bas”<sup>106</sup>. A similar disappointment was the lack of an intensified European identity. Another French citizen Mathieu expresses this by underlining, as Véronique, the over-emphasis being put on the economy: “A part l’Euro, un symbole fort qui nous rapproche, on n’a pas su cultiver cette identité Européenne”<sup>107</sup>.

<sup>105</sup> European Commission, “Do You Ever Think of Yourself as not Only (Nationality), but also European? Does this Happen Often, Sometimes or Never?” (publication: September 2006), Available at <[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/step1.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/step1.cfm)> (Path: “39-Feel European”; “France”; “2006.09”)

<sup>106</sup> “I have imagined, for instance, of a social security that would pull up everyone. However, they built Europe upon economy, by drawing everything down” in Sabéran Haydée et al., “Méconnue, Rejetée, Idéalisée: L’Europe selon les Français”, *Libération* 01 July 2008, Available at <<http://www.liberation.fr/evenement/010184453-meconnue-rejetee-idealisee-l-europe-selon-les-francais>>

<sup>107</sup> “Besides euro, which is a powerful symbol of unification, they were not able to cultivate this European identity” in Sabéran Haydée et al., *ibid.*

The illusory dimension of these articulations is that the preferences may vary according to the periodical conditions. During economic crises, individuals will focus less on European identity and more on monetary issues.

#### **4.2.8. Political Goals for the EU**

France is inspired by the idea of being deeply involved with every step in the EU since it deals with “a paradox...that France made Europe, but then Europe made France”<sup>108</sup>. Aligned with this paradox, the enlargement process concerns France because of the risk of a possible shift in the balance of power in the EU decision-making politics. This concern was even officially articulated during 1994 by the then French Prime Minister François Balladur: “The enlargement poses a further problem: the extension of the Union towards the north and the east of Europe might deprive France of the central geographical position that it presently holds in the Union”<sup>109</sup>. The name François Balladur is crucial in that Nicolas Sarkozy left Chirac’s camp to side Balladur in the 1995 presidential elections.

In the same context, Turkish-German relations are more intensified when compared to Turkish-French relations. Its strategic ascendancy and the supremacy it will have in the decision-making process in the EU due to its population size, already makes Turkey a challenger for France. When these assets combine with its potent relation with Germany, Turkey and Germany could pose great problem for France. In this case, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s opposition to Turkish membership represents an opportunity for France to set the scales in its advantage. The antagonism over Turkish membership is a resource for cooperation.

French outlook for and expectations from the EU indirectly influence its stance about Turkey’s membership. The Union emerges as an opportunity platform that would benefit France in taking major roles in the EU region and its beyond. These

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<sup>108</sup> Cole, *Governing and Governance in France*, p.248.

<sup>109</sup> Helene Sjursern and Børge Romsloe, “Protecting the Idea of Europe: France and Enlargement” in *Questioning EU Enlargement: Europe in Search of Identity*, ed. Helene Sjursern, New York: Routledge, 2006, p.148.

motivations are rooted in the politico-philosophical vision of *Europe-Puissance* (basic translation of this term could be “Euro-Power”). Generated by France, this vision anticipates a powerful EU in the larger world scene and France taking the helm of the EU leadership. If there has to be an EU foreign policy, this will be accustomed concordantly with French needs and ambitions. It is the French dream about a Europe which would pioneer a worldwide hegemony of their lifestyles and civilization<sup>110</sup>. The nostalgia for the era when France was one of the main determiners of the European balance of power and was influential in the global politico-cultural scene is the main motivation behind this vision.

Europe-Puissance depicts a “united states of Europe”, which is a variety of European federation design. At this stage, Turkey’s EU membership creates a two-sided effect in terms of the goals set in this prognosis. The positive trait of this effect is discerned at the geopolitical level. Extending its borders towards the Middle East and Caucasia, would unquestionably provide the EU the opportunity to intervene more efficiently in regional politics in terms of being involved with the crisis management initiatives or economic cooperation. This involvement does not only signify a more active EU in the world scene but also a Union which solidify its existence by enlarging its sphere of influence through the promulgation of its norms and principles in a wider geographical area. In spite of this, the concern is that in the long-run Turkey’s geopolitical location could stimulate mostly negative effects than positive ones.

As mentioned earlier in the foregoing chapters, this concern does not emerge from skepticism about Turkey’s foreign policy ambitions but from the will to stay out of trouble. Turkish foreign policy is based upon the principle of pacifism. However, this does not free Turkey from any outer state-based threats. The constant instability of the regional dynamics could cause discord on what measures to implement vis-à-vis crises while such an atmosphere would necessitate a rapid and solid EU common foreign policy. The main idea is that regional distance ensures a basic level of serenity. The supremacy of pacifist ideal makes “[t]he creation of political,

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<sup>110</sup> Rocard, *Avrupa Birliği Yolunda Türkiye*, p.71.

economic and social stability...more relevant”<sup>111</sup> when compared to cross-border ambitions. When considered from this point of view, not only by neighboring unstable regions but also with its interior security problems like terrorism and economic risks, Turkey does not satisfy these three dimensions of security the Europeans desire of.

Currently, each EU member state is located in a relatively tranquil geopolitical region with no threatening states along its borders. Regarding this fact, the EU states would favor to use economic resources in the deepening process of the EU rather than channeling them for the gathering of security equipments. The forthcoming circumstances may alter these preferences. The deepening process maintained for a specific period of time may serve the EU to overcome institutional obstructions and ensure confidence in its promising future. This condition will favor a different approach towards Turkey’s geostrategic setting and the advantage it will provide for the intensification of EU’s multidimensional scope. For the time being, France aspires to achieve this level without the Turkey’s accession to the Union. For France, deepening is a step towards the transformation of the Union into a single entity, a stage in which it would perform as one actor in the international arena. The EU deepening plan set under Europe-Puissance vision requires France to focus on the EU-ization of different European national identities. This signals the European identity would be “a discursive construct and a product of overlapping discourses”<sup>112</sup>.

Prominent French leaders like Robert Schumann, Jacques Delors who contributed to the idea of a unified Europe, remind the ambition of France to be the guardian and the pioneer of this vision. The rationale behind French will to protect and solidify EU’s normative order is state-based. As mentioned earlier, the strategy of the French leaders to conclude this task is to highlight the deepening of European

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<sup>111</sup> Åsa Lundgren, “The Case of Turkey: Are Some Candidates more ‘European’ than Others?” in *Questioning EU Enlargement: Europe in Search of Identity*, ed. Helene Sjørnsen, New York: Routledge, 2006, p.131.

<sup>112</sup> Bo Stråth and Ruth Wodak, “Europe-Discourse-Politics-Media-History: Constructing ‘Crises?’” in *The European Public Sphere and the Media: Europe in Crisis*, eds. Michal Krzyżanowski, Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruth Wodak, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, p.15.

integration by means of institutional reform. A successful deepening is a precondition for a beneficial widening. Jacques Chirac drew attention to this correlation: “The institutions have to be modified, tailored to the enlargement. The European Union can’t function properly with the present institutions”<sup>113</sup>. The confidence the citizens have in the EU would help the deepening process. In this context, addressing common values and collective memory is a good strategy for establishing this confidence bond, as “a sense of community, a ‘we-feeling’, would function as a basis for integration”<sup>114</sup>. Importantly, debating over Turkish membership becomes a maneuver to nourish the “we-feeling” of the EU citizens.

Turkey has no place in the “we”. There is on the one side the European family and on the other, their neighbor next door, Turkey. In terms of values, the main argument suggests Turkey had no contribution in the development of a European culture, thus does not share common “European” memory. This being the case, it becomes difficult to place Turkey within the “we”. On the other side, and ironically, this impossibility of associating Turkey with European history reveals a contribution. Turkey serves as the reference point of what is not European and implicitly, as a guide for distinguishing who the Europeans are. Any mention of membership criteria is an occasion to regularly underscore and determine what specific values historically constitute Europe with the aim to refresh the bond the citizens have with their Europeanity.

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<sup>113</sup> Jacques Chirac, Post-European Council Press Conference, Brussels, 15 December 2006, Available at <<http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/President-Chirac-s-post-European,8262>>

<sup>114</sup> Helene Sjursen, *Questioning EU Enlargement: Europe in Search of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 2006, p.2.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

Causing a problematique in bilateral relations, Turkey's EU membership candidacy has been a source of tensions between Turkey and France. This thesis aimed to highlight the main arguments present among French leaders and within public opinion towards Turkey. France has been the country where Turkish membership was discussed with its different aspects and had impacted -both in positively and negatively, the flow of the negotiation talks between EU and Turkey. The call for referendum and the option of public opinion that the leaders mention no matter what their personal views are, are also important elements signaling that Turkey will face further challenges in the future. The views and debates on Turkey gained the attention of and attributed a specific "decision-making role" to public. It is important to understand the correlation between the public opinion and the leaders' discourses and who would have the last word. To assess the content of the discussions and the discourses on Turkey is therefore necessary for better positioning of policies.

Debates about Turkish candidacy had been intensified after things seemed to get more serious. By 2005, when the negotiation talks had begun, the French political scene witnessed an intense focus on Turkey. The media, the surveys, the National Assembly in France questioned a lot about Turkey, like in no other country. The reason behind lies in French self-perception about its role in EU's destiny and would like to have the last word in the decision process regarding EU's present and future. Turkey's adhesion becomes therefore a crucial subject that France should treat.

The analysis concludes that leaders' motivation could well contribute to the amelioration of bilateral relations and may have a somewhat positive effect on EU-Turkey relations. Examples to these contributions are Chirac's impact in EU

Summits that were turning points in Turkey's EU roadmap and Hollande's decision to open some of the chapters that were vetoed by Sarkozy. In parallel with this conclusion, the analysis also reveals that the positive aspects would be shadowed by non-resolved long-term issues, such as the Armenian question or the referendum to be held in case of Turkish adhesion. Indeed, both Chirac and Hollande who adopted relatively positive stance about the potential EU membership for Turkey, had always referred to the option of referendum and had often mentioned the need for Turkey to "face" the Armenian question.

The intense debates and crises in bilateral relations during specific periods, i.e. Sarkozy's decisions or the draft laws on the Armenian question, had affected economic relations to a certain degree and this led to the adoption of a more "strategic" discourses by the French part.

If ever Turkey would forsake its historical goal, it would be for the simple reason that it concludes EU membership would not satisfy its interests in numerous areas and abandons its EU strategic goal. This abandonment would not indicate an interruption of the EU-Turkish relations or a rejection of the potential benefits that a "privileged partnership" could afford Turkey. In truth, it is unrealistic to assume that Turkey would prohibit itself from a profitable structure by rejecting their partnership proposition along with the renunciation of EU membership. It is to be expected that each actor involved will attempt to protect and mature the current relationship platform even after Turkey chooses to follow another way. Thus, what the French miss out is that Turkey is already involved within a special relation network with the European countries, and thus, indirectly with the EU. It is illogical to offer Turkey a partnership that would not add up any revolutionary dimension to the existing "association" degree. Turkey's relations with the European system – independently from the EU body, extent to economic and judico-political spheres. Turkey has already a special affiliation with Europe almost for a half century. A harsh setback to relations could not occur while the system is based upon and requires interdependency of the actors once they are involved in. This integrity could be interpreted as an assurance for Turkey. Under these circumstances, France

cannot make any influential move on the issue of Turkish membership by using the card of “privileged partnership”.

The debates over what belongs to “us”, what norms and values create “us”, need the emphasis to be put on the differences of foreign cultures. The differences between the “us” and the “other”, solidify the similarities within that community and serve to disregard the features that may cause any fragmentation. The European identity of which France seeks to take part in its creation, would be constructed upon the determination of common values. Turkey should closely follow up these debates in order to distinguish what kind of a structure the EU project will be in the near future. This is necessary to envisage what role could Turkey have in the EU and how. The “how” refers to the fact that Turkey will certainly be required to adapt itself to the new EU conditions and norms. If Turkey takes on this requirement by its own consent and not under a selection of *acquis communautaire*, it would be the most reputable act.

Jacques Chirac’s and Nicolas Sarkozy’s presidencies are the periods during which Turkey has been debated intensely; this is why, many of the arguments that the French perspective is based upon can be detected through the discourses of the both presidents. The presidencies of François Hollande and Emmanuel Macron signal that the attitudes can change over courses of period and the discourse maneuvers play an important role in French leadership discourses. The discourse analysis of all these leaders suggest it is always necessary to look up for public opinion as the French public, whether due to their active participation in politics for self-assessment or for the sake of leaders’ vote concerns, it is the ultimate decision-maker.

It should be denoted that French are also willing to understand Turkish arguments. For instance, the president of the Assembly, Jean-Louis Debré –who also presided over the Assembly when the draft law no.610 was adopted, gave an official visit to Turkey in February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 with the accompany of four presidents of the parliamentary groups: Bernard Accoyer (UMP), Jean-Marc Ayrault (*Partie Socialiste*; PS; Socialist Party), Alain Bocquet (PCF) and Hervé Morin (UDF). This

is an important date in the relations between the Sarkozy government and Turkey that Turkey should not disregard and try to take similar steps. Turkey should try to understand both the official French discourse and the French public opinion since “[u]nderstanding their vision, empathizing with the French can prove to be highly valuable”<sup>115</sup>.

France considers the reluctance and the ease of Turkey from participating in discussion platforms and monitoring debates with its own initiative, as a lack of self-confidence derived from the lack of legitimacy of its arguments.<sup>116</sup> Turkey needs to set up an official itinerary which takes the European civil societies as its target groups. Within this political foresight, intellectuals should discuss each area upon which the opinions and prejudices are concentrated and should reach a consensus on certain arguments that would be proliferated. Without this kind of a determined itinerary with the consent of its intelligentsia, Turkey should not undertake any diplomatic promotion. This promotion should not demote France to level of a state with which Turkey should establish highly interactive communication just for convincing it for its membership ambitions; the policies should foresee a wider time period. Menacing discourses do not equal preventive measures and could have more damaging outcomes for Turkey than for France.

Living together is the most difficult art to perform in the contemporary world.<sup>117</sup> With increased terror attacks, long-term economic crises, each society goes through psychological turmoil. France is no exception. Facing the worst terrorist attacks in its history and dealing with migration issue at different time sequences, the public opinion in France is subject to diverse stimulants. It will not be unrealistic to expect French public to discuss separately or altogether (by searching the linkages between the concepts of) Islam, terrorist motivations, migration and economic problems for a long period of time. Turkey should accept the reality that perspectives about

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<sup>115</sup> EDAM, *The Franco-Turkish Relationship*, p.61.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p.56.

<sup>117</sup> Emile Poulat in UNESCO, *Culture du Dialogue en France et en Turquie: Quels Projets pour Aujourd'hui?*, Paris: UNESCO, 2005, p.30.

Turkey cannot be considered independent from the debates that France will conduct about these concepts and phenomena. The relations between societies and their perceptions on each other's culture have a critical impact on state-to-state relations. Their opinions should be formed through dialogue and not monologue. The Turkish arguments should be based upon the conception of interculturalism rather than multiculturalism. The distinction between these concepts is worth attention. On one hand, the idea of multiculturalism tends to separate cultures into subcategories by highlighting the differences which could trigger the formation of a cultural hierarchy or cultural *ghettos*. On the other hand, the philosophy behind interculturalism does not focus on the differences by underlining them but supports the interaction between diversities. The nuance between "difference" and "diversity" becomes an important determinant.

The democratic tradition requires respect to different opinions and lifestyles. Contemporary European states are proud of promoting necessary legal basis for diverse lifestyles to flourish. The same level of democracy should be aimed at interstate relations. Turkey should not face closed doors because of its diverse features but should be given the opportunity to ameliorate its defected fields. The case of France in particular should be a warning as well as an opportunity for Turkey to implement an efficient long-term public diplomacy towards EU citizens. Being the only EU candidate to be discussed to such an extent, Turkey should meanwhile resolve specific issues that obstruct its EU accession procedures, such as the alleged Armenian "genocide". This means Turkey needs to adopt preventive measure instead of counter-measures and by doing so, should ensure to reflect eagerness to accomplish its EU journey.

The thesis concludes that the issue of Turkish EU membership candidacy is a topic where bilateral relations between Turkey and France get tensified. The periods of different French presidents reveal that personal ideational motivations could of course have a positive impact on the pace of the relations; however, the presence of several issues that are not resolved or ideas that are difficult to measure beforehand could be brought on the agenda of Turkish-French relations regardless of positive attitudes. These issues and ideas have historical and/or socio-cultural connotations

that can be noticed within the public opinion as well as political elites' discourses. As these have long-term impacts upon the opinions on Turkey -within or outside the EU candidacy issue, it is crucial to assess leaders' discourses together with public opinion throughout different time periods in order to comprehensively evaluate the French perspective on Turkey's prospective membership.

It is in this perspective, rather than dealing solely with French leaders, Turkey should engage itself in communicative cultural relations with the French civil society in order to annihilate existing prejudices and then, to prevent the formation of further opposition. The overall public opinion on Turkey seem to be negative when considered within the framework of EU membership. It should not only develop relations based upon communicative interactions, but should also aim a sustainable level of development in its economic, social and juridical spheres –a level that the EU anticipates. Without such evident development and proving a long-term motivation regarding EU membership, it is unlikely to overcome negative opinions and prejudices since these are fostered by the negative examples observed in the areas mentioned.

Not only the Turkish leaders, but Turkish intellectuals and journalists should endeavor to participate in the debates ongoing on the French TV channels. Communication strategies should target the intellectual level as the French public is culturally interested in conceptual discussions or put in other words, is more politically active.

It is in this perspective that dialogue comes forward as the pioneer of a space suitable for enjoying diversities –not only at societal but also at individual level, under the same framework. A communication based on dialogue does not impose a particular way of thinking and does not turn perceptions into prejudices; for unity shall not derive from the amalgamation of diversities but from harmonious plurality. The deontology of a genuine dialogue then demands the reconnaissance of each side within their own specificities by disregarding historical phobias.<sup>118</sup> Rather than

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<sup>118</sup> Claudio Monge, *ibid*, p.50.

imposing a particular vision and letting negative opinions or prejudices form mental barriers between the parties, a new and unifying strategy should be created with the cooperation of each actor. Without a doubt, this is how both France and Turkey could benefit from a long-term interaction.

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## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

#### TÜRK-FRANSIZ İLİŞKİLERİNDE SORUNSAK: TÜRKİYE’NİN AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ ÜYELİĞİ ADAYLIĞINA DAİR FRANSA’NIN YAKLAŞIMI

Bu tez, Fransa’nın Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliğı (“AB”) üyeliğine adaylığı hakkındaki yaklaşımlarını analiz eder. Bu analizi 1999 ve 2019 yılları arasında kapsayan yirmi yıllık bir zaman dilimine oturtur. Türkiye’nin 1999 yılında Helsinki AB Zirvesi’nde aday ülke statüsünü elde etmesi, incelenen zaman diliminin başlangıç tarihi olarak bu yılın alınmasındaki temel nedendir. İkincil ve de oldukça belirleyici olan bir diğer etmen, bu adaylık statüsünün elde edilmesiyle birlikte Fransa’da belirli bir kitlenin Türkiye’ye olan dikkatlerinin ortaya çıkması ve/veya artmasıdır. Bu tarih itibariyle Türkiye Fransa’da siyasi elitlerin dikkatini çekmeye başlamıştır. İzleyen dönemde, 2004 yılında alınacak AB ile müzakerelerin başlaması kararı ile birlikte, Türkiye daha çok dikkat çekecek ve geniş çaplı tartışmaların odağı olacaktır. Öyle ki, Türkiye’nin üyeliğı sadece siyasi elitlerin tartışma panellerindeki bir konu olmaktan çıkacak ve sokağın nabzını tutarken ölçülen bir kriter hâline dönüşecektir. Hem intelligentsia hem de kamuoyunu kapsayan sosyo-politik çevrelerce sürekli irdelenen bir konu olarak uzun süre gündemde kaldı ve de Türkiye’nin AB yolculuğı olumlu ya da olumsuz netileneceğı güne değin gündemde kalmaya da devam edecek görünmektedir. Nitekim, Türkiye’nin adaylığı başka hiçbir AB ülkesinde bu denli tartışılmamış; aynı şekilde, Türkiye dışında başka hiçbir ülkenin adaylığı Fransa’da bu derece tartışma konusu olmamıştır.

Görüşlerin ve tartışmaların Türkiye’nin dış politikası, özellikle AB üyeliğı nezdinde önemli sonuçlarının olduğı gözlemlenmektedir. AB üyelik sürecinin gidişatını

belirleyen müzakere başlıklarından birkaçının açılmasının 2007 yılında Fransa tarafından veto edilmesi bu sonuçlara örnek teşkil etmektedir.

Tez, bu durumun ardında yatan sebepleri araştırmakta; kamuoyunun yönelimlerini ve liderlerin söylemlerini oluşturan genel argümanları ve bu iki grup arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Liderlerin kitleleri yönlendirme stratejilerini oluştururken söz konusu kitlelerin karar alma süreçlerini etkilemek adına onların hangi duygularına ve zihinlerindeki hangi imgelere hitap ettiklerini belirlemek önemlidir. Böylece söylemleri oluşturan niteliklerin kamuoyunda ve genel olarak toplumsal bellekte hangilerinin var olduğunu bir nebze tespit edebilmek mümkündür.

Tez, Fransız liderlerin söylemlerinde Türkiye hakkında vurguladıkları noktaların neler olduklarını ve neden bu vurguları yaptıklarını anlamayı amaçlar. Bunun bir aşaması da liderlerin Türkiye üzerine söylem ve politikalarında, kişisel görüşlerinin yanı sıra, kamuoyundaki yönelimlerden etkilenip etkilenmediklerini gözlemlemektir. Fransız kamuoyunun niteliği de bu boyuta ayrıca yer verilmesi konusunda teşvik edici olmuştur. Nitekim, Fransız kamuoyu, siyasi kararların alımında ve uygulanışında ağırlığını hissettirir. Bunu, liderlerin Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği konusunda nihai kararı Fransa halkının vereceğine dair demeçlerinde ve böylesi bir stratejiyi tercih etmelerinde okuyabiliriz.

Tez öncelikle toplumsal bellekte var olan Türk imajını analiz eder ve sonrasında bu imajın günümüzde ne tür argümanları beslediğini tespit etmeye çalışır. Toplumsal bellekteki izlerin sadece liderlerin söylemleri ile değil, Fransa'nın iç dinamiklerinin etkisiyle de Türkiye hakkında argümanların şekillendiği söylenebilir. Bir taraftan bu argümanları coğrafi, kültürel ve hukuki açılardan ayırıp incelerken, diğer taraftan Fransa'nın kendi içinde yürüttüğü toplumsal ve hukuki tartışmalara değinmesinin sebebi budur. Türkiye tartışmaları Fransa'nın içeride karşılaştığı sorunlarla ilgili yapılan tartışmalarla çoğu zaman çakışır. Sorunlara ek olarak, Fransa'nın kendi imajı ve AB'nin geleceği hakkında kendine yüklediği sorumluluklar da iç dinamiklerden biri olarak ortaya çıkar.

Tezin ikinci bölümü itibariyle, Fransa’da Türk imajına dair genel hatlar incelenir. Daha sonraki bölümlerde detaylandırılacak olan argümanların en temelinde, Türk kamuoyuna da yansıyan birtakım önyargıların varlığına dair kalıntıların olduğunu saptar. Aynı zamanda bu argümanların teorik alanını da belirlemeyi amaçlar. Kültürel ya da medeniyet, hukuki, siyasal, toplumsal ve de felsefi açılardan değerlendirilen bir Türk kavramı olduğu görülür. Kimlik tartışmalarının odağında bir Türkiye vardır. Türkiye’nin kimliğini tespit etmeye ya da diğer deyişle, Türkiye’ye bir kimlik yakıştırması yaparken aslında kendi kimliklerinin tanımlaması yapılır. “Avrupalılık” (“*Europeanness*”) kavramına yapılan atıflar AB üyesi ülke toplumlarınca yazılı olmayan, kültürel normların Birlik üyeliği açısından birer kriter olarak öne sürülebileceği görülür.

İç dinamiklere bakıldığında, bir ülkede yaşanan toplumsal süreçlerin, hukuki ve yasal düzenlemelerde yaşanan krizlerin, bireylerin farklı olanı, bir “diğerini” değerlendirirken özellikle belli noktalara odaklanmasına sebep olduğu söylenebilir. Fransa örneğinde, ülkede yaşayan Müslüman topluluğun ve göçmenlerin entegrasyonunun sorgulanmasına sebep olan olayların yaşanması Türkiye’nin değerlendirilmesinde kültürel atıfların din üzerinden yapılır. Türkiye laik bir ülke olmasına rağmen çoğunluğu Müslüman bir toplumdan oluşmaktadır; Fransa seküler vatandaşlık kavramına rağmen kendi iç politikasında belirli bireylerin entegrasyonunda “aksama” yaşadıysa, aynı durum Türk toplumunun AB entegrasyonunda da meydana gelmeyecek midir? Serbest dolaşım hakkından yararlanarak belki Fransa’da ikamet edecek olan Türklerin sisteme entegrasyonu ne kadar mümkün olacaktır? Bu tür sorgulamalar kamuoyunda oluşan ve tezin ilgili bölümlerinde de daha detaylı inceleneceği üzere, liderlerin söylemlerini uyumluluk/entegrasyon varsayımları üzerinden inşa etmesine sebep olan tedirginliklerdir.

Üçüncü bölümde, Türkiye’nin aday ülke statüsünü kazandığı 1999 yılından tezin yayınlandığı 2019 yılına kadarki dönemde cumhurbaşkanlığı yapan liderlerin söylemleri incelenir. Cumhurbaşkanlığı dönemlerindeki gelişmeler, söylemler ile oluşturulan politikaların arasındaki bağlantılar, Fransa’nın Türkiye yaklaşımlarını belirlemek açısından önem arz eder.

Jacques Chirac'ın söylem ve politikaları incelenirken, göreve geldiği 1997 tarihinden itibaren değil, Helsinki AB Zirvesi tarihi olan 1999 yılından üst üste seçildiği iki dönemin son yılı olan 2007'ye kadarki dönem esas alınır. Chirac, Türk kamuoyu tarafından Türkiye'ye oldukça pozitif tavır takıyan bir Fransız lider olarak addedilir. Bunda Helsinki ve Kopenhag AB zirvelerinde Türkiye'ye verdiği destekler oldukça etkilidir. Nitekim Chirac, Türkiye'ye aday ülke statüsünü verilmesini desteklediği gibi, AB üyeliğinin Türkiye ile "uyumluluğu" konusuna medeniyet bağlamında yaklaşamayacağını ve bu ülkenin gerekli şartları tamamladığı takdirde üye olma ihtimalinin bulunduğu işaret etmiştir. İlgili bölümlerde işlenen argümanlardan biri olan medeniyet farklılığına (doğrudan çatışma olmasa dahi), Chirac karşı çıkmıştır. Chirac'ın altını çizdiği önemli noktalardan biri Türkiye'nin hâlihazırda Avrupa sisteminin bir parçası olduğu ve dolayısıyla Avrupa (ve dolaylı olarak AB) ile özdeşleşen değerleri paylaşmayı bir hedef olarak belirleyip, bu bağlamdaki azmini ispatladığıdır. En temelde, Chirac'ın bu değerlerin sadece bir topluma ya da topluluğa ait olamayacağı bakış açısını benimsediği söylenebilir. Chirac'ın söylemleri üzerinden, değindiği noktaların Türkiye'nin AB üyeliğine karşı çıkanların hangi noktalar üzerinden argümanlarını oluşturdukları ölçülebilir.

Chirac dönemi olumlu yaklaşımların etkilerini görmek açısından olduğu kadar, bu pozitif etkilerin bir noktada etkisiz hâle gelebileceğini göstermesi açısından da akılda tutulması gereken bir dönemdir. Bu dönemde, Ermeni meselesinin ("*Armenian question*") kendisinin cumhurbaşkanlığından sonra göreve gelecek olan Fransız cumhurbaşkanları tarafından gündeme alınan bir konu olacağını haber veren gelişmeler meydana gelmiştir. Bu meseleye ek olarak, AB'ye katılacak her yeni devlet için Fransa genelinde referandum yapılması kararı Chirac döneminde alınmış ve gerekli yasal düzenleme yapılmıştır. Bu kararın 2005 yılında alınması ve Türkiye'nin üyeliğinin tartışılmaya başlandığı günlerin sonrasına denk düşüyor olması sürece bir kırılma noktası niteliği kazandırır. Kararı sadece yeni üye olacak devletler için değil, Türkiye'nin üyeliğinin gündeme gelmesiyle doğrudan bağlantılı olarak değerlendirmek daha doğru olacaktır. Bu şekilde yapılacak bir okuma, izleyen dönemlerde Türkiye üzerine yapılan tartışmaların doğasını ve etki alanını tartabilmek adına faydalı olacaktır. Nitekim tez, referandum kararını bu çerçeveye

oturtur. Bu bağlantının kurulmasında Chirac döneminde İçişleri Bakanı olan ve birkaç yıl sonra Chirac'tan cumhurbaşkanlığı görevini devralacak olan Nicolas Sarkozy'nin, aynı dönemde gündemde olan Avrupa Birliği Anayasası ("AB Anayasası") tartışmaları esnasında verdiği demeçleri etkili olmuştur. Sarkozy AB Anayasası'nın onaylanması için çağrıda bulunurken, söz konusu Anayasa sayesinde Türkiye'nin AB üyesi olabilmesi için daha fazla kriteri sağlamak zorunda kalacağı savını öne çıkarmıştır. O dönemde Avrupa Komisyonu tarafından yapılan kamuoyu anketlerinde, AB Anayasası referandumunda "hayır" oyu kullananların motivasyonunu ölçmek adına, ankette "Türkiye'nin AB üyesi olmasını istemiyor" seçeneğine de yer verilmesi, tartışmaların yoğunluğunu göstermesi açısından dikkate alınması gereken bir detay olarak karşımıza çıkar. Diğer bir ankette Türkiye'nin üyeliğine karşı çıkanların %64'ü, bu ülke belli reformları gerçekleştirse bile fikirlerinin değişmeyeceğini beyan eder. Bazı anketler, Türkiye'nin AB serüveninin bireylerin ekonomik hassasiyetlerinin gerisinde kaldığını gösterse dahi, ekonomik göstergelerden hemen sonra bu kalemin yer alması ve çıkan oranın AB'nin genişlemesine karşıt olanlardan nispeten yüksek olması, ilerleyen zamanlarda gelişebilecek kamuoyu yönelimlerini tahmin etmek açısından yol gösterici olabilir. Paralelde ise farklı siyasi parti liderlerinden yapılan açıklamalara bakıldığında, argümanların AB üyeliğinin Türkiye için bir kaldıraç olabileceği ile Türkiye'nin belli kriterleri asla gerçekleştiremeyeceği fikirleri arasında şekillendiği görülür. Tez bu savların incelemesini kamuoyuna odaklandığı Dördüncü Bölüm'de yapar.

Nicolas Sarkozy döneminin (2007-2012) öne çıkan özelliği, Sarkozy'nin söylemlerinde de çokça işleme yüzünden Türkiye'nin gündemi oldukça meşgul etmiş olmasıdır. Dolayısıyla bu dönemi ele alırken, Türkiye hakkında yürütülen tartışmaların niteliğini ölçmek adına fazlasıyla veri toplanabilmektedir. Sarkozy'nin kişisel olarak Türkiye'nin üyeliğine karşı çıkıyor olması ve bu yönde de politikalarını geliştirmesi elbette negatif argümanların çoğunlukta olmasına sebep olmuştur. Yoğun tartışmaların, siyasi karar ve tavırların da etkisiyle, Fransa'nın resmî olarak Türkiye'yi AB'de istemediğine dair Türkiye kamuoyunda bir önyargı oluşmasına sebep olduğu söylenebilir. Sarkozy'nin demeçlerini incelemek, liderlerin fikrî motivasyonunun resmî politikaya ne derece etki yaptığını ölçebilmek

adına önemlidir. Tez resmî politikaya etkiyi ölçmenin yanı sıra, Sarkozy'nin kamuoyundan güç alıp almadığını da sorgular.

Sarkozy'nin argümanları arasında en fazla öne çıkan vurgular coğrafi konum ve kültürel arka plandır. Türkiye'nin Avrupalı olmadığını, bu ülkenin AB üyeliğine her zaman karşı olduğunu ve de hep karşı çıkacağını açıkça beyan eden bir cumhurbaşkanı olmuştur. Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimleri öncesinde yürütülen kampanya süresince sık sık bunu dillendirmesi, seçimleri kazanmasında bu beyanın da etkisinin olduğunu düşündürür. Göreve geldikten sonra AB müktesebatı kapsamında yer alan beş adet başlığın, üyelikle doğrudan alakalı olduklarını gerekçe göstererek açılmasını engellemesi, karşıt söylemlerin Türkiye'nin dış politika manevralarını etkileyecek boyuta ulaşabileceğini kanıtlar.

Fransa'nın AB Başkanlığı yaptığı dönem olan 2008 yılı Sarkozy'nin Cumhurbaşkanlığı'na denk gelir. Sadece bir yıl öncesinde beş başlığın açılmasına sebep olan Fransa'nın bu dönemde Türkiye'nin önüne daha fazla engel koyacağı düşünülse de, iki adet başlığın açılması mümkün olmuştur. Elbette daha az riskli - AB üyeliği ile doğrudan ilintili görünmeyen, başlıklar olarak nitelendirildikleri için fazla engel çıkarılmadığı düşünülebilir. Ancak, AB gibi politika alanlarının dışına çıkıldığında, kültürel alanlarda Türkiye adına birtakım zorlanmalar görülmüştür. 2010 yılında Fransa'da gerçekleşen "Türk Sezonu" süresince yaşanan diplomatik gerginlikler, bu sezonun Fransa içinde çok fazla reklamının yapılmaması, Türkiye'nin işine çokça yarayabilecek bir zaman diliminde kamu diplomasisi seçeneğinin etki alanını kısıtlamıştır.

Chirac ve Sarkozy dönemlerinde ya Ermeni sorunu ya da Türkiye üyeliği üzerine kurgulanan kararlar gibi gergin geçen aşamaların ekonomik alana yansımaları ise Türkiye'nin aldığı tavırlar neticesinde gerçekleşmiştir denilebilir. Dördüncü bölümde daha detaylı incelendiği şekliyle, ikili ticari ilişkilerin verilerine bakıldığında her ne kadar ticaret hacmi azalmamış olsa da Fransız şirketlerin Türkiye piyasasındaki payı azalmıştır. Bunda Türk makamların belli projelerde ve ihalelerde Fransız şirketlerinin katılımına öncelik tanıması gibi etmenler etkilidir. Bu durumun ışığında, Sarkozy'den cumhurbaşkanlığı görevini devralan

François Hollande'ın göreve başlarken ekonomi alanında ilişkilerin geliştirilmesi ve AB süreci ile ilgili daha yapıcı bir yaklaşımı benimsediği görülür.

François Hollande döneminde (2012-2017) olumlu bir söylem benimsenmesinin yanı sıra yeniden ortaya çıkan belli konuların varlığı, geçmiş ve gelecek dönemleri yorumlarken bir nevi sağlama yapmaya yarar. Hollande, Türkiye'nin Avrupa'da olduğunu Türkiye'ye yaptığı ilk resmî ziyarette söyler; "Avrupalı" olmaktan ziyade "Avrupa'da" olmak arasında yapılan ayırım dikkat çeker. Daha stratejik, daha temkinli bir söylem geliştirildiği göz çarpar. Esasen, Hollande'ın, eski Fransız Cumhurbaşkanı François Mitterand'ın 1992'de gerçekleştirdiği resmî ziyaretten sonra Türkiye'ye resmî ziyarette bulunan ilk Fransa Cumhurbaşkanı olması da bu stratejinin önemli bir parçası olarak öne çıkar.

Hollande dönemi, Chirac döneminin bir yansıması gibidir ve bu sebeple geleceğe ayna tutar. Olumlu yaklaşımlar, belli konular etrafında düğümlenen süreçler çözülmedikçe, AB-Türkiye-Fransa eksenindeki ilişkilerin seyrini değiştirme imkanına sahip değildir. Öyle ki, olumlu söylemler Türkiye-Fransa ilişkilerinde normalleşme sürecini desteklese de, eski konular yine rol çalmaya devam eder. Ermeni meselesi ile ilgili Fransa Ulusal Meclisi'nde gündeme gelen yasa tasarıları bu konunun Fransa iç politikasında her zaman varlığını ve önemini koruyarak Türkiye'nin canını sıkacağı belirgindir. Hollande döneminde Türkiye'de yaşanan belli gelişmeler Türkiye'deki demokratik ortam ile birlikte ülkenin AB kriterlerini yerine getirme konusundaki motivasyonu sorgulanır olmuştur. Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinde yaşanan yavaşlama neticesinde de Türkiye Fransa'nın gündemini fazla meşgul etmemeye başlamıştır denilebilir. Nitekim AB'nin kapısını çalan bir Türkiye görünmemektedir. Bu durum bir sonraki Cumhurbaşkanı Emmanuel Macron'un söylemleri için de bir zemin oluşturacaktır.

Emmanuel Macron'un galip çıktığı Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimleri öncesinde yürütülen siyasi kampanyalara bakıldığında Türkiye'nin gündemi o kadar meşgul etmediği görülür. Hollande dönemi itibariyle Türkiye'de yaşanan gelişmelere sorgulayıcı bir yaklaşım zaten ortaya çıkmıştır. Fransız gazetecilerin tutukluluk durumları, 2016 yılında gerçekleşen darbe girişimi gibi gelişmeler, Türkiye'nin AB

ile olan ilişkilerindeki yavaşlamayla birleştğinde Türkiye ile olan ilişkiler AB sürecinin dışında değerlendirilmeye başlanmıştır. Macron'un Cumhurbaşkanlığı görevine gelmesiyle (2017) Türkiye ve Fransa ilişkilerinde büyük bir değişiklik gözlemlenmez. Ancak söylem açısından bakıldığında Macron'un mesajları daha doğrudan ancak Sarkozy'nin aksine olumlu çağrışımı olan bir dil kullanarak iletir. , Macron'a göre, Türkiye'nin geleceğinin Avrupa ile birlikte sağlanması doğrudan bir katılım yolundan ziyade daha farklı bir çerçevede -ortaklık veya işbirliği aracılığıyla, sağlanabilir.

Macron'un seçim kampanyasında Ermeni meselesi hususunda 24 Nisan'ı anma günü olarak ilan edeceğini belirtmesinin ardından, göreve geldiğinde bu sözünü tutarak gerekli yasal düzenlemelerin yapılması, Türkiye karşıtlığı olarak değil, iç politika manevrası olarak görülebilir. Nitekim, AB sürecine yoğun bir şekilde atıfta bulunulduğu daha önceki Fransız cumhurbaşkanları döneminde, sözde Ermeni soykırımının “soykırım” olarak Türkiye tarafından kabul edilmesi talebi bir şekilde öne çıkmaktayken, Macron söyleminde söz konusu meseleyi Türkiye'ye bağlamıyor görünür. Konuyla ilgili yasal düzenlemelerin Türkiye tarafında Sarkozy döneminde olduğu gibi ekonomik önlemlerde karşılık bulmaması da dikkat çekicidir. İki ülkenin ilişkileri AB süreci dışında tutmayı ve özellikle ekonomik düzlemde geliştirmeyi hedefledikleri söylenebilir. Dolayısıyla, Macron yönetiminin 1,5 senelik zaman dilimindeki Türkiye ilişkileri gözlemlendiğinde, Türkiye'nin AB ile ilişkilerinin ivme kazanmaması durumunda konuşulan konuların yakın gelecekte aynı şekilde cereyan edeceği varsayılabilir. Elbette, AB sürecinden bağımsız olarak, Türkiye-Fransa ilişkilerinde her zaman öne çıkacak olan ve Türkiye'nin AB süreciyle bağlantısız bir şekilde ele almak/çözmek isteyeceği bir konu olarak Ermeni meselesi gündemdeki yerini de tutmaya devam edecektir.

Dördüncü Bölüm, siyasi liderlerin hedef kitlesi olan kamuoyunu inceler. Yukarıda belirtildiği üzere, bazı konuların varlığını neden sürdüreceğini ve gündeme gelmeyecek olmasa bile varlıklarını sürdüreceği olan bakış açılarının neler olduğunu tespit etmek, ileriye dönük olarak daha doğru öngörülerde bulunmayı sağlayacaktır. Fransa siyasa kültürü dikkate alındığında, kamuoyunun liderler nezdinde önemli bir değerlendirme kalemi olduğu görülür. Kitleyi etkilemek kadar, kitlenin desteğini

almak her siyasi lider için elbette önemlidir. Ancak Fransa örneğinde, toplumu oluşturan kitlelerin yeri geldiğinde alınan kararların geri çekilmesi için taleplerini iletme hususunda daha aktif bir politika izlediklerini söylemek mümkündür. Bu durumda, üçüncü tarafların da, kendilerini etkileyebilecek bir kamuoyu oluşumu ihtimaline karşın aynı liderlerin kadar hassasiyet geliştirmeli ve hedef kitleyi incelemelidir. Türkiye siyasi arenasında ve medyada genel eğilim Fransa'nın yaklaşımlarını değerlendirirken daha çok resmî düzeydeki söylemleri okumaktır. Elbette ekonomi gibi, belli "kurtarılmış alanlar" içerisinde alınan kararlar için siyasi liderlerin doğrudan hamle yetkileri olduğu varsayıldığında, öncelikli olarak onların söylem ve kararlarına odaklanılabilir. Ancak daha doğru bir okuma ve de daha çatışmalı alanları ilgilendiren kararların arka planını anlayabilmek için, karar alma süreçlerine etki eden farklı güçleri tespit etmek gerekir. Fransa örneğinde de, bu farklı güç ya da motivasyonlardan bir tanesi kamuoyudur.

Tez Fransız kamuoyunun Türkiye hakkında görüş ve eğilimleri incelenirken etki eden faktörlere yer verir. Bunlar kültürel, tarihsel, ekonomik ve kavramsal faktörlerdir. Fransız kamuoyu mercek altına alınırken önce Fransız vatandaşlık kavramının incelenmesi belirli bir çerçeveye çizmekte yardımcı olur. Fransız vatandaşlığının kavramsal tanımı farklı dönemlerde yaşanan toplumsal olayların değerlendirilmesinde de önemli bir arka plan oluşturur. Bu vatandaşlık tanımı kişileri birey olarak öngörürken, her türlü dinsel ve etnik referansları bertaraf etmeyi amaçlar.

2005 yılında Paris banliyölerinde çıkan olaylar, türban yasası, dünya genelinde artmakta olan İslamofobi gibi etmenlerin de etkisiyle vatandaşlık kavramının uygulandığı kamusal ve bireysel alanlardaki başarısı tartışılır. Bu bir nevi Fransızların Fransa imajı nezdinde kimlik krizine sebep olur. Yine çoğunluğu Müslüman ve/veya göçmen olan toplulukların entegrasyonunda gözlemlenen çatlaklar sebebiyle, AB'ye ya da AB üyeliği aracılığıyla Fransa'ya gelmesi muhtemel benzer yeni grupların, demokrasi ve laiklikle özdeşleştirilen toplumsal-yasal/kavramsal düzene uyum sağlayabilme ihtimallerinin geniş çapta sorgulandığı görülür. İçeride yaşanan bu sorgulamaların Türkiye'ye bakış açısını etkilediği ve AB-Türkiye geleceği hakkında fikir beyan ederken sanki Fransa'nın bahsi geçen

gruplarla olan ilişkisine dair hassasiyetler yansıtılır. Nitekim, Fransa'daki Türk kökenli vatandaşların, dini inançlarından bağımsız olarak, çoğunlukla diğer Müslüman topluluklarla bir tutulduğu gerçeği vardır. Diğer referans noktaların biri olan Türkiye'nin yüksek nüfusu burada da kendini gösterir. Çoğunluğu Müslüman olan yüksek bir nüfusun AB'ye entegrasyonu nasıl mümkün olacaktır? Bu Müslüman kimlik özelliğine atıf, Avrupa ve özellikle Fransız siyaset kültürüyle özdeşleştirilen laiklik kavramının Türk devlet ve de toplum sistemindeki yerini de sorguladır.

Kamuoyunda Türkiye'nin AB üyeliğini değerlendirilirken en fazla ve de en kolay şekilde atıfta bulunulan kavramlar coğrafi konum, ekonomi ve nüfus olarak öne çıkar. Türkiye'nin kendi bakış açısıyla değerlendirdiğinde oldukça olumlu gibi görünen "köprü" niteliği ve önemli bölgelere yakınlığı, tehlikeli bölgelere yakınlığı açısından Fransa tarafından olumsuz olarak nitelendirilir. Nüfus oranı, hem ekonomik açıdan -işsizliğin artabilmesi ya da AB bütçesi üzerindeki muhtemel yükü, hem de kültürel uyumsuzluk açısından değerlendirilir. Bu tür algıların varlığı Türkiye hakkındaki görüşler üzerinde uzun vadeli etkiye sahiptir.

Kamuoyu ile çok açık bir şekilde bağlantılandırılmazsa da, siyasi ve entelektüel tartışma platformlarını çokça etkilemesi ve de Ermeni diasporasının Fransa toplumu içinde etki bakımından ağırlığını göstermesi dolayısıyla, tez bu bölümde Ermeni meselesine ayrı ve özel olarak yer verir. Tez, Ermeni diasporasının Fransa siyasal arenasındaki etkinliğini ölçebilmek adına yakın geçmişe ve Ermeni terör örgütlerinin faaliyetlerinin Fransa tarafından nasıl değerlendirildiğine göz atar. Fransız Meclisi'nde alınan kararlar, Türkiye-Fransa arasındaki ilişkilerin her zaman gerginleşmesine sebep olmuş, bazen de Türkiye'nin önüne AB üyeliğinin gayriresmî bir kriteri olarak sunulur. Ermeni meselesinin Fransız yasama alanındaki çıktılarını değerlendirirken, Fransa'nın benzer hususlardaki tavrı ile hukuki zeminde karşılaştırır.

Tez Türkiye-Fransa ilişkilerine, bu ilişkinin farklı bir boyut kazanmasına sebep olan Türkiye'nin AB yolculuğu üzerinden bakmayı hedefler. Bu bağlamda, en hararetli tartışmaların yaşandığı AB Helsinki Zirvesi'ni inceleyeceği dönemin başlangıcı

olarak alır. Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği hakkındaki argümanlar daha çok liderler tarafından lanse edilir gibi görülmektedir. Tez bunun arka planındaki düşüncelerin ve etmenlerin ne olduğunu ve ne dereceye kadar etki yapabildiğini belirlemeyi amaçlar. Liderlerin partiler nezdindeki siyasi yapılanmalarından ziyade kişisel görüşlerine ve söylemlerine yer verilmesinin sebebi, aynı parti içinde yer almış siyasi figürlerin farklı siyasi gruplanmalara kayabiliyor olması ya da farklı görüşlere sahip olmasından kaynaklı olarak, tez kamuoyu ile olan ilişkilerinin etkisini dikkate almıştır. Siyasi ya da ideolojik geleneğin etkilerini ölçebilmek için tezin araştırma boyutu derinleştirilebilir ve liderler ile kamuoyu incelemelerinden ziyade doğrudan siyasi partilere ve yapılanmalara odaklanılabilir. Bu doğrultuda, siyaset bilimi ve sosyoloji gibi alanların araçlarından yararlanılması ile birlikte, dış politika analizinde konuya disiplinler arası çerçevede bütünsel bakma fırsatı doğabilir.

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