LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

**TURKEY'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION:
THE PROSPECTS OF A EUROPEAN TURKEY**

By

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*To the soul of my father who taught me that education
is the key to a successful life*

To Professor Jennífer Skulte-Ouaíss

Turkey's Accession to the European Union: The Prospects of a European Turkey

Majd Hajali

Abstract

The accession process of Turkey into the European Union has been a long and drawn out process. Ever since Turkey and the EEC signed an agreement, Turkey was lead to believe that it will be granted membership into the European Union. While there are obvious religious and cultural differences, Turkey had made large strides with regards to becoming more in line with the European Union's ideology and standards. Turkey has suffered from the fact that there are so-called "brakemen" states, which still have been acting as a hindrance with regards to the smooth flow of the process. These states have objections to Turkish accession due to issues that they claim should be resolved before Turkey is allowed to join the European Union. Furthermore, they note that there are serious economic, geopolitical and cultural aspects that need to be looked at in order for Turkey to be able to fully integrate into the Union. This being said, the European Union has made a public commitment to allow Turkey into the Union based on the founding principles of the Union and the fact that the Union has characterized Turkey as being "European". If the Union is to hold back on the promises that it has made to Turkey, it runs the risk of losing credibility among the international community. This paper aims to understand the problems and hindrances that have plagued Turkey's accession and to analyze them within a framework. Given that there has been much research done on the topic, this paper aims to add its own new contribution through its analysis of the various issues affecting accession as well as analysing the structural and intergovernmental problems within the EU that have also impacted its stance towards Turkey.

Keywords: The European Union, Turkey, Accession hindrances, EU Member-States, Europeanization.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CHP	Republican People's Party
CU	Customs Union
EC	The European Commission
EEC	The European Economic Committee
EU	The European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Turkey's membership in the EU will not be determined solely by its ability to meet the accession criteria, but rather influenced by a variety of factors. This has been discussed by a number of scholars as well as in more mainstream public forums. Some of those factors have to do with Turkey's ability to meet the Copenhagen criteria that were laid down in 1993.¹ Other factors are correlated with the EU's institutional setup, member states preferences, and EU public opinion.²

In 1995, Turkey was the first country to set up a customs union agreement with the EU, following the proposal of the EC after its rejection of Turkey's accession to the Community in 1989. In 2001, the Turkish Grand National Assembly adopted 34 amendments to the 1982 Constitution that are associated with series of political reforms.³ They include the abolition of death penalty, the possibility of broadcasting and education in other languages than Turkish, the increase in civilian control over political life and freedom of expression. All of these were geared toward meeting EU accession requirements.

Moreover, the reforms included the abolition of State Security Courts, the supremacy of international human rights conventions over domestic law, now enshrined in the constitution, the fight against torture and ill treatment as well as the

¹For further information, check the conditions for enlargement <http://ec.europa.eu>

²Müftüler-Bac, M. (2002). Turkey in the EU's enlargement process: obstacles and challenges. *Mediterranean Politics*, 7 (2), 79-95.

³Delegation of the European Union to Turkey.

strengthening of gender equality in the constitution and the civil code. As a result, in 2004, the Commission concluded that Turkey adequately fulfilled the political criteria, which was a key condition to start the accession negotiations. In addition, Turkey has steadily and successfully pursued economic reforms. Its economy has developed significantly in the recent years due to political stability and the implemented economic policies. The EC then its successor, the EU, has acknowledged Turkey's dynamic economies in many reports.⁴ Furthermore, Turkey's willingness and efforts to meet the Copenhagen criteria are in themselves national development goals. In October 2005, the screening process concerning the analytical examination of the *Acquis communautaire* started with the launch of the accession negotiations. It is worth mentioning that the negotiating framework for Turkey stated in its principles that "these negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand."⁵

It is apparent that Turkey's accession process goes beyond meeting the *Acquis* to include public attitudes as well as member states preferences, however. Meeting the Copenhagen criteria does not seem to presage immediate Turkish the membership in the EU; thus, it is necessary and essential to understand the overall enlargement process and the factors that shape it.⁶

This thesis delineates and assesses the obstacles facing Turkish accession to the EU. Such assessment makes clear that it is not solely the fault of Turkey that it has yet to gain membership in the EU but that a number of EU member states are working to hinder Turkey's membership. To this end, the thesis investigates the

⁴European Commission reports.

⁵Negotiating Framework. (2005, October 3). Retrieved from ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accesion_process.

⁶Müftüler-Bac, M. (2002). Turkey in the EU's enlargement process: obstacles and challenges. *Mediterranean Politics*, 7 (2), 79-95.

main challenges correlated with some of the member states, such as Germany, Greece, and Cyprus as well as some drawbacks of Turkish membership that EU member states fear.

The most four crucial hindrances to EU membership that Turkey is facing are economic, geographical, political, and religious. The thesis analyzes each of the obstacles leading to the conclusion that Turkey is not welcomed in the European club as a full member state, regardless of the fulfillment of the Copenhagen Criteria, due to the significant differences between its social identity, norms, values, lifestyle and culture from that of the EU. It is worth mentioning that Turkey is expected and required to have a positive role in settling its disputes with some of the EU member states even when they are not mentioned as preconditions in the Copenhagen Criteria. Moreover, the decline in the Turkish public support with regard to its country's membership in the EU does not reflect a positive attitude towards the accession.

A more detailed analysis will be illustrated in this thesis to explain the reasons behind the decline in Turkish public support for EU accession. Furthermore, the opposition in the European public opinion for Turkish membership especially in Germany, Luxemburg, Austria, and Cyprus reflects the unwelcoming EU attitude for a European Turkey. Euro-barometer reports show that most of the opposition come from EU member states with high percentage of Turkish immigrants; this may imply that the Turkish migrants are facing difficulties integrating into the society. To this end, the Europeans want to safeguard what they view as their culture, social identity, norms, and values. Finally, this study demonstrates Turkey's new strategies for increased stature and ongoing development by moving away from its

overwhelming focus on the EU. It also highlights its current tendency to play and promote a major role in Asia, being “a self-standing regional hub” by itself.

This paper aims to understand these various aspects surrounding the lagging accession process. There are many underlying reasons as to why the process has been moving at snail’s pace, and it is important to understand the underlying causes. This paper aims to do so by reviewing some of the previous literature that has been written on the subject, coming up with its own opinions on the different issues affecting accession, and finally giving its own idea as to where the future of the accession talks are headed.

This thesis contends that the Europeans, on the national level and EU level, are concerned about the process of the Turkish integration into the European society. The differences in social identities, values, lifestyle, mind set, norms, language and culture are the main concerns for the Europeans and the EU member states.

The Europeans’ fear of a Turkish “invasion” of their countries as well as of their norms and culture is the major reason behind their opposing Turkey as an EU member state. Based on this, the Europeans are attempting to protect their collective interests and social identities, hence, their sovereignty as identities and preferences of individuals and member governments influence institutions. In this view, the reluctance in the European Union to accept Turkey as a member state is being reflected in the Eurobarometer’s reports, generating the Turkish population’s resentment by making them feel unwelcome and unwanted in the European Union.

The European Union’s borders have moved southeastwards and this has given us a real world experiment on the domestic impact of the EU. Turkey, as well as the Balkan countries, have obtained an accession perspective. Ever since Turkey

gained its accession perspective, studies dealing with the EU-Turkey relations have stretched the concept of Europeanization to cover a wide range of empirical research. The main question posed by this is whether or not Europeanization approaches account for the differential impact of the EU on Turkey. The normative power of the EU has been developed over fifty years through a series of declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions that seek to promote five core norms: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and human rights. Turkey's conformity to these norms, and whether or not they are a source of hindrance for accession into the EU will be analyzed. Many nations within the union do not believe that Turkey has met these conditions due to various conflicts that still exist both within Turkey and abroad. For example, many nations have pointed to the treatment for the Turkish government towards the Kurds as an abuse of human rights.

Proponents of Turkish accession argue that the nation is a key regional power with a large economy and has the second largest military force in NATO. This will enhance the EU's position as a global geostrategic player given Turkey's geographic location and economic, political, cultural and historic ties in regions with large natural resources that are in the immediate vicinity of the EU's geopolitical sphere of influence.

Turkey's favorable position for conducting foreign affairs in the Middle East combined with the positive light Turkey's membership would shed on both the EU and Turkey itself indicates the promising impact Turkey's membership can have on the strength of EU political influence in the Middle East (Everts, 2004). Although the EU has a commitment to the various countries in this region, Turkey's historical

and cultural ties with the Islamic world allow it to have a deeper understanding of the Middle East (Fotiou & Triantaphyllou, 2010).

It is vital to understand the long application process for Turkey's joining the European Union in order to help put the issues of today into perspective. The application process is not a new issue, but is something that has its roots over 50 years ago. Turkey's strategic position, placed between Europe and the Middle East, has meant that the country has long seen itself as a nation that can get the best of both worlds (East and West). The application process had evolved into what it is today through a series of meetings, commitments and agreements.

1.2 History of Turkey and its Application Process

Turkey as it is known to today is the much smaller ethnically Turkish successor state of the multinational Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was an Islamic Empire that had great influence in the region in the fifteenth and the sixteenth century and its rule lasted for over six hundred years. Modern Turkey was established after the fall of the empire and the War of Turkish Independence, after which the country was ruled by the military general Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Ataturk had a vision of a modern, European-oriented Turkey and he put numerous reforms into place in order to achieve this goal. During the Cold War, Turkey aligned itself with the United States and NATO; the country took its first steps towards European integration in 1959.

In 1959, Turkey submitted its application to join the European Economic Committee (EEC), which resulted in the signing of the Ankara Agreement. In September of 1963, Turkey also signed the Association Agreement, which was to put in on the path of full membership into the European Economic Committee. The

official application for the EEC came in 1987. However, the nation was asked to wait in order for a better climate to develop because of the fact that there were political problems in Turkey that coincided with the launch of the Single Market across Europe. In 2002, at the Copenhagen European Council, it was noted that if Turkey wanted to become a full member, it would have to meet the requirements of the Copenhagen Criteria by 2004.

The Council had presented its findings that the Copenhagen Criteria had been met and that accession talks with Turkey should begin. This was accepted by the European Union and negotiations were set to take place in 2005 to that end. However, this did not mean that Turkey was automatically to receive full membership. Turkey was required to also meet the European Commission's requirements on all of the chapters of the *Acquis communautaire* (which number 35), and then the nation had to go through process whereby the current member states would have to unanimously vote in favour of allowing Turkey join the Union. Turkey's bid today can be said to be hanging in the balance. This is because the very slow pace of accession had brought out a sense of frustration with the Turkish public, whose patience has been stretched as is depicted by the declining levels of satisfaction with the process that will be discussed later. Furthermore, many issues and obstacles currently stand in the way, which Turkey has had to focus on in order to move the process forward.

1.3 Interaction with Europe

Turkey has been interacting with Europe for many years and this is evident in various agreements signed since 1963, starting with the Ankara Agreement.⁷ In October 2004, the European Union took the step of recognizing Turkey, with a predominantly Muslim population, as a country that had a chance in joining the European Union in the future. By this point, it had taken Turkey a very long time to be offered negotiations on joining the European Union, and it is quite clear that Turkish membership will take the longest amount of time of any of the new member states in the Union. There are a variety of reasons for this that this paper will delve into, but the facts remain clear. Turkey still has a long road ahead in its desire to obtain membership in the European Union.

With formal relationships between the two bodies commencing in 1963, the relationship between Turkey and the European Union has had its fair share of ups and downs. The 1995 signing of a Customs Agreement allowed for the deepening of ties between the two bodies. Turkey initially had a bid to join the European Union turned down in 1987 but the nation was offered a conditional membership candidacy in 1999, with the idea that the nation had to undergo a rigid process of reformation both economically and politically, and only when these reforms were complete would the Union begin talking seriously about Turkey joining the Union. Finally, in December 2000, the Accession Partnership was set in place and the talks about Turkish accession into the European Union officially began towards the end of 2004. Membership status was granted to Turkey initially but the process of this was far from straight forward with many obstacles underpinning the difficulties that

⁷The Ankara Agreement aimed towards Turkey's accession into the EEC. Its importance came from its initiation of a process creating a Customs Union. This agreement was the first interaction between Turkey and Europe.

Turkey was to face in its desire to join the European Union. The Union had stated that Turkey would be judged based on the same criteria that other potential members had to meet in order to join, and that there were six key areas that needed to be reformed and improved in order for the country to be allowed into the Union. The six areas that needed reform and improvement were: human rights as well as minority rights, political and economic reform, Turkey's historically strained relationship with Greece, the removal of any objection to Cyprus joining the Union, support for the mediation efforts of the European Union on the Cyprus issue and lastly, for Turkey to engage in talks with Greek Cypriots on the issue of membership in the European Union (Yesilada, 2002).

Ever since Turkey was excluded from membership talks during the Luxemburg summit in 1997, it was the only nation that had a Customs Agreement that was not given pre-membership status. In addition to this, Turkey was angered by the inclusion of Greek Cyprus in the list of countries that was given pre-membership status, and this has been one of the major hurdles that the nation has been facing in its accession talks (Yesliada, 2002). Because of this, Turkey vetoed the European Security and Defence Identity proposal at NATO's Washington summit in 1999.

As noted before, Turkey's membership bid has been moving at an extremely slow rate, which has meant that very little ground has been made in their accession bid. The European Union itself has stressed that Turkey can expect its bid to be the longest of any of the other potential new members and has stated that the nation should not expect anything to happen before 2014 in order to allow for the "smooth

integration and to avoid endangering the achievements of over fifty years of European Integration” (European Commission 2004)⁸.

There have been several economic and political issues which have threatened Turkey’s accession bid and slowed it down quite considerably, however the Turkish government has regularly voiced its interest on maintaining its goal of joining the European Union and fulfilling all the requirements that would allow it to do so (*Irish Times*, 2008)⁹. An example of this was shown when the nation appointed Egemen Bağış to be the full time negotiator in Turkey’s accession bid and this has shown that the nation has been taking the issue seriously as they view the future of Turkey as being a member of the Union (*Irish Times*, 2008)¹⁰.

This being said, the slow process of Turkey’s bid has raised several important questions. Many believe that the Turkish bid is subject to unreasonable requests by the European Union on Turkey that are not in line with the requirements of other nations. Furthermore, the European Union has called on the Turkish government to speed up its reforms on a regular basis and Turkey itself has regularly asked for the European Union to stop slowing down its accession bid (Agence Europe, 2008)¹¹. Turkish-EU relations have been historically mixed in nature, and based on the unstable nature of their relationship, as well as keeping in mind the many obstacles that the Turkish government still needs to overcome, the question must be asked whether or not the speeding up of the accession process is a viable option.

⁸European Commission. (2004, October 6). Turkey: The Commission recommends opening accession negotiations, <http://www.europa.eu>, COM(2004): p656

⁹Turkey ‘fully determined’ to pursue EU membership. (2008, November 5). *Irish Times*. Retrieved from irishtimes.com

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Agence Europe. (2008, December 20). “Ankara calls for accession talks to be speeded up, but 2009 likely to be difficult,”

One key area of note is the fact that the Turkish public seem to be losing their patience with the process, and the interest on joining the EU has generally been declining. For example, statistics in 2008 showed that during the spring of that year, 49% of Turkish population supported the idea while in the autumn of that very same year, that figure had dropped to 42% (European Commission, 2008)¹². These statistics coupled with the fact that there seems to be a large amount of scepticism between many of the current member states in the European Union has meant that the outlook does not generally look positive for the faster pace of negotiation talks between the Union and Turkey. Another question that should be asked is that, since the speed of the negotiations has been declining, and the obstacles that Turkey needs to overcome are seemingly growing as time goes by, then why is the whole process still an ongoing one with all of these problems in place?

This paper aims to identify the source of why the Turkish bid has been slowing down in the way that it has been and why there has been scepticism from many of the current member states in the Union. The research analyzes the economic and political challenges that Turkey is facing in its accession bid while touching on key relationships between Turkey and other members that have hindered the progress of these talks. As already alluded to, the reasons that the Turkish bid has stalled have not only been economic and political in nature. There are also geopolitical and religious issues that will be addressed. The paper will also build on existing literature on the subject, delving into the important economic, social and political issues that are affecting Turkey's accession bid. Much research and analysis has been done on the issue, and the paper plans to overview some of

¹²European Commission. (2008). "Standard Eurobarometer 69: Executive Report-Turkey.". p3

the works that were previously done. Using the paper's framework, the conclusions will be drawn from the different literature on the subject while building on them.

1.4 Research Question

There is a significant body of literature on how and why Turkey is not likely to become a member of the EU, and this paper aims to build upon previous work by undertaking a systemic analysis of political, economic and religious hindrances that might affect Turkish accession. To this end, the main question posed by this paper is: What are the factors that best explain the challenges Turkey is facing in its EU accession bid? The thesis will focus on analyzing the reasons help better grasp EU's reluctance about Turkey's membership. These reasons encompass geopolitical, economic and religious concerns as well as the impact of the EU as a cohesive power and the role of turkey's relations with some of the member-states. The focus of the paper will center around the below topics, that have widely been seen as being the key obstacles in the way of Turkish membership.

Regarding economic issues, Turkey is looking forward to having "access to social and regional funds, the Common Agriculture Policy, and free mobility of labor" after joining the EU. However, the EU states, taking into consideration the setbacks they are facing with the economically weak states, are not willing to bail out another country when facing any setbacks or financial crisis. Moreover, they are concerned about the relative underdevelopment of Turkey's economy compared to the economies of EC/EU members as well as Turkey's high rate of population growth. The latter issue is perceived as a potentially serious problem because of free labor movement among EU members. Closely related to the concern about there being too many Turkish workers for too few jobs is the social problem of integrating

those workers into 'European' culture. Others fear a growing Turkey inside of the EU. That is, while it doesn't have the strongest economy today, it very well might have the strongest one in the near future and then it will want to 'dominate' the EU from the inside.

Considering the geographic hindrances, the most serious issue is Turkey's conflict with Greece. These two entities' main problem is their dispute over the island of Cyprus, which dates back to 1974. With Greece as a current EU member, it has sought to use the accession talks to force resolution of the problem to its benefit. Starting in 1974, Turkish troops occupied the northeastern part of the island in response to a coup in Cyprus backed by Greek military junta. Turkey justified its intervention as a mean to protect the Turkish minority (20 percent of the population), which felt threatened by the Greek majority's proposals for unification with Greece.

Another issue is Turkey's dispute with Greece over territorial rights and interests in the Aegean Sea. Although both Greece and Turkey are *de jure* allies in NATO, their conflicting claims brought them to the brink of war in 1986 and 1987. A fundamental source of contention is exploration rights to minerals, primarily oil, beneath the Aegean Sea. International law recognizes the right of a country to explore the mineral wealth on its own continental shelf. Greece and Turkey, however, have been unable to agree on what constitutes the Aegean continental shelf. Turkey defines the Aegean shelf as a natural prolongation of the Anatolian coast, whereas Greece claims that every one of the more than 2,000 of its islands in the Aegean has its own shelf. As all member states should agree on the opening and closing of each chapter Turkey needs to fulfill, Greece uses its power as a member

in the EC and then the EU to hinder its progress by blocking some beneficial legislations to be issued by the EC.

Moving to the political challenges, Turkey is required to compromise regarding the Aegean Sea as well as the Cyprus issue. As long as those two issues are not solved, Turkey seemingly cannot gain membership to the EU. The crucial issue with Cyprus is that Turkey does not want to formally recognize it as an independent country. This renunciation came as result of the unfulfilled EU promises to facilitate trade with Northern Cyprus as well as Greece's disapproval to accept the Annan Plan in 2002 that aimed at making Cyprus a federal state. Moreover, Turkey's rejection to allow Greek-Cypriot aircrafts and vessels into its ports and harbors resulted in the suspension of eight out of 35 negotiations chapters¹³.

Another issue that Turkey needs to solve is the Kurdish dilemma. Aligning with the EU accession criteria means giving more rights and freedoms to minorities, including the Kurds. As a result, the question of autonomy will be raised as it is considered one of their rights to self-determination. This approach will definitely endanger the national unity, putting Turkey's territorial integrity at stake.

One of the intensely debated issues that dominate the discussions over Turkey's bid to join the EU is the relationship between Turkey and Islam. However, Islam is not an issue of concern to Turkey, rather to the EU. Turkey's burden is limited to the Copenhagen Criteria. However, this problem, if it exists, concerns the EU as it is a matter of culture. It needs to decide whether its expansion is based on "Cultural Europe" or "New Europe". "New Europe" is an expanded Europe that is defined by universal norms of democracy and modernity, while "Cultural Europe" is

¹³European Commission, Progress Report, p.81

an entity that is defined by cultural and geographic boundaries (Daloglu, 2005). Moreover, the ethnic, religious, and historical aspects of Turkey emphasized its non-Christian and non-European character. As a result, it is left at the back of the accession queue while the Central and Eastern European Countries were able to jump the line, deemed as natural members of the European family (Erdogdu, 2002).

There has been strong opposition to Turkey's bid to join the EU from several nations. Several key EU members such as France and Germany have spoken out on Turkey's bid to join the EU for several reasons. The *Eurobarometer* has also shown that 59% of EU-27 citizens are against Turkey joining the EU, while only around 28% are in favour (European Commission, 2007). Turkey's refusal to acknowledge the Republic of Cyprus as the sole authority on the island is also a key point that hinders Turkish accession in the view of many.

There are differences between EU member states with regards to opinions and outlook on a variety of issues. The Union is a "hodge podge" of languages and cultures as opposed to a melting pot. These differences are highlighted in differing viewpoints between nations on Turkish accession. For example, nations such as Greece, France and Germany have been vehemently opposed to the idea, while nations such as Romania have generally been for the idea. This lack of cohesion between the Union was recently highlighted by the opposing views on how to tackle the Greek debt crisis. David Cameron, Prime Minister of Britain recently said on a visit to Turkey that he would "fight" for Turkish membership and was "angry" at the slow pace of negotiations. These differences in viewpoints highlight the lack of a single vision by the Union, with countries such as France and Germany attempting to divert Turkish attention away from accession by means of offering incentives.

1.5 Methodology

The case study method can be used to explain the dependent and independent variables involved in analyzing Turkey's case. This method is an empirical inquiry that examines a real-life situation. It includes gathering data and determining the analysis techniques that best answer the research questions.

I will use both qualitative and quantitative research methods to explicate the obstacles Turkey is facing in its bid to join the EU; I will be explaining the major reasons behind the EU's reluctance to invite Turkey to join such as, geography, politics, economics, religion, cohesion within the union and Turkey's relationship with EU members. Moreover, I will include surveys to illustrate Turkish and European public opinion with regard to the accession to the EU.

Tackling the new political variables in the region illustrate the change in Turkey's policies and strategies, moving towards Asia and the Middle East. However, this does not really mean that Turkey is going to abandon its pursuit to join the EU; what matters for Turkey is the process itself regardless of the outcome.

The methodology chosen helps to describe, analyse and demonstrate the challenges Turkey is facing. Also, it highlights the reforms and developments Turkey is required to make whether internally regarding its domestic affairs or externally with respect to its foreign affairs and settling disputes with some of the EU member states.

As previously noted, this thesis is based on a review of previous literature and diverse secondary data. Public opinion discourse is described in this research on both national and EU level. Moreover, EU assessments, conventions and protocols as well as newspapers are being examined and analyzed.

In addition to the description of the relatively straightforward reasons why Turkey is unlikely to be offered membership in the EU, there has been significant amount of discussion on the EU as a normative power that is reluctant to accept the idea of Turkey joining the EU. This point of view looks to the domestic challenges within Turkey that are a reflection of normative differences between it and the EU, such as human rights, protection of minorities, and religion. Furthermore, the most crucial international issues that may be of an impact on Turkey's accession process – based on previous research and literature – are examined: Turkey's role in international security, economic challenges with regard to free movement and migration as well as budgetary and competition issues, challenges by some EU member states that are shifting Turkey towards the ME, in addition to the decline in the public opinion that is demonstrated in the *Eurobarometer* reports. Moreover, it is worth discussing and evaluating the important role of the opposed EU member states for a European Turkey such as Germany, France, Greece, and Cyprus – as key states in prolonging the negotiations. To this end, this thesis analyzes and focuses on the most crucial, yet controversial issues in Turkey's negotiations process.

1.6 Map of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. After this introduction of the thesis, the second chapter reviews the key scholarly and EU-prepared literature on the topic of Turkish EU accession. This is followed by a chapter on major domestic issues affecting accession. Here we look at the alleged Turkish violations of Human Rights and the protection of minorities, particularly the Kurds; this chapter also examines the four key rights that Turkey is required to improve and protect. Moreover, it tackles the relationship between Islam, Turkey, and the EU as well as its impact on

the accession negotiations. The fourth chapter analyzes the different regional and international issues that are affecting Turkish accession into the EU such as Turkey and its role in international security. Then it moves on to discuss the economic Copenhagen Criteria focusing on the issues that concern the EU including free movement and immigration as well as budgetary and competition issues. Challenges by EU as a normative power and standing conflicts that Turkey has with some key EU nations that play a role in slowing down the accession – Greece, Germany, France, and Cyprus – will be examined in depth. Furthermore, this chapter delves into the question of whether or not the EU is a cohesive entity and how much this cohesion, or lack of, is likely to play a role in being a hindrance to Turkish accession. It also highlights the decline in the Turkish and European public support for a European Turkey as well as Turkey's new orientation towards the Middle East. The last chapter restates the central research question guiding the thesis before turning to a summary of arguments made and finally arriving at an answer to the research question.

The next chapter focuses on the analysis of previous research done on the subject matter. As mentioned before, one of the aims of this paper is to review some of the literature and research conducted on the issue, and draw its own conclusions based on these studies, highlighting the important underlying factors that are affecting Turkey's bid process. While many studies have been conducted on the topic of Turkish accession to the EU, a few important works were chosen in order to focus on the primary issues affecting the process.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Many researchers have examined Turkey's bid to join the EU. They have looked at the improvements and developments Turkey has achieved since the accession negotiations started. After a discussion of the previous research done on Turkey's accession to the EU, an explanation about the "community trap" that entangled the EU into an obligation of accepting Turkey in the EU will be analysed in this chapter. This leads to the commitments made by the EU to Turkey when it recognized the Turkish fulfillment of the political reforms required to start the screening process. However, the opposing perspectives of EU member states on the national level indicate the impact of Europeanization and the reasons behind the slowdown of Turkish accession talks. Closely related to this are the perceived challenges of fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and the accession chapters on the path to a European Turkey. In addition, this chapter provides a reflection of the support for the bid from some of the EU member states, which is important in illustrating the lack of a single vision within the EU. Lastly, the relationship between democracy on one hand and terrorism and the system on the other is explained and analyzed in depth in this chapter.

2.2 Previous Research

Reviewing the existing literature, many scholars (e.g. Diez and Buzan) discuss the challenges facing Turkey in its bid. However, they concentrate on the security issue as the most important hindrance. Also, as it is explained in this chapter, some researchers argue that Turkey will not get a full membership, rather a “privileged partnership” or a special flexible relationship that can get Turkey closer to the EU as an associate but not a full member. On the other hand, some hope and positive attitude are still reflected in some of the literature as being discussed here regardless of the decline in the Turkish public support, which its reasons are analyzed in chapter five.

One of the studies that was published, “The European Union and Turkey” by Diez and Buzan in 1999, took a negative view when it came to Turkey’s future prospects in joining the European Union. The outlook of the paper was pessimistic for a variety of reasons but one of the key factors was the fact that the paper was written during a particularly difficult period for the Turkish bid. At that point, Turkey was “the only country that had signed a CU agreement with the EU and at the same time kept outside the Union’s membership plans”¹⁴

Also, there was increasing tension with regard to the fact that the Greek side of Cyprus was included in the membership list and Turkey took a hard line when it came to this issue because it perceived the move as the Union disregarding “international treaties covering the establishment of the Cyprus Republic”¹⁵.

The research also focused on a key point that was of major concern to many European Union citizens, which was the question of whether or not Turkey was

¹⁴Yesilada, B. A. (2002). Turkey’s Candidacy for EU Membership. *The Middle East Journal*, 56 (1), p. 94-111

¹⁵ Ibid. 49

“European” enough to join the Union. This was dubbed as somewhat of an identity issue for the Turkey, which was heavily focused on Turkey’s cultural, historical and geopolitical ties to the Arab and Muslim world.¹⁶ The research argued that Turkey has come a long way in adopting many Western and European values and cultural characteristics, which has put the nation more in line with the economic, political and cultural values that are present in the European Union. Therefore, Diez and Buzan argue that the notion that Turkey is not “European” enough is an invalid argument and cannot be seen as a reason for refusing membership¹⁷.

A central theme that was brought up and analyzed by the study done by Diez and Buzan was that “a central difficulty lies in the way of EU-Turkey relationship penetrates deeply into the domestic politics of both sides.”¹⁸ Research has also focused on the internal affairs of the country and attempted to understand the affect that the whole westernization process would have in terms of whether or not it would bring the country closer to membership. However, it is clear to see from the study that one of the main issues that is of hindrance to Turkish accession is the issue of security. It is argued in the study that the geographical location of Turkey, which is in between the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Balkans means that Turkey is strategically located and therefore could be seen as a political “insulator”. Therefore, one of the sticky points if Turkey would eventually join the European Union would be that the position of “insulator” would effectively need to be abandoned which could ultimately become a security concern for the nation.

It is clear, though, that Turkey no longer wants to play this role as was depicted by the way Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan acted during the World

¹⁶Diez, T. & Buzan, B. (1999). The European Union and Turkey. *Survival*, 41 (1) p. 41.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.41

Economic Conference in Davos. By storming out of the meeting in protest of Israel's actions in Gaza, he set the tone for the way Turkey has been viewing its role in the region with disregard to the consequences that this could have with its international relationships.¹⁹ The research also recommends that full membership would not be ideal for a variety of reasons and that both Turkey and the European Union should come to a relationship agreement that is separate from the full membership that Turkey has been fighting for. They say that "for the EU, the main goal should be to develop Turkey as a close associate, and perhaps as a model for the flexible relationships it needs to develop with a whole set of states in the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe"²⁰. They authors believe that there are various ways in achieving this, primarily through existing forums and lines of communication such as the joint Parliamentary Committee that the EU and Turkey have. It is argued though, that for this to be affective and yield positive results, there is a need to view things in terms of a "broad zone of association" instead of the approach that has been used so far.²¹

It seems as though the pattern is similar when it comes to this issue as Turkey has been working hard in order to meet its obligations when it comes to the Copenhagen criteria. Therefore, it is difficult to classify Turkey as being a member or a non-member but rather in the broad association that Diez and Buzan have spoken about in their study.

With this being said, however, the current relationship between the Union and Turkey is set up in a way that does not necessarily facilitate a broadening of relationships based on principles that are outside the scope of Turkish membership

¹⁹Turkish PM given hero's welcome. (2009, January 30). *BBC News*. Retrieved from news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/davos/7859815.stm

²⁰Diez, T. & Buzan, B., "Turkey," p52.

²¹Ibid.

in the Union. This is because Turkey has regularly declared that its only interest lies in the membership that it had set out to achieve from the beginning of the talks and they are not willing to change their idea on the matter in the foreseeable future. The Turkish government has pressed ahead with fulfilling the requirements that it needs to fulfill in order to achieve this, and several government spokesmen, including the Prime Minister himself, have regularly spoken about the issue and the Turkish viewpoint.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the European Union has not evolved in the same manner that the study by Diez and Buzan had spoken about in their study. Even though the fact remains that there are several current members of the European Union that do not participate in the Union's vision entirely, such as the United Kingdom and its refusal to adopt the common currency, the fact remains that the European Union has still been using the "inside/outside" view when it comes to membership. That is to say, those members are either inside the Union or outside and there is no middle ground on the matter.

While some researchers (e.g., LaGro & Jorgensen 2007) argue that the EU will not offer more than a privileged partnership to Turkey, many scholars are optimistic about the closure of the accession negotiations as mentioned above. To this end, the argument is shifted towards Turkey's current will to become an EU member and its national interests overall. Turkish and European public support play a major role regarding this point; survey data will be provided portraying the public opinion, based on several Euro-barometer reports. Germany, Austria, Luxemburg, Cyprus, France, and Belgium are among the countries with high percentage of opposition for Turkish membership. Gordon & Taspinar (2006), Domaniç (2007), and Petřková (2008) study the decline in the Turkish public support for EU

membership from approximately 70% before the accession negotiations started to 48% in 2009. Such a decline has been analyzed to be the outcome of the unjust conditions in comparison with other candidates, the publicized negative attitude of European leaders and politicians toward Turkey, as well as the lack of confidence in the EU (Müftüler-Bac 2006).

Furthermore, based on the new economic and political variables in the region, Turkey is seemingly moving away from the EU towards the Middle East and Islamic World, becoming (once again) a regional hub in itself (Bürgin 2010, Taspinar 2011, Ojanen & Torbakov 2009). However, Larrabee (2011) argues that Turkey's change in its engagement does not mean turning its back to the West, as Turkey still needs its ties to Europe.

2.3 Community Trap

One important question to be pondered is why the membership status was given to Turkey in light of the fact that there have been several options that were being tabled and discussed, such as the proposals that were spoken about by Diez and Buzan. Several researchers and scholars have attempted to answer this question. One such person is Schimmelfennig who has tackled the issue using his own "rhetorical action theory". According to him, there was somewhat of a "community trap" that occurred which came about due to the fact that "rhetorical commitment led to rhetorical entrapment"²². His argument is that rhetorical commitment is taken seriously in the Union due to the fact that the Union's main vision and philosophy is to bring together all of the liberal societies within Europe. He uses the fact that there

²²Schimmelfennig, "Community Trap," p66.

has been significant expansion in the Union when it comes to Eastern European countries as a basis for his argument. Furthermore, there were several treaties that were signed onto, such as the EEC founding treaty that was “determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe and call upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join their efforts”²³. This “ideal” that has been discussed is based on certain characteristics that are shared among several members in the Union such as the idea that economies should be liberal, and also that anti-Communist ideologies are an important core of the common views. Therefore, because the main objective of the Union was to commit to countries that shared this point of view and had the same ideologies, there was a rhetorical commitment made by the Union that it cannot simply go back on.

It is this commitment that Schimmelfennig calls the “community trap” that has led to the rhetorical entrapment. He argues that “the requirement of consistency applies both to the match between arguments and actions and to the match between arguments used at different times and in different contexts”²⁴. Therefore, the European Union must be able to maintain a level of consistency when it comes to the arguments and the actions that they make in order to remain a credible body.

However, there is a way for members of the Union to circumvent this issue, and this can be done by taking what has been said and using it to essentially “reinterpret” the information in order to suit their needs and use it to their advantage or bring up certain norms and values that support their interests and their preferences.²⁵ One important example of this that can be used is the “Europeanism” issue that Turkey has had to face. Even in this regard, the “trap” that was discussed

²³Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” 67

²⁴Ibid. 65

²⁵Ibid.

still holds as even when member states use the information and their interpretation to suit their interests, the other members can essentially “shame them into compliance by exposing the inconsistency between their declarations and their current behaviour”²⁶. Thus, if members were to use this tactic for their own benefit, they may risk the possibility of losing their own credibility and be forced to comply with the body as a whole and the other members of the Union.

2.4 Previous Commitments Made to Turkey

It is for this reason that there is an obligation for the European Union to proceed with the membership of Turkey as opposed to trying to find alternatives to the relationship between the two bodies. This is because both the European Union and Turkey have recognized the fulfillment of the political reforms required to start the screening process, and therefore, deviance from this path by the European Union would signify a lack of credibility because there would be an obvious lack in consistency if the stance was to change dramatically, given the fact that negotiations have been ongoing for a long period of time. Furthermore, there have been certain promises that were made to Turkey with regards to its membership aspirations, and in order to nullify these promises, it would require a unanimous vote by current European Union members that would all need to agree that Turkey should not be given membership and allowed to join the European Union.

Schimmelfennig’s study and assertion of the expansion of the European Union’s borders to the East is important. He explains that “the divergent state preferences on enlargement are best understood as individual and self-centred,

²⁶Ibid. p64

national welfare and security benefits or national attitudes to integration, not a collective “community interest.”²⁷ It can be argued that this is a rational argument because the European Union is, after all, comprised of sovereign and independent member states which mean that the issue of enlargement must be discussed at the national level in order to respect the sovereignty and representation of the member countries in a proper manner. Schimmelfennig presents two different categories in order to tackle the issue of enlargement as he presents the notion that there are “drivers”, which are “one group of governments” and then there are what he calls the “brakemen” which are governments that are trying to delay the decision making process with regard to Turkish accession into the Union. While this way of grouping the nations is a narrow way of doing so, he goes on to say that “no single force explains member states’ enlargement preferences.”²⁸ Accordingly, he believes that this concept of having both drivers and brakemen center around three theories, which are: rationalism, rhetorical action and sociological institutionalism.

According to him “although rationalism can explain most actor preferences and much of their bargaining behaviour, it fails to account for the collective decision of enlargement.”²⁹ What this is saying is that there is an element of national reasoning behind the fact that the European Union has indeed started talks with Turkey about the prospect of joining the Union but the idea of rationalism alone cannot explain why that is. Furthermore, his definition of rationalism is based on the works of Andrew Moravcsik³⁰. The notion here is that when it comes to members’ preferences on the matter, they are largely a function of “international

²⁷Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” p53

²⁸Ibid.53

²⁹Ibid.76

³⁰Moravcsik, A. (1998). *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. London: UCL Press.

independence, opportunities for international economic exchange, and the dominant economic interests in national society.”³¹ When it comes to “rhetorical action”, he believes that it would be able to “provide the missing link between egoistic preferences and norm-conforming outcome.”³²

The next section deals with Europeanization and its impact on Turkey’s negotiations process in an attempt to explain the reasons behind the slowdown of Turkish accession talks.

2.5 Europeanization

When discussing Europeanization, many controversial perceptions are being deliberated in Turkey’s case. While some scholars believe that Turkey is European enough and have come a long way in its reforms, others argue that its road to the EU is still tough as they are many needed reforms that Turkey is still required to achieve.

A study has been done on the subject was conducted by Birol Yesilada, a professor of Political Science and International Studies whose research focuses on contemporary Turkish politics and society. In 2002, he wrote “Turkey’s Candidacy for EU Membership”. His study was based on the complex historical relationship between Turkey and the European Union as well as the prospects of Turkey joining the Union. By doing so, he was able to uncover important political and economic factors that were obstacles in Turkish accession. According to the research and analysis that he conducted, Yesilada believed that the prospect of Turkey joining the European Union was tough and that the nation faced “a difficult road ahead” in its

³¹Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” 49

³²Ibid.p76

plans to join the Union.³³ With very much the same ideas in mind as Diez and Buzan, he tackled the important issue of “Europeanism”. However the way in which he went about it was different. For him, he believes the fact that Turkey is a part of some important European organizations such as NATO and the fact that it is a country that was a part of the Ottoman Empire means that Turkey already has European ideals that cannot be discounted or ignored.

One of the conclusions that was reached in the study was that in terms of Turkish membership, it “cannot be achieved unless Turkey undertakes major political reforms that provide extensive individual and civil and political rights to its citizens.”³⁴ Furthermore, he discusses the issue of how the process has been moving along in a very slow manner and how it has given the whole process a negative outlook.

Another issue that he brings forth is that of the relationship between Turkey and the European Union with regards to economic issues and says of them that they are a “clear obstacle to membership in the near future.”³⁵ He pointed out that even though Turkey’s economy “fits the Copenhagen criteria”, there are several factors that could hinder its progress. One such factor is the fact that the European Union’s economy might simply not be able to absorb Turkey’s economy. This point will be analyzed in depth in chapter four.

Europeanization was not the only hotly debated issue regarding whether Turkey is to join the EU or not. The slowdown in the accession negotiations and the concept of the EU enlargement are also important issues to be examined when looking at Turkey’s EU membership.

³³Yesilada, Candidacy p110

³⁴Ibid 110

³⁵Ibid 111

2.6 Enlargement and Slowdown

It is important to go back to the work done on the issue of Turkey's accession into the European Union by Yesilada and the claims that were made because it is likely that the suggestions that were made by Yesilada will be the most likely outcome of the Turkish accession process. The main idea that can be taken from the work is that Turkey's membership to the European Union will be a reality, but it will take a long time before this will come to be a reality. This idea poses one central and important question. Since Turkish accession has taken a very long time up until this point, and the process seems to be one that is going to require much more time and not likely to happen any time in the near future, why is it that the process is even continuing if this is the case? In order to answer this question, it is important go back to the work done by Schimmelfennig in order to support the idea that Turkish membership will happen, but that this process will take a long time to happen.

Using Schimmelfennig's rhetorical action theory, the case can be made that this point can be argued and quite strongly. Schimmelfennig discusses why states engage in association, which has to do with liberal intergovernmentalist theory. The point that is not discussed by him, however, is how the dependence of the associations between the member states creates the conditions for full membership within the Union. The main point of discussion is that the European Union is built on certain principles and ideologies through which standards are created that all member states are expected to abide by. One of these important standards is highlighted within the Copenhagen Criteria. The European Union can be said to be bound to allowing Turkey into the Union, through rhetoric if nothing else. This goes back to the principles that were just discussed. Because the Union was created with the idea

of a “European” identity, and the fact that the European Union has considered Turkey as being “European” through the share common values that characterises the main part of Turkey’s membership bid, the European Union had made a promise to the nation of Turkey that is said to be binding.

While not officially, if this rhetoric is not upheld, the European Union would lose a significant amount of credibility within the international community. Moreover, there have been many association agreements that the European Union has committed to with regards to Turkey, and the Union has often stated in no uncertain terms that it has a common interest in giving Turkey membership at some point in the future, even if the process is to drag on and take more time than all parties had anticipated for. Therefore, the European Union is in a position whereby changing its stance on the issue would not only result in the loss of credibility, but could even cast the future of the Union in doubt. The real obstacle behind this is a structural one as there is no clear consensus among the EU member states regarding the enlargement desirability.³⁶ These standards and principles are the foundations of the Union and are a cornerstone is the Union’s direction. It is fair to say that the Union therefore has no choice but to continue what it had started despite the problems that have been highlighted with regards to Turkey’s inability to fulfill some of the *Acquis* chapters to the fullest level expected from the nation.

Going back to the idea of rhetoric and the foundation of the Union, we can see that this sort of rhetoric has been evident since the foundation of the Union. For example, the treaty that ultimately lead to the foundation of the Union as it is known today claims that “...resolved to mark a new stage in the process of European

³⁶Wallace, H., Wallace, W. & Pollack M. A. (2005). *Policy – making in the European Union*. (5th ed.) New York: Oxford University Press: p426

integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities, recalling the historic importance of the ending of the division of the European continent and the need to create firm bases for the construction of the future Europe.³⁷” The quote taken shows that the foundation of the European Union was based on a commitment with regard to what it considers to be “Europeans”. Therefore, since the European Union has expressed the fact that it considers Turkey to be “European”, it has an obligation under the principles of the foundation of the Union to offer the nation of Turkey the full rights that other nations within the Union have.

There are also clear statements that have been made by the European Union that deepens its commitment to offer membership to Turkey. One example of this is the Ankara Agreement that set the stage for economic relations between the EEC and Turkey. According to the Ankara Agreement “recognizing that the support given by the European Economic Community to the efforts of the Turkish people to improve their standard of living will facilitate the accession of Turkey to the Community at a later date³⁸.” Therefore, within this statement, as well as others, there is an apparent commitment made by the European Union with regards to Turkey’s membership. Schimmelfennig says that these commitments are important because of the fact that in the case of the expansion of the Union to the east, “rhetorical commitment led to rhetorical entrapment.³⁹”

This rhetorical entrapment is the basis upon which the legitimacy of the entire Union comes into play. These commitments that have been made towards Turkey have meant that there has become significant “entrapment” by the Union on this

³⁷European Commission. (1992, July 29). Treaty on European Union, Official Journal C191.

³⁸European Commission. (1963, September). Ankara Agreement Preamble.

³⁹Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” p66

issue, due to the fact the entrapment itself comes as a result of the actions of driver states that “effectively prevented the brakemen states from openly opposing the goal of enlargement⁴⁰.” With regards to the brakemen states, it has been seen that there are generally three rhetorical strategies that are used which “dispute the warrant on which the argument rests, call into question the credibility of the proponent, or doubt the argumentative link between the warrant and the claim⁴¹.” The states that act as driver states can often use the strategies to obtain a level of advantage over the states that are acting as brakemen states. This goes back to the idea of credibility that was mentioned before, as there needs to be a common approach with regards to these key issues in order for the whole bloc to be seen as holding any sort of credibility. Therefore, it will get to a point where the states that are acting as brakemen will have to eventually accept the idea of enlargement for the fear of their position and their stance as being seen as one that is both not credible and even illegitimate.

One good example of this is the position that the nation of France took with regards to the enlargement of the European Union in 1993 to bring in the nations of Sweden, Austria and Finland. France had held the position that deepening was the way to go as opposed to widening the scope of membership because the nation had felt that widening would have a detrimental effect on the integration of the Union⁴². However, France then changed its position and “declared its official support for enlargement because the more it sustained pressure from Germany and the new member states, the more morally awkward a situation it was in. The French government softened its policy, as it suddenly saw itself as the only main obstacle to the pro-enlargement policy and feared losing the sympathies of the new member

⁴⁰Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” p72

⁴¹Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” p73

⁴²Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” p73

states⁴³.” This is why although the actions of brakemen states can have a significant effect on Turkish accession with regards to the speed of the process, this example and others like it show that brakemen states do not necessarily remain the same and can eventually pave the way in order for the process to run along in order for the Union as a whole to have one common stance.

Therefore, the European Union’s commitment with regards to enlargement by providing Turkey with the chance to join the Union – a commitment in which the Union is essentially trapped – means that Turkey should very well receive the membership that it has set its sights on, regardless of the fact that the process will probably take a longer period in time that any of the involved parties had anticipated. However, LaGro & Jorgensen (2007) argues that the EU is prolonging the negotiations, hence, delaying indefinitely Turkey’s membership as an attempt to divert Turkey’s attention from the EU. With regards to the expansion of the Union to include the Balkan states, it was said that “once the decision to enlarge was made, each further step toward preparing for the opening of accession negotiations was presented as a logical follow-up to this decision and difficult to oppose.”⁴⁴

2.7 Copenhagen Criteria

In 2004, the European Union attempted to clarify the Turkish accession process using what was known as a three-pillar system. The first of these had to do with the Copenhagen political criteria. The goal of the European Union was to be able to closely monitor the extent to which Turkey are able to conform to the criteria by publishing reviews that would come out on an annual basis and also set priorities

⁴³Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” p74

⁴⁴Schimmelfennig, “Community Trap,” p75

for the nation on what areas needed to be worked on the most. One of the main issues pertaining to this point is that the European Union reserved the right to suspend negotiations with Turkey on its membership “if there is serious and persistent breach of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms or the rule of law on which the Union is founded.”⁴⁵

The second of the pillars relates to the process of *Acquis* fulfillment and how is it set to occur. Again, the European Union reserved some key rights with regard to this pillar. For example, the Union had the discretion to set benchmarks and make sure that a “satisfactory track record on the implementation of the *Acquis*” was to take place as well as the “obligations relating to alignment with the *Acquis* must be fulfilled before the negotiations on the chapters concerned are closed.”⁴⁶ Also, because this pillar was also involved in the kind of impact that Turkish membership would have financially and on institutions, this meant that in regard to the accession process, “long transition periods may be necessary.”⁴⁷

The last pillar was one of dialogue between the European Union members and Turkey. This was focused on political and cultural ties between Turkey and other member states as well as encompassing issues such as minorities, migration amongst other important issues. Müftüler-Bac (2008), McLaren (2007) and Joseph (2006) explain the EU governments and the public’s fear of the economic implications of Turkey’s membership regarding flow of migration from Turkey. Bogdani (2011) further emphasizes the concern over the Turkish migrants’ integration within the new lifestyle, culture, social norms and values.

⁴⁵European Commission. Turkey: the Commission recommends opening accession negotiations.

⁴⁶Ibid

⁴⁷Ibid

Religion – as it is greatly correlated with culture – also has been a controversial issue when it comes to Turkey’s membership in the EU. Bogdani (2011) and Daloglu (2005) argue over the differences between “Cultural Europe” and “New Europe”. Furthermore, they believe that the ethnic, religious, and historical aspects of Turkey emphasized its non-Christian and non-European character. For them, the real issue here is the Islamic society that is rooted in the Turkish population. Nevertheless, various researchers (Laciner 2005; Zürcher & Linden 2004) analyze religion—particularly Islam—as not being an obstacle that is hindering the EU from accepting Turkey. On the contrary, they argue that Islam will have a positive contribution to the Middle East-Europe relationship (Zürcher & Linden 2004). This pillar, in addition to the previous two that were set, was a way of identifying the potential political slowdowns that would be likely to occur in the accession talks process.

As mentioned, reports were set to be put out in an annual basis in order to gauge the performance of Turkey. The report that came out in 2008 showed the country’s “ability to assume the obligations of membership.”⁴⁸ This signified a step in the right direction for Turkey, as these reports play an important role in understanding the steps that Turkey has been taking in order to bring itself to a position where it can show itself worthy of membership in the Union. With regard to the *Acquis*, one of the most important considerations that must be brought up is the fact that there has been a freeze on a few of the chapter by the European Union. These are: right of establishment and freedom to provide service, fisheries, transport policy, agriculture and rural development, free movement of goods and customs and external relations.

⁴⁸European Commission. (2008, May 11). Turkey 2008 Progress Report. SEC (2008)2699. Brussels p38

According to the 2008 report just mentioned, the reason that is stated for the freeze in the above mentioned chapters is that “as long as restrictions remain in place on the free movement of goods carried by vessels and aircraft registered in Cyprus or where the last port of call was Cyprus, Turkey will not be in a position fully to implement the *Acquis* relating to this chapter.”⁴⁹ It must be noted that this same reason was given for all of the chapters mentioned. Moreover, Bogdani (2011), Lake (2005), Carkoglu & Rubin (2003), Arikan (2006) and Joseph (2006) examine in depth Turkey’s geographic and political conflict with Greece and Cyprus. They all agree that this is the leading challenge that Turkey needs to settle as a precondition to join the EU. Lake (2005), Akcapar (2007) and Bürgin (2010) further demonstrate Greece’s passing Turkey’s candidature in the Helsinki Council in 1999 in order to use it as a card to secure stability in the region.

Furthermore, it has been stated that there have been very minimal progress made when it comes to the environment chapter. However, this takes on a different tone due to the fact that it is not Turkey that has been failing in its requirements, but rather, it has been the European Union that has been making the environmental requirements harder,⁵⁰ which has led to Turkey doing poorly when it comes to environmental issues. This means that Turkey will have to do much more in order for it to become in line with the standards that have been set forth by the European Union. There are also some issues that have been brought up pertaining to this aspect and some of which are the fact that Turkey has not signed the Kyoto Protocol and

⁴⁹European Commission, Progress Report, p.81

⁵⁰European Commission. Towards a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen. SEC(2009)101 and SEC(2009)102.

many still view greenhouse gas emissions in the country as being of major concern and something that is needed to be sorted out at the earliest possible time.⁵¹

There are also many chapters that state that Turkey's administrative capacity is seriously lacking in depth, and this means that much needs to be done in order for it to become in line with European standards. The issue here is that Turkey's administrative capacity has been said to need serious reform and modernization. Furthermore, Turkey suffers from excess bureaucracy and difficulties when it comes to its taxation management issues.⁵² These administrative issues, along with others, have been seen to be severely lacking and basic issues such as work permits and official documentation need to be more in line with the standards that are seen throughout the European Union.

Since Turkey is essentially an economy that is agricultural in nature, administrative improvements will come a long way in helping the country reap the rewards and benefits of administrative modernization and reform. This is because this modernization and reform would not only allow for growth, but would also play an important role in regional development.⁵³

On the important issue of economics, the *Eurobarometer* public opinion report of 2008 showed that there were three key areas of concern that citizens in member countries of the European Union had. These concerns, according to the chart below, were as follows: unemployment (45%), the economy (35%) and inflation and the rise in prices (18%).⁵⁴ However, the three significant areas of concerns for the

⁵¹European Commission, Progress Report, p.77-79

⁵²European Commission, Progress Report.

⁵³Gorzelak, G. (2008, October 21). Economic Disparities: European Union Regional Policy and the New Member States. Canada: Dalhousie University.

⁵⁴European Commission. (2008, December). Standard Eurobarometer 70: Public Opinion in the European Union. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb70/eb70_en.htm

Turkish population included terrorism (50%) as the second more critical concern after unemployment (63%), and the third is economic situation (33%).

QA6a2. What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?

2.1 Source: Eurobarometer 74, "Life in the European Union and Beyond," Autumn 2010

Müftüler-Bac (2008), McLaren (2007) and Joseph (2006) explain the EU governments and the public's fear of the economic implications of Turkey's membership regarding financial costs. The question, then, must be asked on whether or not Turkey will be able to meet its obligations of the *Acquis* when it comes to the

issues that have been highlighted by the citizens of European Union countries as being the most important with respect to the economy.

Turkey has inflation problems and these issues stem from the fact that Turkey's central bank is not an entity that is independent. Therefore, the country does not fulfill the *Acquis* requirements in that regard because inflation is primarily set by the central bank and the government together which means that this is a difficult hurdle for the nation to overcome if it is to be in line with the rest of the European Union member states.⁵⁵ Furthermore, there has not been much progress made when it comes to issues such as Turkey's fiscal policy amongst other key issues.

Turkey has also had historical problems associated with employment. For example, there has been much criticism coming from various world bodies that highlight the fact that there are still issues such as unequal working rights, child labour, undeclared work and union issues that must be addressed by the nation in order for its employment sector to be up to the standards that are expected by the European Union. Researchers discuss Turkey's deficiency with regard to human rights as well as economic capability to compete with EU member states (Erdogdu 2002; Carkoglu & Rubin 2003; Joseph 2006; Bürgin 2010). The issues of corruption, unbalanced income distribution, poor urbanization, and insufficient infrastructure are some of the problems that Turkey needs to overcome in a way to improve its development (LaGro & Jorgensen 2007; Lake 2005). Turkey, for its part, has attempted to rectify this problem by implementing an Employment Package in May

⁵⁵European Commission, Progress Report, p.59-60

of 2008 that would aim to work on the unemployment issues and other employment related issues that the country has been facing over the past decade.⁵⁶

With regards to the Copenhagen criteria, which are divided along two categories which are political and economic in one and bureaucracy in the other, Turkey has been under scrutiny to measure up to its requirements. Other areas in which Turkey has been subject to much scrutiny with regards to the Copenhagen criteria are with regards to the issues of democracy and rule of law, human rights and the protection of minorities throughout the country as well as issues in the surrounding region and Turkey's international obligations.

2.8 Support for the Bid

It is a fact that Turkey faces opposition from different countries with regards to its bid to become a full member of the European Union. The United Kingdom has been one of the nations that have been supporting the bid, with Queen Elisabeth II's visit to Turkey in which she said "Turkey is uniquely positioned as a bridge between the East and West at a crucial time for the European Union and the world in general⁵⁷." Furthermore, Former Prime Minister of Italy, Silvio Berlusconi had said that he would be willing to support Turkey in speeding up its accession process.⁵⁸ Supporters of the idea of Turkey obtaining full membership within the European Union have stated that Turkey would be able to provide strategic military support as well as add economic prosperity to the Union. While there is the (correct) notion

⁵⁶European Commission, Progress Report, p.61-4

⁵⁷Atatürk's Turkey Acceptable for EU, says French Professor. (2008, November). *Sunday's Zaman*, p23. Retrieved from

<http://www.sundayszaman.com/sunday/detaylar.do?load=print&link=159525&yazarAd>

⁵⁸Italian PM Urges EU to Speed Up Turkish Accession. (2008, November 12). Agence France-Presse. Retrieved from <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1226520122.76/>

that the acceptance of Turkey into the Union would cost the Union in the short term, it is also seen that the young and plentiful labour force within Turkey would be of great benefit to the Single Market and therefore have a net positive effect on the Union in the long term.⁵⁹

There are some that argue that having Turkey join the Union would provide economic and political stability in the Union. For example, a gas pipeline from central Asia, that runs through Turkey, means that it is in the interest of the European Union that Turkey be economically and politically stable.⁶⁰ Also, it is widely seen that Turkey's geographic position, being situated in between Europe and the Middle East, and having the largest military in NATO in terms of numbers of soldiers means that Turkey would be a valuable security asset to the European Union.⁶¹ Many also see the potential for improving ties between the Islamic world and Europe, something that cannot be ignored with the current events that are occurring today around the world. Lastly, with the mention of religion, many see that by allowing Turkey into the Union, a message of acceptance to Islam would be sent. The opposite could have negative repercussions as denying Turkey membership into the Union could send out a damaging message.⁶²

2.9 Terrorism and Democracy

There have been several polls that have been conducted within the European Union and Turkey that have aimed to gauge the perceptions of citizens on issues

⁵⁹Avery, G. (2008). EU Expansion and Wider Europe, in E. Bomberg, J. Peterson & A. Stubb (Eds.), *The European Union: How Does It Work?*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Gosport England pp179-200.

⁶⁰Villelabeitia, I. (2008, November 11). Is Turkey's EU Membership Dream Vanishing?. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE4AA36L20081111>

⁶¹Avery 2008, pp. 192-3

⁶²Avery 2008, pp. 192

relating to Turkish accession. For example, a *Eurobarometer* study that was conducted in Turkey showed that around 68% of the participants believed that the idea of terrorism was one of the two main concerns with regards accession. When this was compared to how European Union citizens responded, only 5% of European Union citizens believed that terrorism was amongst the most important issues, instead focusing on issues that were related to the economy and to job creation such as inflation and unemployment. Therefore, when drawing up comparisons, it is clear to see that the notion and idea of terrorism may be a significant obstacle and of significant importance with regards to Turkey's bid to join the European Union.⁶³

These issues have regularly been highlighted in the recent past. For example, in January of 2008, no fewer than 33 individuals were arrested because they were accused of being behind a plot to stage a paramilitary coup to bring down the government. Some of these people were former military personnel and generals, and they have been given the name "Ergenekon". Their elaborate plan involved a plot to assassinate many influential Turkish figures in order to bring about the collapse of the Turkish government. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has extensive materials on the issue and according to them "for ultranationalists today the threats to Turkey include EU accession, Armenian genocide allegations and any talk of a peace deal to end the 24-year-old Kurdish insurgency."⁶⁴ There was a hidden sense of disbelief about this, however it must be noted that there are people within Turkey who do hold this viewpoint. The constant threats that exist to the government mean

⁶³European Commission. (2008). Standard Eurobarometer 69: Executive Summary- Turkey. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_tr_exec.pdf. p.2

⁶⁴Rainsford, S. (2008, February 4). 'Deep state plot' grips Turkey. *BBC World News*. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/Europe/7225889.stm.

that internal threats are subject to significant scrutiny and will constantly be an issue with regards to Turkish accession into the European Union.

One important example of this has been the political party, *Saadet*. The party is a radical hard-line Islamic party, which has many views that are contrary to the idea of accession. For example, the party has anti NATO and anti- European Union views that have been said to be linked to external groups that share these views such as the radical Islamic group Hamas in the Palestinian territories. The *Saadet* party managed to gain 2.3% of the vote that took place during the elections in 2007.⁶⁵ There are, of course, various other threats that have often been a source of instability in Turkey. The issue of the Kurdish minority in the country has long been a contentious and hotly debated topic within Turkish society, and Kurdish radicals such as the banned Kurdistan Worker's Party, also known as the PKK, have often been a source of instability for the country.

The existence of such parties has also helped spur on the creation of new parties and splinter groups such as the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (insert name in the original language here—and put it in italics). These groups have often been seen as a hindrance with regards to Turkey joining the European Union because they reinforce scepticism that exists surrounding the idea that Turkey will not be able to fully cast aside its Islamic and historical roots in favour of becoming a permanent member of the European Union.

Furthermore, with “Ergenekon”-style ultra-nationalist groups springing up, they were not only a concern with regards to playing on the fear of terrorist activities and the attempts to overthrow the government, but these groups also shed light and raise concerns with regards to the legal system in Turkey. The European

⁶⁵Akyol, M. (2009, March 2). NO to EU, out of NATO, death to imperialism. *Hurriyet Daily News*.

Union has reported on these issues and has come out and said that issues exist with “insufficient safeguarding of the rights of defence and the excessive duration of detention period without indictment.”⁶⁶ There was also concern from within the United Nations, which expressed fears stemming from the “prosecution, trial and detention of terrorism suspects, in which the principles underlying the reform process find it difficult to gain a foothold.”⁶⁷ There have been some major discrepancies with regards to the legal system with regards to human rights violations and these issues have been put in the spotlight often.

Moreover, these issues have further been put under the spotlight because of some reform proposals, particularly regarding the judiciary, that were put forward in the spring of 2008. Even though there was a proposal that attempted to improve the effectiveness of the system as a whole and to improve on the way in which investigations were conducted, there is vast room for improvement to be made in order for the court and judicial system in Turkey to become on par with other members within the European Union. It is vital that even the “Ergenekon” members are able to receive fair and unbiased trials, and it is also vital that the issue of these people who could have strong links to certain levels of government be investigated stringently. There are also other examples that highlight the need for further reforms and progress within the Turkish system as a whole. For example, regional appeal courts were set to be up and running by the summer of 2007 but these appeal courts are still not operational.⁶⁸ Turkey would need to improve its judicial system in order to uphold the rule of law and also in order to improve on its human rights track record.

⁶⁶European Commission, Progress Report, p.7

⁶⁷United Nations. (2007, February 7). Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Mission to Turkey, A/HRC/4/40/Add.5.

⁶⁸European Commission, Progress Report

Another issue that is of a concern to the EU and related to the issue of terrorism is the Turkish democratic system and the reforms and developments required to meet the EU standards.

2.10 Democracy and the System

Turkey is a nation-state that has a functioning democracy through elected officials, as well as having a working constitutional court. The country is regarded as a secular state, as religion does not have any formal role within the operations of the government and this fact has widely been used as an example of what other Islamic nations should strive to achieve. This being said, there are certainly some problems that are associated with the Turkish model of democracy that the country holds in such high regard.

One of these problems, according to an *Agence Europe* report, is that there has been an emergence of “polarisation” between many of the different political parties and influential people within Turkish society. There have been instances where these tensions between different rival groups have boiled over and exploded, such as was the case within the Constitutional Court whereby there was a concerted effort to bring down Turkey’s ruling party and ban the party because some opposing members believed that the party was pursuing anti-secular policies.⁶⁹

There has been considerable attention placed on this polarisation within Turkish society, with a draft report being submitted to the European Parliament in 2008 that suggested that the polarisation that is occurring within Turkey “negatively affected the function of the political institutions and the process reforms” and this

⁶⁹Court to consider AK Party closure. (2008, March 31). *Today’s Zaman*. Istanbul.

itself led to the stagnation of efforts aimed at improving on Turkey's issues with regards to progress being made in the accession process.⁷⁰ One of the key examples that highlight these divisions is the issue of the "Ergenekon" that has been discussed before.

There are further problems that have been highlighted with regards to Turkey's democratic system. One such problem is the fact that the Turkish Constitution of 1982 has not been altered and reformed to accommodate the changes in recent views. Many have seen that this goes in hand with the issue of polarisation. One case that has brought this to attention is when there was amendment that was made in order to lift the ban on religious headscarves being worn within universities. However, this amendment was effectively cancelled by the Constitutional Court through an appeal that was made by an opposition group.

The grounds for the appeal were that this amendment would be contrary to the ideals of building a secular state.⁷¹ While this issue does show democracy being upheld by all involved, it also highlights the fact that the different parties within Turkey have not been working together in order to forward the agenda of joining the European Union, and have certainly not been implementing the changes that have been necessary to do so. Therefore, because of these reasons, it is clear to see that the polarisation in Turkey could be a significant obstacle in Turkish accession into the European Union.

It is important to note the annoyance of the EU with the recent statement of the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan in late May 2012 when he compared abortion to the case of Uludere's air strike, which resulted in the killing of 34

⁷⁰ *Agence Europe*. (2008, November 29). European Parliament prepares very critical report.

⁷¹ European Commission, Progress Report, p.7

civilians mistaken for terrorism.⁷² Turkey is considering a law on banning or restricting abortion and considering it murder. However, the PM's comparison made the EU worried over Turkey's democracy. Moreover, EU diplomats are not satisfied with the new laws passed by the Turkish Parliament in May 2012 preventing public servants and the aviation sector from striking. Those laws and statements made in Turkey were perceived by EU diplomats as a "fading interest in accession talks with the EU".⁷³

A significant amount of research has contended that there has been a commitment by the Union to allow Turkey to join the EU. Furthermore, based on the founding principles of the Union, and the fact that Turkey has been said to be "European", the Union has essentially trapped itself and is in a position where it is under pressure to allow Turkey to join the Union in order for the whole bloc to maintain its credibility. Turkey certainly has some issues that it needs to resolve, and must ensure that the factors that are plaguing the bid process are brought more in line with European standards. The next section goes into detail about key factors that are hindering the process. These factors require fast and effective reform in order to put the bid process on track.

⁷²Demirtaş, S., (2012, June 4). EU finds Erdoğan's words on abortion 'annoying'. *Hurriyet Daily News*.

⁷³Demirtaş, S., (2012, June 4). EU finds Erdoğan's words on abortion 'annoying'. *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/eu-finds-erdogans-words-on-abortion-annoying.aspx?pageID=238&nID=22199&NewsCatID=338>

CHAPTER THREE

MAJOR DOMESTIC ISSUES AFFECTING ACCESSION

3.1 Introduction

There are many issues that are affecting Turkey's accession process, many of which are based on the Copenhagen Criteria. These issues are a vital part of the accession bid at the present time, because they represent a series of reforms that Turkey is expected to enact in order to join the Union. Whether or not all of these reforms will come into place is yet to be seen, but it is certainly the case that Turkey is lagging behind the rest of Europe with regards to key issues such as human rights and the protection of minorities.

These two issues are of an importance to the EU on the Turkish domestic level in which Turkey is required to legislate new laws and amend existing regulations that guarantee the protection of minorities and prevent violations of human rights. Moreover, it is worth examining these areas in the context of the discussion of challenges facing Turkey on the national level. Religion is also analyzed in this chapter due to its domestic nature. However, despite being viewed as problematic, Turkey cannot (and should not, from a human rights point of view) do anything to change the fact that its population's majority is Muslim.

3.2 Human rights

This paper has already shown that there have been instances of human rights violations in Turkey due to the fact that the judicial system is weak and has essentially allowed for this to occur. During one of the last reporting periods for the

progress report with regard to Turkey's application ambitions, the European Court of Human Rights said that Turkey was responsible for human rights violation in over 200 cases according to what the European convention on Human Rights deems to be violations. There have been many different applications to the court with regards to Turkey's issues towards human rights and many of these complaints are under review.

This has been a major hurdle for Turkey to overcome, and the severity of it is further highlighted by the fact that one fifth of the 2008 progress report was spent discussing the various issues to do with Turkey's human rights record and its violations. However, it is important to note what the complaints were really for as most of the complaints came about from judicial and property rights shortcoming as opposed to being violations that had come about through bad treatment with regards to the right of life.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, this has been one of the main sticking points that Turkey has had to review constantly and there has been very little progress made with regards to the human rights record when held against the *Acquis*.

There is further evidence of human rights violations set out by the European Court of Human Rights that goes deeper into the issue. For example, the table of violations that has been put forth by the court has showed that in 2008 for example, from all of the 264 different judgements that were made, at least 90% of those show that there was at least one human rights violation. There was only one case that was deemed to not have any human rights violations at all, and a further case that was void while the five remaining ones were given separate judgements based on different categories. Furthermore, the fact is also highlighted with the findings showing that around 92% of the cases being reported in one of the four following

⁷⁴European Commission, Progress Report, p.8

categories which are: right to a fair trial, length of the trial proceeding, the right to security and liberty and finally the protection of property.⁷⁵

It is important to note that the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is the basis upon which the judgements are passed, and this council is a representation of the shared values and beliefs that are held within the European Union as a whole, or at least it is meant to act as such a body. Therefore, because of the fact that Turkey sees itself as a “European” nation, these rules that govern the rest of the European Society apply to Turkey, so it has been a contentious point with regard to the accession of Turkey into the Union because of the vast human rights issues that have coming to the forefront more often than not. The complaints that have been made towards Turkey with this regard are based on four key areas that are as follows.

First, the right to liberty and security. This right encompasses the arrest and the detention of individuals. When an individual is arrested or detained, there are some rights that are automatically taken away from them by default. This being said, it is important to note that the issue of the right to liberty and security deals with the rights that should be given to individuals who are arrested and detained, and also highlights the situations in which the arrest or detention of an individual should be an option.⁷⁶ One important example of this lies with the issue of the “Ergenekon” that was mentioned before. Some of the members of this group have been held without a formal charge being brought against them. It must be noted that there has been some progress in this regard, albeit minor. The Istanbul Protocol was set up to ensure that

⁷⁵ European Court of Human Rights, Violation by Article and Country, www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/5D511C09-CF91-47D2-BA2F-

⁷⁶ Council of Europe, Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocol No. 11 with Protocol Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 12, and 13 September 2003. Article 5, p.4

the negative treatment towards detained members would be stopped and some progress has been seen to be made with regards to this.

The second factor is the right to a fair trial. This issue discusses the information, the presumption of innocents until proven guilty, the timeframe and the minimum rights that are available to the individual in the trial.⁷⁷ This section was the section that had the most number of violations occurring within, and it accounted for at least 75 cases that were prosecuted.⁷⁸ One example of a violation that has commonly occurred within this section, for example, has been the fact that it has been difficult to obtain access to a lawyer in the predominantly Kurdish southeast of the country⁷⁹.

With regards to the length of the proceedings, the third issue relates to individuals being arrested and detained without charge and a trial does not occur for the detained individual within a reasonable amount of time after the individual's detention.

The last issue concerns the protection of property, stating that "every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived if his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law."⁸⁰ There have been several violations within this section. One such example occurred in a case that involved the foundation of an orphanage for Greeks. The issue arose from the fact that the Turkish government had wanted the land to be registered under the State-Directorate General for Foundations and this meant that that the

⁷⁷Council of Europe, Convention, Article 6, p.5

⁷⁸European Court of Human Rights, Violation by Article and Country

⁷⁹European Commission, Progress Report

⁸⁰Council of Europe. (2003, September). Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Article 1, p.22

enjoyment of the land by the Patriarchate was essentially being denied. The European Court of Human rights ruled in the favour of the foundation, which said that the government was acting as an impeding force with regards to the protection and the enjoyment of property.⁸¹

Closely related to the concern about human rights, there is the matter of the protection of minorities, particularly the Kurds. It is shown as a critical issue as the EU is not identifying any tangible progress in alignment with EU standards.

3.3 The Protection of Minorities

The Kurds compose 18% of the Turkish population while other minorities are around 7-12% as stated in the World Factbook (2008). During 1930s, Turkey's official government policy sought to assimilate Kurds in Turkey. Until recently, the Kurds have endured many years of persecution and oppression. This section highlights the reforms made in this regard as well as an assessment of the key areas where Turkey failed to uphold its responsibilities.

In 2009, there was the launching of a Kurdish language television station, which marked a significant step in the right direction with regards to the protection of minorities.⁸² However, the European Union still released a statement that clearly show concern for the situation in Turkey with regards to the rights of minorities, saying that "overall, Turkey has made no progress on ensuring cultural diversity and promoting respect for and protection of minorities in accordance with European standards."⁸³ One of the key and most effective ways of analysing Turkey's position with regards to its record of minority protection comes with the United Nations

⁸¹European Commission, Progress Report, 24

⁸²Haberler, T. (2009, February 13). EU Training for forces on human rights. *The Daily Hurriyet News*.

⁸³European Commission, Progress Report, 26

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Turkey is a signatory. In this agreement, Article 27 says that “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.”⁸⁴

It is clear that with regards to this statement in the article, Turkey has failed to uphold its responsibilities because of the Kurdish issue, particularly with regards to the use of the Kurdish language in the media as a whole. This is also in direct violation to article 19.2 in the ICCPR, which says that “freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”⁸⁵ There have been some efforts that have been undertaken in order to attempt to turn this around, which as a proposal that would mean that the wording of Article 301 in the Turkish Criminal Code be changed in order to accommodate these changes.⁸⁶ This issue, though, has been subject to debate within the Constitutional Court but nevertheless signifies a step in the right direction at least with regards to upholding the rights of minorities within the country.

Another article of the ICCPR, Article 2.1, states “each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴United Nations. (1966, December 16). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), Article 27, www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm

⁸⁵Ibid., Article 19.2

⁸⁶European Commission, Progress Report, 16

⁸⁷United Nations, “Covenant,” Article 2.1

Turkey is also in violation of this article. This is because the people known as the Roma people are also protected by the same rights that other minorities are protected by according to this article. Turkey has moved these people against their will, which means that Turkey has been in direct violation of this article. It is clear that there is a real need for the laws in Turkey to be changed and to be relaxed against minorities in the country such as the Kurds, before the country is able to be seen to be upholding the values and principles that are more in line with the European Union and the United Nations with regards to the issue of the protection of minorities.

It is noteworthy that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan agreed to meet the Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on June 6, 2012 to find a solution to the Kurdish question after a submission of a proposals draft by CHP.⁸⁸

The last section in this chapter that deals with domestic concerns reviews religion – particularly Islam as approximately 99% of the Turkish population is Muslim. This is the most debated issue when it comes to Turkey's accession to the EU, thus, very critical to analyze and understand its role in the accession process.

3.4 Religion

There has been much discussion with regards to the process of Turkish accession coming to a slowdown because of the fact that the nation is predominantly Muslim. Although Turkey proclaims itself a secular county, the EU does not believe

⁸⁸Turkey's leaders agree to meet on Kurdish Problem. (2012, June 5). *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-leaders-agree-to-meet-on-kurdish-problem.aspx?pageID=238&nID=22322&NewsCatID=338>. For more information on the draft f proposals, check appendix

that it really is. An explanation of the reasons behind this perception will be stated in this section as well as the European outlook on Islam. In addition, this chapter tackles the positive outcome of a European Turkey with regard to bringing Europe and the Islamic world closer.

As previously discussed, some authors have claimed that the ethnic, religious, and historical aspects of Turkey have emphasized its non-Christian and non-European character. For them, the real issue here is the Islamic society that is rooted in the Turkish population.⁸⁹ However, this, of course, is an issue that is not brought about publicly by many of the member states within the Union for obvious reasons. However, it is important to note that there are people who emphasize the fact that Turkey's main religion is different than the rest of the European Union. As noted in a 2004 newspaper, "It is more or less spoken or more or less hidden, but the major component in popular rejection of Turkey's admission is Islam."⁹⁰ Moreover, there has also been some more extreme views with regards to this issue, with some authors claiming that "characterization of Muslims as a single group of traditional and possibly fundamentalist believers, antagonistic to the West."⁹¹ The view that is discussed here is that Islam is contradictory to democracy and that Turkish accession and membership into the Union would mean that there would be an obvious lack of fit between the status quo and the new member.

A lecturer of the European Commission (TEAM – EUROPE France), Olivier Vedrine, has said that the European Union is simply not ready for Islamic integration, and stressed the point that it is Europe and not Turkey that is not willing

⁸⁹Bogdani, M. (2011). Turkey and the dilemma of EU accession: When religion meets politics. New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd. 17-48, 73-168.

⁹⁰Ford, P. (2004, October 6). Wariness over Turkey's EU Bid. The Christian Science Monitor.

⁹¹Zürcher, E. J. & Linden, H. (2004). The European Union, Turkey and Islam. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 45-76.

to integrate and accept a different kind of religious culture.⁹² Islam is not an issue of concern to Turkey, rather to the EU. Turkey's burden is limited to the Copenhagen Criteria. However, this problem, if it exists, concerns the EU as it is a matter of culture. It needs to decide whether its expansion is based on "Cultural Europe" or "New Europe". Daloglu (2005) explains that "New Europe" is an enlarged Europe that is defined by universal norms of democracy and modernity. On the other hand, "Cultural Europe" is an entity, which its boundaries are defined by cultural and geographic concerns. Moreover, the ethnic, religious, and historical aspects of Turkey emphasized its non-Christian and non-European character. As a result, it has been left at the back of the accession queue while the Central and Eastern European Countries were able to jump the line, deemed as natural members of the European family (Daloglu 2005).

There has also been similar rhetoric coming out of Italy's ambassador to Turkey, Carlo Marsili, who claimed that this issue is the primary cause for opposition to Turkish accession.⁹³

This being said, there are others who have claimed that the issue of the predominant religion in Turkey would not be an issue at all if the country were to join the Union. As a matter of fact, some have gone on to claim that this would act as a positive change to the perception of the Union as it would bring about closer ties between the Muslim world and the European Union.⁹⁴ While there will be varying opinions on the matter, the fact that the European Union has deemed Turkey

⁹²Atatürk's Turkey Acceptable for EU, says French Professor' 2008, *Sunday's Zaman*, 23 November. Retrieved from

<http://www.sundayszaman.com/sunday/detaylar.do?load=print&link=159525&yazarAd>

⁹³Italian Envoy Echoes Support for Turkey's EU Bid. (2009, May 5). *Hürriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11576514.asp>

⁹⁴Zürcher, E. J. & Linden, H. (2004). *The European Union, Turkey and Islam*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 45-76.

to be “European” means that the Union has a commitment to act towards welcoming Turkey to the Union, which will be discussed later. By categorizing Turkey as being “European”, the European Union recognizes that there are cultural and ideological similarities that Turkey shares with the Union. Furthermore, it must be noted that Turkey is a secular country that separates religion from the workings of the government. The United States’ State Department has said that “Turkey’s constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respected this right in practice.”⁹⁵

Turkey has been a secular country since the establishment of the Republic by Atatürk; also, since 1937, secularism has been a constitutional principle. However, many Europeans consider Turkey Muslim, hence alien, country that does not belong to the EU and is not welcome as a member state. Many reasons to explain this rejection are demonstrated by Bogdani (2011) and Zürcher (2004).

First, although Turkey is officially secular, its secularism is guarded by the army, rather than the political or civilian state actors. This kind of secularism is also known as “Kemalism”, which is a mixture of French secularism and the Ottoman tradition of keeping religion under the control of a strong state (Bogdani, 2011, 44). Therefore, to many, its secularism is not believed to be sufficient in the European sense. Moreover, the European public perceives Turkey as alien because it does not share the common religious and cultural ground (Zürcher 2004).

The second reason is the forceful imposition of secularism by the state. As a result, a majority of the population considers it a violation of their right to practice their Islamic faith, which explains the revival of the political Islam in the last decade. Secularism needs to be embraced by social and political groups and evolve

⁹⁵United States Department of State 2006, International Religious Freedom Report 2006: Turkey. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71413.htm>

over the course of centuries. However, this is not the case with Turkey's secularism. In the 1970s, Islamist parties started to appear on the political scene challenging the dominance of the secularized political elites. They managed to succeed in the rise of political Islam through their promising slogans to solve the economic deficiency and bureaucratic inefficiencies of the then current parties. Consequently, the Islamist Welfare Party won in 1997 and the AKP in 2002.

Third, Turkey's secularism cannot erase the fact that Turkey is still a Muslim society; Islam does provide numerous cultural touchstones for the country. There do seem to be some values different from those deemed "European" despite the secularist reforms that it underwent. Secularization has stayed only at the official level without being able to be a strong aspect of the masses. On the contrary, religion has remained a strong force at the mass level (Zürcher 2004).

The fourth argument deals with the difficulties regarding the Copenhagen criteria. Concerning human rights and protection of minorities, the Turkish government will continue to face challenges as discrimination is rooted in the cultural and religious social structure. Regardless of legislations on equal rights, they are going to be hard to enforce as, for instance, the discrimination against women and the limitations of freedom of expression and religion are related to social norms, mentality, and Islamic values that are embedded deeply in Turkish society.

Moreover, the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism in this century is considered as the most dangerous threat to the West, especially since September 2011. As a result, Europeans often associate Muslims and Islam with terrorism, threatening the security of the West. Furthermore, the Europeans fear an "Islamic cultural invasion" if Turkey joins the EU. This fear is based on the Muslim majority in Turkey, which

population is around 78 million – 99.8% are Muslims (mostly Sunni) according to the World Factbook (2011) – as well as the fast growth of the already existing Muslim population in Europe – it is estimated of up to 20 per cent. Consequently, Islam could become the dominant religion in Europe (Bogdani 2011; Zürcher 2004). It is worth mentioning that the estimated Turkish community in the EU is around 2.4 million excluding those who have an EU member state' citizenship or dual citizenship, according to the Eurostat.

Bogdani (2011) argues that as Europeans do not prefer mentioning the word “religion” as an obstacle, they use a code word instead, which is “culture”. To this end, the majority of the Europeans see that Turkey does not share common culture, mentality, values, norms, and social identities with the EU member states due to its Muslim society. Hence, they have negative perceptions and views about the role of religion and cultural factors, which is contributing to the EU population's reluctance to accept Turkey in the EU.

As mentioned earlier, this is not an issue of concern to Turkey as it is not responsible or accountable for such an issue; it is a perception, rather than a reality, that is slowing the accession down. Moreover, this is not a surprise to the EU since they launched the screening process in 2004. The composition of the Turkish society and population is not a hidden matter to the EU and the EU cannot expect any changes in this regard. It is quite obvious that this “challenge” needs to be dealt with within the Union trying to perceive it as a positive factor that is going to enrich the cultural diversity and bring the East closer to the West. Europe in the future might need Turkey to fulfill its demographic gaps, in addition to the need to embrace a secular kind of Islam so as to fend off claims that it is Islam resistant.

Turkey's human rights record as well as its record on the protection of minorities is lagging behind the rest of Europe. The European Union was founded on some basic principles, some of which had to do with these very issues. It is therefore very important that Turkey begin to act more in line with the rest of the Union with regards to these issues in order to move the process forward. The next section moves outwards, looking at the different regional and international issues that are affecting the membership process. Some of the issues are long standing issues that have put the process under the threat of collapse.

CHAPTER FOUR

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

4.1 Introduction

Turkey has had long standing issues with several member countries of the Union. Germany, France and Cyprus all have reservations about the membership of Turkey for their own reasons. There is also the worry that Turkey will not be able to fulfill the economic section of the Copenhagen Criteria, and the membership of Turkey would lead to economic risks in the Union. These issues have been a sticking point in the accession process, and have often threatened to grind the entire application process to a stop.

This chapter tackles the international issues and challenges Turkey is required to deal with. The most critical and vital issues that are going to be analyzed in this chapter is the role of Turkey in international security, economic Copenhagen Criteria divided into free movement and immigration and budget and competition issues, challenges by EU members including the orientation towards the Middle East and the reasons for the decline in Turkish public opinion. Moreover, the unsettled issues with Greece and Cyprus as well as the opposed attitude of Germany and France are explained and examined in depth in this chapter.

4.2 Turkey and International Security

One of the key points of contention that has had a significant impact on the ability for Turkey to look forward to becoming a member of the European Union

has been the issue of Cyprus. The United Nations special envoy to Cyprus has said that “although progress has been made with regards to reunification talks, it is insufficient.”⁹⁶ Moreover, the European Council has made it a point that Turkey must maintain its unification talks in order to come up with a lasting solution in order to help bolster its prospects of joining the European Union.⁹⁷ This had led to the two leaders within Cyprus, the Cypriot and the Turkish leader reaffirming their intentions to hold talks and ensure that a solution will come about. However, to date, no solution has been put forth and the issue of Cyprus remains as contentious as ever. This has had an effect on the *Acquis* chapters that does not seem to be fulfilled by the Turkish nation, meaning that there has been little progress on that front with regards to accession.⁹⁸

When it comes to the role that Turkey has given for itself with regard to international security, this is also seen as an important aspect for the country’s membership in the European Union. The study conducted by Diez and Buzan, discussed before, delves into the importance that Turkey has in a geopolitical sense as it is viewed as an “insulator” between different countries. It is also because of the fact that, geographically, Turkey is located in an area that is a crossroads between geopolitical and ideological differences. Furthermore, the fact that Turkey shares a boarder with the nation of Iraq means that Turkey is widely viewed as a key for the European Union with regards to investment. This was highlighted by the visit by the Queen of England as she states upon her visit in 2008 that “Turkey is uniquely

⁹⁶European Commission, Progress Report, p.7

⁹⁷*Agence Europe*. (2008, December 9). EU reiterates 2006 strategy- Turkey must make ‘substantial efforts’ on political criteria.

⁹⁸*Agence Europe*. (2008, December 23). EU/Cyprus: Negotiations on island reunification stalling but two sides reaffirm determination to reach agreement ‘as soon as possible’.

positioned as a bridge between East and West at a crucial time for the European Union and the world in general.”⁹⁹

Yet, it is important for Turkey to take a more cautious role when it comes to its military actions. For example, in 2007 Turkey used air strikes in the northern Iraqi region of Kurdistan in order to clamp down on Kurdish rebels, and this was widely seen as a breach of Iraqi sovereignty and was widely condemned by the international community.¹⁰⁰ Like most issues, the issue of the air strikes has two sides to the coin. While this was seen by many as step taken too far, there was some praise given to the Turkish people because this action was seen as a pro-active stand that the country was taking against terrorism. The issue, though, remains that Turkey has been finding it difficult to align itself with the European Union’s political stance as it had directly breached the sovereignty of another country.

It is clear, then, that there is a real need for much more to be done in order for Turkey to be able to fulfill the Copenhagen political criteria. There is a need for the rule of law to take on a more important role in Turkish society as well as the safeguarding of human rights and minority rights in order for Turkey to become more closely aligned with other members in the European Union.

4.3 Economic Copenhagen Criteria

With regards to the Copenhagen economic criteria, it is declared that “membership of the Union requires the existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the

⁹⁹Turkey has key role, says Queen. (2008, May 13). *BBC World News*. www.bbc.co.uk

¹⁰⁰EUTCC Statement on Turkish Air Strikes. (2007, December 18). EUTCC Press Release. www.eutcc.org

Union.”¹⁰¹ Many contend that there would be many positive economic effects for everyone involved if Turkey joined the European Union. However, the slowdown of accession has come as a result of the slow implementation of these criteria by the Turkish government, and this has further complicated the situation for Turkey’s membership.

Due to the fact that the world economic situation is in a dire state at this point in time, many have seen that the economic criteria of the Copenhagen criteria being a very important matter. With many economies failing to completely recover from the financial crisis that impacted the financial markets around the world in 2008, it is no wonder that a bloc such as the European Union would feel the need to protect itself economically and be very cautious with regards to any possible effect that a new member could have on the European Union member states’ economies.

Furthermore, it has been said that “the outlook is highly uncertain, and the timing and pace of recovery depend critically on strong policy actions.”¹⁰² The fact that the global markets around the world are facing an uncertain period in time means that the implementation of the Copenhagen economic criteria is, in itself, somewhat more difficult at this point in time. This is because changes in the economies are now much harder to predict and many economies around the world are more cautious.

One issue that is quite apparent is the fact that the European Union’s economic programs have to essentially adapt to the global market, which further complicates matters for Turkey. These changes did not just come about during the recent financial crisis, and evidence of this could be seen longer ago. For example,

¹⁰¹European Commission, Progress Report, 30.

¹⁰²International Monetary Fund, “World Economic Outlook update: Global Economic Slump Challenges Policies,” www.imf.org

in 2003 approaches were “changing from a Keynesian strategy emphasizing integration and cohesion to a neo-liberal one, emphasizing deregulating markets in the face of growing global competition.”¹⁰³

The criteria that Turkey has been trying to fulfill will also be analyzed and judged using the existence of a functioning market economy and the ability for the country to be able to cope with economic and market forces that the country would be subject to within the Union. It must be noted that there is also importance with regards to budgetary implications if Turkey was given the chance to become the newest member of the European Union.

With regards to the first criteria, the existence of a functioning market economy, Turkey is viewed and is classified by the European Union as being a market economy. This is due to the fact that supply and demand over products and services are what set and regulate the price of goods and services, and government intervention in this type of economy has been minimal. As with many other countries around the world, the Turkish economy suffered from significant slowdown in 2008. In fact, according to some data that has come out, Turkey was extremely affected by the financial crisis that shook the world recently. Even though the Turkish economy had grown by 6.7% in the first quarter of 2008, the second quarter saw much more moderate growth levels of 1.9%.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, many have seen that Turkey’s ability to conform to, and fulfill the economic portion of the Copenhagen criteria rests with the ability of the Turkish economy to be able to bounce back strongly from the global financial crisis.

¹⁰³Eder, M. (2003). Implementing the Economic Criteria of EU Membership: How Difficult is it for Turkey?, in Turkey and the European Union. A. Carkoglu & B. Rubin (Eds.). London: Frank Cass and Co., 239

¹⁰⁴European Commission, Progress Report, 87

With regards to the second criteria, the ability of the country to be able to cope with economic and market forces that the country would be subject to within the Union, is an important issue for Turkey's accession bid. In 1963, Turkey and the European Union signed what was known as the Ankara Agreement. This agreement set in place a framework for Turkish participation within the internal European Union market for the future. However, the agreement has come under scrutiny especially because of the fact that Turkey has often only partially implemented this agreement. Because Turkey has had difficulty in fulfilling its duties with regards to the Ankara Agreement, Turkey has essentially made its life more difficult because this is yet another obstacle that the nation faces with regards to its goal of joining the European Union.

One example of further economic trouble that has been a sticking point for Turkey lies in the nation's agricultural industry. In 2004, the European Union issued a report that discussed various issues of importance with regards to Turkish accession into the European Union. The Union had said in this report that the agricultural industry would require "special attention¹⁰⁵" and, furthermore, "would represent a major challenge to cohesion policy". One of the main reasons that has been highlighted with regards to this issue is that 26% of the population in the country is employed in the agricultural sector, according to Eurostat data. Furthermore, the entire sector only contributed to 8.7% of the nation's GDP. The information that can be taken out of this fact is that the agriculture industry is a large one in Turkey, but one that is running ineffectively and which needs to be turned

¹⁰⁵European Commission. (2004, September 6). Issues Arising from Turkey's Membership Perspective. SEC(2004) 1202. Ec.europa.eu/enlargement. P.5

around in order for the country, and the Union for that matter, to be able to benefit.¹⁰⁶

These issues pose an important question that must be taken into consideration. Can the Turkish agriculture industry compete with other European Union members, whose agricultural sectors have benefited from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) over a number of years? One report that came out in 2004 said that “continuous rural development efforts and an upgrading of administrative capacity would be required from Turkey to create as favourable conditions as possible to participate successfully in the common agricultural policy.”¹⁰⁷ With this in mind, the progression of the years have brought up even more questions and concern and has meant that more changes need to be done in order for the nation of Turkey to participate under the CAP in a way that would avoid “substantial income losses for Turkish farmers.”¹⁰⁸ What this essentially entails is that attention and reform are needed in this area because otherwise, Turkish farmers would suffer and would not be able to deal with market forces, which would be counterproductive.

Turkey is looking forward to having “access to social and regional funds, the Common Agriculture Policy, and free mobility of labor” after joining the EU. However, the EU states, taking into consideration the setbacks they are facing with the economically weak states, are not willing to bail out another country when facing any setbacks or financial crisis. Moreover, they are concerned about the relative underdevelopment of Turkey's economy compared to the economies of EU members as well as Turkey's high rate of population growth, which is approximately

¹⁰⁶European Commission, Progress Report, p.87, 89

¹⁰⁷European Commission, Issues, 5

¹⁰⁸European Commission, Issues, 5

1.2% according to the World Factbook (2011). The latter issue is perceived as a potentially serious problem because of free labor movement among EU members.

Starting in 1980, Turkey instituted liberalization efforts opening its doors to the world economy. The country has been able to achieve many positive reforms in the economic sector since its joining the Customs Union in 1995. By 2003, Turkey's economy had expanded significantly and inflation rates were diminished to the extent that Turkey was able to "lop off the six zeros from the currency" (Gordon & Taspinar, 2006, p.62). The progress continued with the Turkish market opening to foreign investments. As result, the per capita income levels increased to US\$ 14,600.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, national debt in relation to GNP dropped down from 91% to 65% in three years, while the existence of EU-Turkey Customs Union has been beneficial for Turkey's economy (Domaniç, 2007).

However, Turkey is still considered a developing country that is not able to compete with other EU member states; it has not yet achieved a completely functioning market economy and still needs to implement industrial policies. The issues of corruption, unbalanced income distribution, poor urbanization, and insufficient infrastructure are some of the problems that Turkey needs to overcome in a way to improve its development (LaGro & Jorgensen 2007; Lake 2005). Were Turkey to gain membership, as the largest and least developed candidate compared with the new member states, budgetary and migration would be the main concerns for the EU as explained by Joseph (2006).

The following section provide an in depth evaluation of the expected outcome of a European Turkey in regard with the economic situation as well as the EU

¹⁰⁹2011 estimates according to the *World FactBook*.

predictable concerns on the free movement and immigration of Turkish people into the EU after the membership.

4.3.1 Free movement and Immigration

Considering the introduction of the free movement, the EU is concerned about an influx of Turkish migrants to the core EU countries. As a result, the issue being debated in the EU is the impact of this flow on wages and employment chances. This is relatively correlated with the human capital endowment of each EU country. The lower the latter is, the higher the risks of migration are. As the unemployment rate in Turkey is around 12% (the World Fact world 2010), the Europeans believe that the Turkish migrants will compete with them on job opportunities as well as threatening their culture and social security resources. They expect the poor and unskilled Turkish people to migrate to the EU countries looking for job opportunities. Consequently, those who have a lower level of job skills as well as lowest income are going to be affected badly. Moreover, as the agricultural sector is large in Turkey, the EU member states farmers will face competition if Turkey joins the EU (McLaren 2007; Joseph 2006).

Closely related to the concern about there being too many Turkish workers for too few jobs is the social problem of integrating those workers into 'European' culture. The EU is worried about their integration process, especially for the relatively poor Turkish workers, and the difficulties they may face adapting to the new life in Europe. These difficulties are mainly related to social identities, culture, lifestyle, language, norms and values.

Bogdani (2011) further analyzes the resistance of migrants to integration due to nostalgia and attachment to their native culture. What is more, some may be

unwilling to integrate expressing their attitudes in exclusion, xenophobia, racism, hostility, and segregation. Consequently, they will feel ignored, estranged, and marginalized causing them to turn to fundamentalism.

Others fear a growing Turkey inside of the EU. That is, while it doesn't have the strongest economy today, it very well might have the strongest one in the near future and then it will want to 'dominate' the EU from the inside. While Europe is struggling with bailouts, Turkey's rapid growth momentum demonstrates that its economy is growing more powerful and that it may well prove to be one of the world's fastest-growth economies in 2012 (Taspinar 2011, Parkinson 2011).

To this end, the EU worries about not being able to absorb Turkey in this respect, which will have a negative impact on the EU and European member states' citizens. The issues of budget and competition hold the same significance as the matter of migration and free movement, which is highlighted in the following section.

4.3.2 Budget and Competition Issues

If Turkey were given membership to the European Union, there would be natural competition with regards to budgeted relief funds that would occur between Turkey and other member states of the European Union. The European Union has stated that "Turkey would qualify for significant support from the structural and cohesion funds over a long period of time. A number of regions in present member states benefiting from structural funds support could lose their eligibility on the basis of present rules."¹¹⁰ It is therefore clear to see how this budgetary competition could be a big obstacle for Turkey's ambitions to join the European Union, because

¹¹⁰European Commission, Issues, 5

it could eventually lead to some nations becoming “brakemen” states that would try to ensure that Turkey does not join the Union as it would have a negative impact on their own states.

One of the reasons that Turkey is able to claim funds, or indeed, be eligible for funds is due to the fact that Turkey has not implemented and completed its agricultural reform plan. For example, one of the reports to come out of the European Union has said that all the focus before accession should be on preparations for CAP, and goes on to say that “in most cases implementation of the agricultural *Acquis* has not yet started. The main emphasis in this regard, and the main focus of the accession preparations, should be the creating of a rural development strategy aimed at restructuring and modernisation of agriculture.”¹¹¹

At this point in time, France receives 20.3% of the CAP funding, and it must be noted that in this case agriculture only makes up around 1.5% of GDP. Since the CAP investment is representative of around 40% of the European Union budget, it is fair to say that this is a significant amount.¹¹²

Furthermore, one of the main concerns with regards to this issue is the fact that if Turkey were to join the European Union, there would need to be a budgetary redistribution, which would mean that countries such as France would suffer because of this and Turkish membership would have a serious impact on the economic image and workings of the European Union.

Regarding budgetary implications, Turkey will be a net recipient of the Union's structural funds. It is challenging to estimate the net budgetary implications as it depends on the reform of the CAP and Turkish GDP's growth. Moreover, as

¹¹¹European Commission, Issues, 5 p. 37

¹¹²European Commission. (2007). The Common Agricultural Policy Explained. Ec.europa.eu/agriculture

the EU linked the budgetary transfers and a member country's GDP, Turkey has the possibility of receiving higher levels of structural funds as its GDP increases. The link was set by imposing "an upper limit to the level of structural fund support at 0.69% of a member country's GDP" (32). Under the scenario that Turkey will join the EU in 2015, it is assumed that the net budgetary transfers will be approximately €24.6 billion (33). Joseph (2006) continues to explain that the budgetary costs of integrating Turkey in the EU is equal to ten countries' budgetary costs of integration, assuming these ten countries are from Central and Eastern Europe, thus, it is difficult to determine if the EU will be able to recover the net budgetary transfers to Turkey.

These issues have come to light and have been highlighted because of the fact that the European Union, like most other zones and regions in the world, and finding it difficult to pick themselves out of the economic mess that was created by the global financial crisis. It is therefore no wonder that the European Union member states would be cautious with regards to any sort of change with regard to the economic make-up of the Union.

The European Union has also noted that "the inclusion of Turkey would significantly increase socio-economic disparities across the EU. The scale of the statistical effect in terms of reduced average per capita GDP is comparable to the effect of accession of the 10 new member states¹¹³, also given the fact that it is widely viewed that the Balkan countries in the EU (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Slovenia) were seen as "net recipients"¹¹⁴ when they joined the European Union, which is something that is also likely to happen were Turkey to join the Union. It is also important to note that because of the scope of Turkish membership (which is to

¹¹³European Commission, Issues, 38

¹¹⁴Schimmelfennig, "Community Trap," 52

say that Turkey alone would need to be able to come up with the finances that the last ten members had to come up with combined) entails that the European Union would have to look at ways in which it can redistribute its budget. If this were to happen, and if this were to be implemented by the European Union, will mean that the process of Turkish accession into the Union will further suffer from delays and take much longer than Turkey would have anticipated, or indeed, accepted.

4.4 Challenges by EU Members

As seen from the previous pages, most of the issues having to do with Turkish accession have largely come through a link with other nations within the Union. These challenges present a case for why there could be nations (brakemen states) that could look to putting up further barriers in order to ensure that Turkey does not join the Union, for fear that its membership would have detrimental effects on members states within the European Union. Taking the case of Cyprus into consideration as an example, it is evident that there is a direct or indirect involvement in the Turkish membership process with other member states of the Union. This has a significant effect on whether or not Turkey as a nation is able to fulfill the requirements that it must fulfill in order to gain membership.

At this point, it is key to remember the fact that member states of the European Union have a say, and therefore to some degree, power over applicant states for membership. This happens within the European Parliament and also the European Council, which means that other nations may stand in the way of Turkey in its bid to join the European Union. There are several states that may have reasons to do so, which compass issues that have yet to be discussed and will be the focus of the next section.

One of the pillars that have been set with regards to Turkey's membership bid involves the fact that Turkey is required to engage in talks with other member states within the European Union. The aim of this is to for Turkey to build relationships with other nations that will be strengthened if and when Turkey does achieve membership status in the Union but this issue also brings to light the fact that Turkey has had some problems with some of the member states that has long threatened to derail the entire process due to the slow nature of talks and the inability to find resolutions to some long standing issues.

Because of these issues, it becomes easier to see where Turkey may have problems with regards to certain countries acting as brakemen states that are interested in hindering the Turkish accession process. Schimmelfennig touched on this matter extensively and said that brakemen states simply cannot always remain this way. This is due to the fact that they could begin to lose credibility among other members of the Union. What this means is that these states that act as "brakemen" states will get to a point in which they are expected to accept the driver state positions on the subject matter.¹¹⁵

Even though, according to Schimmelfennig and others, these brakemen states' roles are not issues that will last for a considerable amount of time in the sense that they will need to change in order to provide a common European Union stance, their ability to have an impact on the accession process and their ability to pose an obstacle of any sort cannot be ignored. There are certain states that have had a significant impact in terms of slowing down the process of Turkish accession into the Union. France has been one of the nations that has often stood in the way and has had a significant impact on the way the process has played out over the recent past.

¹¹⁵Schimmelfennig, "Community Trap," 72

France has had objections in the past with regards to certain *Acquis* which has not helped the Turkish nation in anyway. These brakemen states will be identified according to the outstanding issues that Turkey has had with these nations in order to understand how they can play a role in slowing down the accession process.

4.4.1 Orientation towards the Middle East

During the second half of the 1900s Turkey was primarily focusing on its ambitions to join the European Union. As mentioned before, the talks were centred on Turkey's ability to meet certain requirements and conditions in order to be able to join the Union. That being said, political events and Turkey's cultural and religious heritage have meant that Turkey has taken somewhat of a turn with regards to where its ambitions and attentions are focused. Several key events have meant that Turkey has had to distance itself with Western powers, such as the United States and NATO in favour of adopting a more cautious stance. The Iraq war was a primary example of this. In 2007, research that was conducted in order to gauge the attitudes that people in other countries had on the United States showed that public opinion within Turkey held that a favourable image of American and the West's actions were at all time lows. Standing at an approval rating of only 9%, Turkish public opinion on the approval of the United States was the lowest among all of the surveyed countries which were 47 countries¹¹⁶ and this was due in a very large part to the war in Iraq.

Furthermore, the condemnation by countries such as France with regards to the Armenian Genocide, recently declaring it a crime in France to deny the genocide, has meant that Turkey has had to take a hard stance and defend itself

¹¹⁶<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256>

against what they see as accusations on issues that they did not commit. This issue has led to a souring in the relationship between Turkey and France, which has had serious repercussions on the bilateral ties between the two countries.

Another point that has drawn Turkey closer to the Middle East and further away from the Western World is the issue of Israel. Israeli operations in Gaza, and well as the killing of Turkish citizens among the Gaza bound flotilla recently has put the relationship between Turkey and Israel at a very low point. Turkey has long been concerned about the situation in Palestine, and the recent events in Palestine and the injustices that Turkey has seen in the area have led to Turkey voicing concern and support for the people of Palestine. This, naturally, has led to an exacerbation of the poor relationship that Turkey has had with some of the Western powers. Furthermore, before the current Syrian Crisis, Turkey and Syria had resolved many of their differences and seemed to be sharing a common view for the region. Turkish President at the time Abdullah Gul had said of the relationship that it was a “perfect example of neighbourly cooperation.”¹¹⁷

One cannot overlook the importance of public opinion within both the EU and Turkey, as well as its impact on the accession negotiations. During the 90's, Turkey witnessed a positive stance towards the EU accession and portrayed an optimistic image, which was also reflected in the Turkish population's attitudes towards the EU membership. According to the *Eurobarometer 69* (Chart 4.1), a significant decline in the Turkish public support for the EU membership started to appear in 2004 recording the lowest support in 2006 with only 44 percent of the respondents perceiving this membership as being in Turkey's interests; according to the chart below, the percentage in favor for the membership was about 71% in 2004

¹¹⁷http://www.syria-news.com/readnews.php?sy_seq=104360

and kept dropping down until it reached 49% in 2008. Furthermore, the majority of the Turkish participants in this survey considered EU global leadership as 'undesirable' (54%) ("Turkey in the EU", 2009).

4.1 Source: *Eurobarometer 69*, Turkey National Report, p.23

Nevertheless, it seems the percentage of those in favor of Turkey's membership in the EU has stopped decreasing lately. The year 2008 witnessed a fluctuation in the ratio between 49% and 42%. However, in 2009, *Eurobarometer 71* indicates a rise in the ratio to 48%.

4.4.2 Why the Decline in the Turkish Public Support for EU Membership?

The year 2006 witnessed the EU decision to partially suspend the accession negotiations with Turkey. This took its toll on the public opinion regarding this

matter. Another crucial factor in the Turkish public distrust towards the EU accession project is its attitude vis-à-vis the Cypriot and Armenian issues. In addition, the Turkish population was frustrated and disappointed with they perceived as the EU's double standards and attitude towards Turkey, which was portrayed in the member states officials' speeches. The data in *Eurobarometer 74* (2010) demonstrates, as per the chart below, the general attitude of the 27-EU-countries towards a European Turkey. In 2008, the percentage against Turkey's accession was 55%. However, in 2010, the percentage of EU opposition for Turkey's membership reached 59% while respondents' percentage in favour of the accession of Turkey remained around 30%.

QA20. For each of the following countries and territories, would you be in favour or against it becoming part of the European Union in the future?

4.2 Source: *Eurobarometer 74*, Public Opinion in the European Union, p.62

Moreover, the confidence in the EP and EC significantly dropped even in the EU member states. As reported by *Eurobarometer 71* for Spring 2009, the trust of the Turkish public in the EU is about 38%. People see that the criteria for Turkey to

join the EU are more challenging than any other candidate (Gordon & Taspinar, 2006). Furthermore, relying on the A&G Research, a whopping 76.5% of respondents believe that the EU will try to obstruct Turkey's membership even with fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria (Domaniç, 2007). In accordance with the negotiation framework for Turkey, "negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand" (Pet'ková, 2008, 7); this inspires less and less trust among the Turkish public.

It is also worth noting that opening and closing any of the 35 chapters need the unanimity of all EU member states. It is quite evident that the EU, even when it agreed to initiate the accession negotiations, has left the door open to dodge its commitment towards Turkey when it fulfills the required conditions. In all cases, Turkey will not accept a "restricted" membership or "privileged partnership" in the EU under any circumstances.

It is evident that the "image" of the EU cannot be implemented in Turkey per se. The basic characteristics of Turkey need to be taken into consideration when dealing with democratic deficiencies; a more flexible approach to the issue of minority rights and other fundamental rights can be more feasible than imposing an exported European system and identity.

A crucial issue to be considered nowadays is whether Turkey *needs* to be a part of the EU. The public attitude in Turkey as well as the standpoints of some policy makers and politicians demonstrate that Turkey does not need the EU membership when it could be "a self-standing regional hub" by itself (Pet'ková, 2008, p.7).

It is noteworthy to examine and highlight some of the EU member states' attitudes towards Turkey's accession when discussing the regional and international

issues and challenges. The most key EU member states that have unsettled issues with Turkey are Greece, Germany, France, and Cyprus, the topics of the rest of this chapter.

4.5 Greece

Greece has long been used as an example of the redistribution effect that was mentioned earlier. This is because Greece had suffered significantly because of these budgetary redistributions and therefore is a fine case when understanding the effects that Turkish accession and the changing nature of the image of the European Union economy could have on the bloc as a whole. Furthermore, when the Balkan countries had joined the European Union, Greece was seen as one of the important brakemen states due to this very reason.¹¹⁸

With this in mind, the accession of Turkey into the Union would likely mean that more distribution is necessary, and to that end Greece will likely be one of the main brakemen states and will slow down the process considerably. Moreover, Greece and Turkey have had a long history of political tension, which can further contribute to the fact that Greece could play a big role in the brakemen state role.

The most serious issue between those two entities is their dispute over the island of Cyprus, which dates back to 1974. With Greece as a current EU member, it has sought to use the accession talks to force resolution of the problem to its benefit. Therefore, it was difficult for the EU to pursue a balanced policy in relation to the Cyprus issue, as Greece play a role in its decision-making process of the EU (Arikan 2006).

¹¹⁸Schimmelfennig, "Community Trap," 52

Starting in 1974, Turkish troops occupied the northeastern part of the island to protect the Turkish minority (20 percent of the population), which felt threatened by the Greek majority's proposals for unification with Greece (Bürgin 2010). Carkoglu & Rubin (2003) argue that the real reason behind Turkish intervention was not for humanitarian consideration, rather for protecting its vital interests; if Cyprus became Greek, the Anatolian coast would be encircled by Greek islands. Consequently, the balance between Greece and Turkey's forces would be destroyed.

In 1983, the Turkish-controlled northern part of the island declared itself the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is only recognized by Turkey (Bürgin 2010). Since then, all efforts and negotiation attempts to settle this conflict peacefully have failed. The most comprehensive attempt to solve the dispute was the Annan Plan in 2002. It aimed at bringing the island's two communities into a confederation of two equal states. However, in 2004, the Greek Cypriots rejected the plan while the Turkish Cypriots approved it (Bürgin 2010).

The major problem between the two parties is the different approach to Cyprus settlement; Turkish Cypriots support the notion of confederation with the political equality between all Cypriots people. On the other hand, Greek Cypriots support the reunification of the island and the withdrawal of the Turkish troops, which the UN and other international forums back up as well (Joseph 2006). The EU has not been able to find a resolution for the Turkish-Greek dispute. However, it has prevented the outbreak of a militarized conflict (Celik & Rumelili 2006).

Even though there has been a visible improvement in relations between the two countries that was underlined by the fact that the Greek Prime Minister visited Turkey for the first time in half a decade not so long ago, the issue of Cyprus between Turkey and Greece has been lingering on with no solution to the issue

being put on the table. It is therefore essential that Greece sees some movement forward with regard to the Cyprus issue; otherwise this could be a major stumbling block for Turkey and could severely dampen the nation's hopes of joining the Union.

Another issue is Turkey's dispute with Greece over territorial rights and interests in the Aegean Sea. Although both Greece and Turkey are *de jure* allies in NATO, their conflicting claims brought them to the brink of war in 1976 and 1987.

A fundamental source of contention is exploration rights to minerals, primarily oil, beneath the Aegean Sea. International law recognizes the right of a country to explore the mineral wealth on its own continental shelf. Greece and Turkey, however, have been unable to agree on what constitutes the Aegean continental shelf. Turkey defines the Aegean shelf as a natural prolongation of the Anatolian coast, whereas Greece claims that every one of the more than 2,000 of its islands in the Aegean has its own shelf.

According to 1958 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf, 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and Customary International Law, the islands "have a continental shelf on the same footing as land territory" (Lake 2005,152). Unlike Greece, Turkey did not ratify any of the Conventions in order not to recognize the islands' entitlement to their own continental shelf. In the tight waterway between Greece and Turkey, both of them have six miles of territorial waters. However, Greece claims that it has the right to extend their territorial waters to 12 nautical miles under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea; Turkey threatened Greece to resort to war if they decide to extend their territorial waters. If the twelve-mile expanse were to be accepted, all international maritime vessels have to go through Greek territorial waters if they are to sail from Istanbul to Antalya.

Therefore, Turkey's challenge to this expansion came as a result to prevent the above-mentioned outcome (Lake 2005; Arikan 2006).

Air space is another source of dispute between Turkey and Greece. Air space normally extends above the expanse of a given country's lands and territorial waters. Since 1974, Turkey has violated and penetrated Greek's national air space, which was fixed by law to 10 nautical miles as Greece argues. Furthermore, in 1996, the Imia/Kardak crisis broke out when Turkey landed its troops on Greek territory in response to Greece's military troops on one of the disputed Imia/Kardak islets (Lake 2005; Akcapar 2007).

As all member states should agree on the opening and closing of each chapter Turkey needs to fulfill, Greece has used its power as a member in the EC and then the EU to hinder its progress by blocking some beneficial legislation to be issued by the EC. Greece perceived the EU as a lever to be used against Turkey, and the latter perceived the EU as captured by Greece (Celik & Rumelili 2006, Redmond 2007).

However, based on the new international variables, Greece did not veto against Turkey's candidature in the Helsinki European Council in 1999 (Lake, 2005; Redmond 2007). Helsinki decisions induced Turkey to accept the linkage between its membership process and the resolution of these disputes. Moreover, the Council urged the two countries to pursue negotiations on bilateral disputes with a view towards their subsequent referral to the ICJ, as well as engaging in extensive functional cooperation (Celik & Rumelili 2006). Greece perceived Turkey's participation in the EU as a strategic choice to improve and progress its bilateral relations as well as securing a high degree of stability in the region (Akcapar 2007; Lake 2005; Joseph 2006).

Apart from Greek-Turkish dispute, Germany has been opposing Turkey's membership in the Union mainly because of the free movement of Turkish people if Turkey is to be an EU member. The next section tackles this issue in depth.

4.6 Germany

When it comes to issues that Turkey has had with Germany, one of the most important ones has been that of the “free movement of persons” clause. In 2002, it was estimated that a staggering 77% of migrant workers who were living and working in Germany were of Turkish origin, which equates to over two million people. This meant that people of Turkish origin made up the largest ethnic minority group of all the groups within Germany's borders.¹¹⁹ Moreover, it was revealed by the European Union that there were upwards of three million Turkish who were living in the European Union and outside of their homeland, which signifies the fact that Germany has been the preferred place amongst Turkish immigrants with regards to choices for living and working.

It is therefore apparent that there is a significant presence of Turkish people within Germany, who have been able to build up a large community for themselves within the country. This has meant that because of the “free movement of persons” clause, this trend is set to continue and grow at extremely high and fast rates, which would mean that Germany would be a hub for migration of Turkish to the country. The European Union has said on the matter that “Turkish people constitute by far the largest group of third-country nationals legally residing in today's EU. Available studies give varying estimates of expected additional migration following Turkey's

¹¹⁹European Commission, Issues, 18

accession¹²⁰.” Therefore, one can see why Germany may have serious concerns if Turkey were to join the Union. The “free movement of persons” clause would allow for an unrestricted number of Turkish moving to Germany and the already large Turkish community could grow substantially.

There are essentially a couple of reasons why this would lead to Germany acting as a brakemen state with regards to the issue of mass migration. The first reason is the fact that the European Union has said that “provisions and a permanent safeguard clause could be considered to avoid serious disturbances on the EU labour market¹²¹.” This clause would be one that Germany would be likely to react positively to because the increase in migration by Turkish people to within Germany’s borders would mean that there would be more competitiveness within the labour market.

Because estimates put migration figures of Turkish people to Germany at very high levels, it is understandable that Germany would want a system in place that would safeguard its borders before accession. It is then important to note that these safeguards would not be straight forward to implement meaning that it would further lead to a slowdown in accession talks. This would effectively render Germany as a brakeman state because of the potential impact that it can have on how the accession process proceeds.

Another issue that ties in to the migration of Turkish people to Germany that could be a reason for Germany to act as a brakeman nation has to do with the Turkish that are currently living and working in Germany and their situation as things stand. Even though, as mentioned before, people of Turkish origin living in Germany are the largest minority group in Germany, there have been several

¹²⁰European Commission, Issues, 5

¹²¹European Commission, Issues, 5

concerns that have been raised with regards to the issue of how well they have been able to integrate into German society. For example, a study was conducted in 2003 by Nedim Ogelman in which it was found out that the Turkish population that are living in Germany “maintain strong perceptions of victimization at the hands of host country actors.”¹²² There has often been the perception amongst Germans that the Turkish community widely adopt an “us and them” approach. This concern is heightened to another level with the prospect of having an influx of Turkish migrants if Turkey was to obtain full membership into the European Union. There has been fear that this could lead to undesired consequences such as civil problems between the different groups.

This type of fear has now become worrying enough to the extent that it has been publicly commented on by some high ranking German officials. For example, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier publicly addressed this issue when running for election against incumbent Chancellor Angela Merkel. Steinmeier pushed the agenda of supporting Turkish membership into the European Union and this was seen as an attempt to win the vote of the Turkish community residing in Germany and also as a way in which these tensions could be alleviated.¹²³ His stance came as a result of the Merkel administration attitude, which had long been a proponent of a Turkish accession agreement such as “privileged membership”, rather than giving Turkey the full membership rights that it has been vying for.¹²⁴

There are key conclusions to be drawn from these issues with regards to the relationship between Germany and its Turkish population. First and foremost, there

¹²²Ogelman, N. (2003). Documenting and Explaining the Persistence of Homeland Politics among Germany’s Turks. *International Migration Review* 37(1): 193-193. P.181

¹²³Velentina P. (2008, October 15). German foreign minister backs Turkey’s EU bid. *EU Observer*. www.euobserver.com

¹²⁴Welle, D. (2005, August 25). Conservatives Say No to Turkey Again. www.dw.-world.de

is an obvious division when it comes to the issue of Turkish accession into the Union, which has its own effects on slowing down the entire process because it fails to reach certain agreements that are important for Turkey to be able to join the Union. Secondly, with more public figures speaking about the issue, and in many cases some officials trying to win over the Turkish community's vote in elections, there is an apparent acceptance of the importance that the Turkish community has in Turkey and the presence that it holds in German society.

There is one more important factor that could also contribute to Germany becoming a brakeman state to Turkish membership. This factor has to do with Turkey's geographical size and its demographics. By allowing Turkey to become a full member of the European Union, the country would become the second largest country in the Union with regards to population size. This would mean that Turkey would be able to hold on to significant powers within the European Parliament. Germany has been the most populated country within the Union ever since its creation, and has also been widely regarded as one of the most powerful members of the Union holding much influence over the way the Union operates and the directions that it takes.

Therefore, with Turkey joining the European Union, the balance of the scale could be seen to tilt in some respects. Germany would have to accept the fact that its longstanding position in the European Union with regards to holding the greatest number of seats within the European Parliament would come under threat. This is not limited to the European Parliament as it would also mean that Turkey would have a significant presence within the Council of Ministers, something that Germany would also have to be aware of given the fact that Germany has long been one of the leaders in that domain.

As Germany plays a role in slowing down Turkish accession process, France, as another powerful EU member state, is responsible for hindering the Turkish membership. France shares the same concern as Germany regarding the immigration and free movement. However, more concerns are being discussed in the following section.

4.7 France

There are certain problems that the France-Turkey relationship has that could mean that France could act as a brakeman state towards Turkish membership. One of these issues, mentioned before, is the issue that deals with the CAP. Moreover, there are migration issues that France has that are similar to the dynamics that are seen in Germany. France has an immigrant population of Turkish origin that comes it at around 8% of the immigrant population, or around 230,000 individuals.¹²⁵ There is also the issue of the way that France has recently been dealing with immigrant problems, especially through police violence that were seen a few years ago in the suburbs of Paris¹²⁶. Also, with Turkey being a predominantly Muslim country, France's hard-line laws on religious symbols such as the veil worn by Muslim women could be a serious issue. Therefore, as was the case with Germany, the "movement of persons" clause could potentially bring about problems for France with regards to the Turkish immigrants living in the country.

Looking beyond the issue of migration, one of the other factors that could be important in terms of France acting as a brakeman nation is the fact that the country has been reluctant with regards to the issue of European Union enlargement in

¹²⁵European Commission, Issues, p.18

¹²⁶Make the Police Accountable in France. (2009, January 1). Amnesty International. www.amnesty.org

general¹²⁷. There have been two general points of view when it comes to the expansion of the Union. Some nations feel that widening is the way to go while others believe that deepening is a better way forward. The group that believes in widening the European Union holds the view that the Union's growth goes in hand with the addition of new members that can bring about positive aspects to the Union as a whole. Others, such as France, believe that deepening in terms of bringing about treaties and understanding between the nations within the Union will bring about a stronger level of association between the members states within the European Union. This stance holds that the Union is sufficient in terms of the numbers of nations that are in the Union and there is no need to expand outward but rather inward expansion would bring about a more cohesive bloc that is able to deal with matters in a more effective way, and keep differences at the minimum.

The position taken by France with regards to its deepening stance was seen in 1993. According to Schimmelfennig, this position came about from the Treaty of Rome, which was completed before the enlargement of the Union to include the nations of Finland, Austria and Sweden.¹²⁸ This had placed the nation of France in a position that has been widely seen as critical towards the expansion of the Union outward. There are also other reasons why France could be a potential brakemen state when it comes to the Turkish membership process. France has already been opposed to several chapters within the *Acquis* that has had an impact on the ability of the process to move along at a fast pace. However, as mentioned before, brakemen states are not expected to stay as such for a long time in order to be more in line with the Union's views. An example of this is the fact that France had removed its objection to the *Acquis* chapter of the "education/culture", which depicts what has

¹²⁷Schimmelfennig, "Community Trap," 53

¹²⁸Schimmelfennig, "Community Trap," 73

been explained about the need to share a common view within the Union and become more in line with other countries in order to keep credibility in place¹²⁹.

4.8 Cyprus

One of the most important obstacles to Turkey's membership in the European Union has been the issue of Cyprus. Here, the matter with Cyprus itself is of a political nature apart from the Greek-Turkish dispute over the island of Cyprus. Cyprus has been a member of the Union since 2004, and the issue has been a subject of much debate for a very long time. In 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus in response to a coup, which was done by Greek Cypriots who had been trying to integrate the island nation with Greece. Turkey had previously committed to preserving the status quo in Cyprus during the Zurich-London Accords, and its invasion was in order for Turkey to maintain the status quo on the island and not allow the nation to drift into the hands of Greek control. Turkey has adamantly refused to recognize the Republic of Cyprus's authority over the island, and it has been a supporter of a separate breakaway state in the form of a Turkish Cypriot state in the north of the island.

This renunciation came as result of the unfulfilled EU promises to facilitate trade with Northern Cyprus as well as Greece's disapproval to accept the Annan Plan in 2002. Furthermore, Cyprus has blocked trade between the EU and Northern Cyprus until today (Müftüler-Bac, 2008). Furthermore, Turkey tried hard to prevent Cyprus' membership in the EU by attempting to convince the EU that its accession is against principles of international law; Turkey perceived Cyprus' membership as a threat to the amelioration of Turkey – Europe relations with a possible veto of

¹²⁹Agence Europe. (2008, October 30). "EU-France-Turkey,"

Cyprus added to the Greek veto. However, the EU was not affected by Turkish arguments (Carkoglu & Rubin 2003).

Turkey has a large military presence on the island, with over 30,000 Turkish soldiers taking up positions on the island¹³⁰. Turkey also has an occupation of around 37% of the island and has refused to open up its own ports and airports to planes and ships coming from the Republic of Cyprus even though they are required to do so according to the Ankara Protocol¹³¹.

Turkey's rejection to allow its aircrafts and vessels into its ports and harbors resulted in the suspension of eight out of 35 negotiations chapters in 2006 (Müftüler-Bac, 2008). With the Republic of Cyprus's membership in the EU in May 2004, the EU obliged Turkey to extend the customs union to the Union's 10 new member states including Cyprus as a condition to opening accession talks with Turkey. In July 2005, Turkey signed an additional protocol to the Ankara Agreement extending its customs union to the new member states. However, at the same time, Ankara issued a declaration saying that its signature did not indicate its recognition of the Republic of Cyprus (Bürgin 2010; Müftüler-Bac, 2008).

To this end, Turkey's refusal to apply the Additional Protocol has been used by some of the EU member states as a justification to the rejection of Turkey's accession. For instance, Germany and France argued that it is not possible for Turkey to join the EU while its army is occupying the territory of another EU country. Therefore, the minimum price Turkey is required to pay is withdrawing its troops from Northern Cyprus (Bürgin 2010). Moreover, Turkey is required to take steps towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN

¹³⁰UN Envoy Sees Cyprus Talks Heading into 2009'. (2008, November 13). *Today's Zaman*. From <http://www.todayszaman.com/tzweb/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=158619&bolum=100>

¹³¹Carkoglu, A. & Rubin, B. (2003, April 3). *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic politics, economic integration and international dynamics*. London: Frank Cass.

framework and in line with the founding principles of the EU; it is also stipulated to progress normalized bilateral relations with the Republic of Cyprus (Carkoglu & Rubin 2003). Finally, since the negotiations need unanimity in order to proceed in every stage, Cyprus's possibility to block progress with its veto formed major complications for Turkey's accession (Müftüler-Bac, 2008).

Recently, in October 2011, the EU Commission proposed creating a "Positive Agenda" in its relations with Turkey. This agenda meant to accelerate the accession negotiations, pushing it forward to prepare Turkey for harmonization in the areas of the eight blocked chapters mentioned above, as stated by EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle at a joint press conference with EU Affairs Minister Egemen Bağış on June 4, 2012.¹³² Füle also added that the aim of this agenda is to align with EU legislation and norms by supporting Turkey to move forward on all of the chapters.

Turkey's hard line approach with regards to the issue of Cyprus is nothing new. The country has always held that it would not recognize the Republic of Cyprus in its current form and this has been a big point of contention with regards to its accession bid. The Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey has said on the issue "We do not approach EU membership at all costs. No one can force us to choose between Cyprus or the European Union. When we began our path in 1999, Cyprus was not a requirement of the EU. The negotiations are based on the Copenhagen Criteria. There is no topic of Cyprus in the Copenhagen Criteria."¹³³ There has been commitment from both Turkey and the Republic on Cyprus to come to a long term

¹³²Turkey moves to break EU bid standstill. (2012, June 5). *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-moves-to-break-eu-bid-standstill.aspx?pageID=238&nID=21030&NewsCatID=338>

¹³³Turkey says it will not be a Member of the EU 'At all Costs'. (2008, November 16). *Hürriyet Daily News*, Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/10363514.asp?gid=2441of111/17/20088:52AMMonday>

solution on the issue. That being said, very little headway has been made with this issue, and there has been more bickering and political manoeuvring by both sides. Cyprus has also claimed that it would do everything in its power in order to block Turkish accession into the European Union.¹³⁴

Many European Union members have weighed in on the debate. For example, diplomats from Italy and Finland have both come out in support of Turkish membership in the European Union but they have both highlighted the issue of Cyprus as being one of the major stumbling blocks along the way.¹³⁵ Furthermore, it has been claimed by both Greece and Cyprus that they would support Turkish membership in the union if Turkey agrees to fulfill its commitments with regards to the issue of Cyprus. The former Greek Prime Minister, Costas Karamanlis has said that “we support Turkey’s accession because we believe that a Turkey that adopts European rules of behaviour will be much better for its people, the entire European Union and its neighbours.”¹³⁶

It is clear to see that the issue of Cyprus is an important one with regards to Turkey’s accession process although the resolution of Cyprus problem is not a precondition to Turkey’s accession to the EU as stated in the Helsinki decisions. More needs to be done and a long term solution must be found in order to ease the process and allow Turkey to focus on other pressing matters in order to join the Union; Turkey is expected to play an active role in settling Cyprus dispute (Carkoglu & Rubin 2003). This hurdle, like many others, have meant that the

¹³⁴Jansen, M. (2009, April 21). Turkish-Cypriot Win Dashes Island's Hope of Unity, EU Prospects. *Irish Times*, p. 9.

¹³⁵Finnish Envoy Backs Turkey's Bid for EU Membership. (2009, May 4). Associated Press. Retrieved <http://www.aol.com.au/sport/story/Finnish-envoy-backs-Turkey%27s-bid-for-EUmembership/2016661/index.html>

¹³⁶Cyprus and Greece Confirm Support for Turkey Joining EU. (2009, April 22). *Agence France-Presse*. Retrieved <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1240418821.34/view>

accession process has had to be dragged on in order to allow for more time for Turkey to come up with what is deemed to be acceptable by the European Union.

It is concluded that Turkey has many unsettled issues when it comes to its International relations with some EU member states. Moreover, Turkey is entailed to make many reforms in order to diminish the EU's concerns and iron out the difficulties that are deemed to ease the accession negotiations.

Up to this discussion, the final chapter lays out the predicted scenarios for Turkish accession process, the unclear complex issues as well as the findings this research reveals.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 General Findings and Conclusions

Turkey's accession process has taken a long time and the case is unique in nature. Among all countries hoping to join the EU, Turkey has been the one attracting the most attention in the EU enlargement policy. An analysis of Turkey's relationship with the Union shows that it has been the longest and most complicated of all candidate countries that have become EU members. The prospect of Turkish membership has forced the discussion of many controversial issues, such as Turkey's developing economy, its potential costs on the EU regarding budgetary implications and labor migration, its geographic and political disputes with Greece and Cyprus, and its Islamic society. Being a predominantly Muslim nation, there has been a struggle within the nation to find a balance between its historical and cultural heritage with Western ideals and ideologies. Turkey's secular government has often stated that its desire is unwavering with regards to its pursuit of full membership within the Union, and has made significant progress towards achieving accession. It is interesting to witness such events unfold since it would be a historical landmark for the European Union, and could shape its future with regards to its expansionary policies and well as have significant geopolitical and social effects on both Turkey and the European Union.

Much research has been conducted on Turkish's accession process. This paper built on existing literature and analyzed some of the key elements with

regards to the accession process and the major factors that have acted as hindrances. With the public opinion in regard to the accession process has hit an all time low, many people are simply feeling fed up with the process and this has had an effect on the way they view the Union. There are certainly key areas where reform is desperately needed in order for Turkey to claim that they share the same standards as the Union, but Turkey has been working hard to improve many areas of society and has come a long way since the process initiation at the start of the 21st century.

Even though there has been somewhat of a decline with regards to Turkish citizens aspiration to join the European Union, and in fact, anti-European sentiments are on the rise within the nation, it is apparent to see that these sentiments will grow even further if the nations bid to join the Union is turned down. At a time when the Muslim world is having relationship difficulties with much of the West, this might be an unwise path to take for all parties involved. The European Union has long made a promise that Turkey will eventually be allowed to join the Union, and that rhetoric is binding in the sense that the Union would lose significant credibility if it does not follow through with it. The fact that the Union has characterized Turkey as being “European” means that they have an obligation to allow Turkey into the Union based on the founding principles of the Union that have been highlighted in this paper.

With the existence of member states that are acting as brakemen states, and the Copenhagen Criteria issues being where they are today, these have had a serve effect on the length of the bid that Turkey and the rest of the Union have had to endure. However, the benefits of such a time consuming process can be seen; there are still many factors that need to be tackled for a proper integration to occur. The conflicts mentioned above that Turkey has with some EU countries such as

Germany, France and Cyprus need to be resolved if the accession of Turkey is to provide the best benefit possible to the Union. These issues have taken a long time to be resolved, especially the issue of Cyprus, which has meant that Turkey has had to stand back and wait for its accession. It is clear that any hasty decision with regards to Turkey joining would not be in the benefit of any of the parties involved, and that could lead to a situation where Turkey would be unable to sustain itself within the Union.

5.2 Possible Scenarios and Expectations

Discussing all the possible scenarios, the two extreme outcomes of the negotiation process are either the EU accepts Turkey as a member with some compromises or rejects it putting its credibility at stake. This research suggests that the EU cannot afford losing its relations with Turkey due to its important role in the region. Moreover, this thesis offers that the EU may need Turkey's current booming economy to help it overcome the financial crisis, which remains an on-going issue the EU is suffering from. On the other hand, Turkish officials repeatedly stated that Turkey is not willing to give up its pursuit for the EU membership, especially after coming this far. Therefore, both extremes are not likely to happen, yet, it is apparent that Turkey will not be joining the European Union in 2014 as this research implies. It is more likely that at some point, Turkey might be offered more access into the EU, opening and broadening the relationship; a new set of relations with Turkey might occur in the future so that it will play a new model when talking about its stance and relation with the EU as a regional organization.

It is worth mentioning that the political variables in the Middle East play an essential role in Turkey's EU accession. If the security situation worsens in Syria, the

EU will not wish to share borders with an unstable turbulent country. Nevertheless, *The Telegraph*¹³⁷ published on 16 May 2012 that the EU Commissioner for Enlargement Stefan Fuele will be visiting Ankara; the aim of his visit is to speed up the accession process, bring Turkey closer to the EU legislation and “forge cooperation with Turkey in foreign affairs, including issues such as the uprising in Syria”. This came after Turkey showing interests in reviving its negotiation process, particularly after the ex-French leader Nicolas Sarkozy was replaced by the Socialist Francois Holland. A new chapter is opened between the two countries. Moreover, Turkey and France restored their ties – after its deterioration under the rule of Sarkozy – with the ending of Turkish sanctions against France promise and the French pledge to facilitate Turkey’s visa procedures.¹³⁸

This paper sought to answer an important question, which was “What are the factors that best explain the challenges Turkey is facing in its EU accession bid?” The factors mentioned in the paper show that there exists a wide range of issues that require discussion and issues that need to be resolved in order for the accession process to move smoothly. Important issues with regard to security, the economy and human rights have been big and important points of contention between Turkey and the European Union and have been addressed time and again. This being said, Turkey has been active in its implementation of key reforms, which are bringing the country closer to European ideals and standards. While there is much work to be done, one thing is for sure; the country is on the right path and taking steps in the right direction to guarantee its place within the Union regardless of the challenges

¹³⁷Turkey shows interest in reviving EU bid (2012, May). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/9271108/Turkey-shows-interest-in-reviving-EU-bid.html>

¹³⁸“Holland-Spring” in Turkish-EU relations. (2012, June 22). *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hollande-spring-in-turkish-eu-relations.aspx?pageID=238&nID=23779&NewsCatID=338>

and setbacks it is facing. Having all the information in this paper at hand, Turkey seems to be heading towards joining the EU as its newest member. However, this process will take more time in order for all of the issues to be ironed out so that proper integration can occur. Eventually, it is the process that matters to Turkey regardless of the outcome itself. The question left to be asked here is: Would Turkey pursue the reforms on its path to the EU membership or, based on the analysis done in this thesis, is it meant to divert it away from the European Union?

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Appendices

Appendix: Republican People's Party's Package of Proposals

The CHP package consists of the following items:

The Republican People's Party's (CHP) package to be discussed between Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu at 3 p.m on June 6 at the ruling party's headquarters in Ankara consists of the following items:

- 1) The Kurdish issue remains at the top of the country's agenda. Violence and terror activities continue as a result of the lack of a solution to the issue. Our country's human and economic resources are being wasted in addition to the daily losses of life.
- 2) The history of the Turkish Republic is full of evidence demonstrating that the Kurdish problem cannot be solved with security-focused policies.
- 3) Putting other [non-security-focused policies] into practice without delay is a necessity. The political sphere must be reorganized and new political measures should be implemented in a way to provide a democratic solution that will bring about societal peace.
- 4) The main location for solving important problems concerning all of society is Parliament. Solving the Kurdish problem requires a national contract.
- 5) Society wants to see a solution that will produce security, comfort, confidence and peace under which no citizen will lose his or her life while also ending increasing polarization and tension due to deadlock.
- 6) It is inexplicable and unacceptable that Parliament, which has already started a process to seek a societal consensus for the new constitution, has not launched a similar initiative on the Kurdish problem.
- 7) The main objectives of our proposal are to create direct and constant dialogue between the political parties, reduce differences in perspective and approach to a minimum, and reground the language of politics in compromise and the search for a democratic solution.

8) Our proposal is to form a “Social Consensus Commission” under the roof of Parliament and to form a “Group of Wise People” to function on the civilian side in cooperation with Parliament.

9) The Social Consensus Commission will consist of eight members and be based on the equal participation of the political parties represented in Parliament. The Wise People Group, which will consist of 12 personalities again distributed equally between the political parties, will assist the commission. The Social Consensus Commission will decide on its own working rules and methods as well as define the duties of the Wise People Group.

10) Article 10 summarizes the CHP’s work on the article.