



Turkey and Membership of the European Union

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate Turkey and her quest to become a member of the EU. Relations between Turkey and European integration institutions began with Turkey's application for associate membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959. Turkey applied for full membership in the EEC in 1987 but did not gain candidate status until 1999. Since that time, discussions about the implications of Turkey's prospective EU membership have become more serious and extensive in both Turkey and the EU. This paper seeks to analyse the potential advantages and drawbacks of Turkey's EU membership for both Turkey and the EU. It considers economic, social, political, and security factors of such union. The paper argues that, taking into account all the possible effects, the possible advantages of this membership outweigh the potential drawbacks for both Turkey and the EU. Thus, it therefore recommends that greater efforts to conclude the negotiation process with full EU membership for Turkey should therefore be considered and treated as highly desirable.

Keywords: Turkey, Membership, EU, Accession

Introduction

Studies such as that conducted by Teitelbaum, and Martin, (2003) reveal that Turkey has a population of 75+ million. The implication of the above population size therefore is that if the country entered the EU today, they would be the second largest Member State behind Germany. This would mean an instant shift of power in almost every EU institution, more notably the European Parliament

where seats are distributed to member States according to population. Turkey would instantly become a key player in European politics and would have more influence than the traditionally core countries, France, Italy, and the UK. Even if we don't consider anything else, it's understandable that Europeans would be wary of a membership that would significantly alter the EU's political and demographic map, and Turkey's massive population is



often quoted as the key political reason the country's accession process is under such heavy scrutiny Taylor, (2002).

Furthermore Turkey is not generally considered a part of Europe. It's the spiritual successor to the Ottoman Empire, an empire that was traditionally adversarial towards Europe, and its population is predominantly Muslim, while Europe's population is overwhelmingly Christian. A very small part of the country's territory, East Thrace, is in Europe and its application may seem unlikely to be denied on geographic grounds, like Morocco's was, but still the question of whether Turkey should be considered a European country or not has been raised multiple times. A recent example is the following statement by Nicolas Sarkozy (2007): I want to say that Europe must give itself borders, that not all countries have a vocation to become members of Europe, beginning with Turkey which has no place inside the European Union. Enlarging Europe with no limit risks destroying European political union, and that I do not accept.

Given Turkey's predominantly Muslim population and its geographic location, the EU does not want to risk an influx of Muslim immigrants, simply put Turkey's accession would open a backdoor to Europe for immigrants from Arabic and African countries, at a time when immigration is an extremely hot issue in European countries and several countries

have recently implemented anti-immigration laws that would seem extreme and unjustified a decade ago. A recent example is the decision to open detention camps for immigrants in Greece, an extremely controversial decision that in local media has been compared to Nazi Germany's detention camps. While this might seem like a local issue, we can't ignore the fact that most illegal immigrants reach Greece (and thus the EU) through Turkey Strafor (2007). While Europe has been traditionally welcoming to immigrants, in recent years there's a strong anti-immigration sentiment across all major member states, a contributing factor to the steady rise of nationalism in Europe. Germany's position in 2010 was less critical but also not particularly enthusiastic in regards to full membership of Turkey. As noted by John (2011);

The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, will insist on "privileged partnership" for Turkey instead of full EU membership when she visits the country next week, according to remarks published yesterday. "There are intertwined relations between Turkey and the EU. There are 35 chapters in the [membership] talks. I am confident that 27-28 of them can be taken up and this will really mean a privileged partnership," she said was quoted as saying by the Milliyet newspaper. "Some issues, like institutional integration, will be left out of the scope," she told a group of Turkish reporters, before a visit to Turkey on Monday and Tuesday. Mrs Merkel stressed,



however, that the European Union placed "great importance" on the need for Turkey to follow a foreign policy consistent with the bloc's stance. Germany's position that the sizeable, mainly Muslim, country is not fit for accession is backed by another EU heavyweight, France, but Ankara categorically rejects any alternatives that fall short of full membership.

Turkey has been growing rapidly. It is now Europe's sixth largest economy and the 18th largest globally. According to recent survey, the country will become the world's 12th largest economy by 2030, surpassing Italy and South Korea.

Turkey has a population of 75+ million and if the country entered the EU today, they would be the second largest member state behind Germany. This would mean an instant shift of power in almost every EU institution, more notably the European Parliament where seats are distributed to member states according to population. Turkey would instantly become a key player in European politics and would have more influence than the traditionally core countries, France, Italy, and the UK. Even if we don't consider anything else, it's understandable that Europeans would be wary of a membership that would significantly alter the EU's political and demographic map, and Turkey's massive population is often quoted as the key political reason the country's accession process is under such heavy

scrutiny (Bankley, (2009).

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The statement is from 2007, two years after the violent Paris riots, a time when feelings for Muslim immigrants in France and in Europe in general were generally unfavourable. While Europe has been traditionally welcoming to immigrants, in recent years there's a strong anti-immigration sentiment across all major member states, a contributing factor to the steady rise of



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Moving on, there are two issues that can be blocking factors to Turkey Membership of the EU, the historically troublesome Greco-Turkish relations and Turkey's occupation of Northern Cyprus. From the EC's 2005 Turkey Progress Report (page 9):

As regards the enhanced political dialogue, relations with Greece developed positively. A series of bilateral agreements were signed and several confidence building measures adopted. A process of exploratory talks has continued. On Cyprus, over the last year Turkey has supported and continues to support the efforts of the UN Secretary General to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. The European Council of June 2004 invited Turkey to conclude

negotiations with the Commission on behalf of the Community and its 25 Member States on the adaptation of the Ankara Agreement to take account of the accession of the new Member States. The Commission expects a positive reply to the draft protocol on the necessary adaptations transmitted to Turkey in July 2004, Aydinli, and Waxman, (2001).

The European Union formed initially after the Second World War's aftermath to prevent member countries from going to war with each other and to increase economic stability throughout the region. The Union's first step was to foster economic cooperation, opening up trade and borders and reasoning that member countries that traded with one another would become interdependent, therefore becoming less likely to feud with each other. Six countries were the founders of the EU, originally calling themselves the EEC (European Economic Community). The original six founding EEC countries were France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands. These first six united countries opened the way for the subsequent countries that have become members. 1993 saw the name change from the EEC to the European Union. The EU has 28 member countries that span across most the European continent. After the European Union was established, it opened up the trading and borders between member countries. Key to smoothing trade among the



member nations was the adoption of a single currency, the Euro. The simple rule the EU follows is that all decisions are decided upon by treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed on by all member countries. The dissolution of borders within the member countries has created a way to travel freely throughout most of the continent. It has also made it easier for member citizens to live and work anywhere in Europe.

It is also of great importance to the EU to promote human rights internally and externally. The basic core values of the EU are seen as the respect for human rights, including an individual's right to dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law. What began as a purely economic union has evolved into a larger organisation spanning most governmental policy areas. The members of the European Union have delivered over a century of peace, stability, communication, and prosperity as well as, delivering a raise in the standard of living.

Major Assumptions of this study

1. The accession to the EU provides Turkey with access to new markets, and is aimed to build a strong economic relationship between Turkey and the EU in the long run.
2. Turkey plays a fundamental role as a bridge to the Muslim world, also in the relationships between the EU and African and Asian countries.

3. There is a strong relationship between economic growth and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), thus the accession to the EU will provide Turkey with a substantial inflow of FDI to its economy.

EU-Turkey Relations; the Membership Challenge

The acceleration of Turkey's reform momentum particularly after late 2001, defined by many as a "silent revolution" in the country, spilled into Turkey's EU accession process, especially when the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 concluded that it would determine whether and when to open accession talks with Turkey in December 2004. The approaching green light for the opening of negotiations set a target and a timeline in the reform programme of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government elected in November 2002. Turkey's progress in reforms spurred the December 2004 European Council to conclude that Turkey "sufficiently" fulfilled the political criteria and that accession talks could begin in October 2005, Basgoz and Wilson, (2011).

Paradoxically, after the opening of accession negotiations in 2005, the momentum in Turkey's accession process was lost. Turkey's accession negotiations proceeded at a snail's pace in their early years and stalled altogether between 2010 and 2013. By mid-2014, a mere 14 out of 35 chapters had been opened and only one chapter (science and research) provisionally closed. Multiple vetoes by the European



Council, France, and the Republic of Cyprus have meant that most chapters of the *acquis communautaire* for negotiation are frozen and that no chapter can be provisionally closed.

Since the turn of the century, Turkey has thus been part of the

EU's accession process. Although the accession process formally began after decades of contractual ties between Turkey and the European integration project, the process has been in a comatose State for the best part of the last decade, Arnold, (1996).

Table 1: Stages in the EU Accession Process - Turkey in Comparative Perspective
Spain Austria Poland Turkey C

	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	POLAND	TURKEY	CROATIA
Application submitted	1977	1989	1997	1987	2003
Commission Opinion	1978	1989	1997	1989	2004
Candidate status	1978	1989	1997	1999	2004
Accession talks start	1978	1993	1998	2005	2005
Accession talks end	1985	1994	2003	-	2013
Accession	1986	1995	2004	-	2013

From an economic point of view, the advantages of such accession are remarkable and can be summarized in few words: "legislative harmony ... new markets ... commercial opportunities and investment potentials. The economic crisis, which is changing the economic climate and the architecture of the world economy, also shows that Turkey's accession offers considerable economic opportunities for the EU.

Europe in the forthcoming period, and will be the second highest growth country by 2017. Turkey is also among countries expected to provide the necessary stimulus for economic recovery in the world. Today, Turkey is the EU's 7th biggest trade partner and the EU is Turkey's main trading partner. Turkey is also the only country which has formed a Customs Union with the EU well before its accession.

World Bank statistics indicate that Turkey is the 16th largest economy in the world and the 6th largest in Europe. According to the OECD, Turkey is expected to be the fastest growing economy of the OECD and

According to the UN, Turkey has entered into a period of a "demographic window of opportunity" which is expected to continue until the mid-21st century. Its young, well-educated and highly skilled labour force can



be a remedy for the structural deficiencies of the EU stemming from its aging population. Thanks to its large and growing domestic market, its mature and dynamic private sector, its leading role in the region, its liberal and secure investment environment, the supply of a high quality and cost-effective labour force, as well as developed infrastructure and an institutionalised economy, Turkey would bring considerable economic gains for the EU. With its fast-growing economy, Turkey appeases all concerns that it would be a burden on the EU budget. On the contrary, it would help the EU in achieving a competitive advantage against emerging markets in Asia and America. As has been said by various experts, having Turkey as a member would also make a significant contribution to promoting EU values abroad. Turkey is a member and in certain cases even a founding member of numerous international organizations with an agenda-setting and decision-making role - the Council of Europe, the OECD, the OSCE and Nato. Turkey, within these organizations, aspires to act in support of democracy, stability, solidarity and prosperity for the benefit of all. Its membership in the G20 shows the geostrategic role that it can play in the international arena. Moreover, 70 percent of the world's energy resources are located to the south and east of Turkey, while the world's largest energy consumer, Europe, is located to the west of Turkey. Turkey's central geographical position is also critical for the security and

sustainability of energy supply to the EU - a vital condition for almost any economic activity.

Its location makes Turkey a key strategic ally of the EU. Its close historic ties and recent experiences in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and Southern Mediterranean, furnish Turkey with the necessary assets to make positive contributions to the shaping of EU policies toward these crucial and sensitive regions. Turkey's accession to the EU is a perennial question. A decade or so ago, relations between the two sides were far more favourable but they have since deteriorated. Now there is animosity, disinterest and an almost complete shutting down of relations. Growing levels of Turko-scepticism are rife inside the EU, as well as much disdain and general distancing on the part of Turkey. The future looks bleak.

Reasons why Turkey still find it difficult to join the EU

1. The issue of human rights is of high importance for the negotiations with the European Union (EU). Acute human rights issues include in particular the status of Kurds in Turkey. The Kurdish-Turkish conflict has caused numerous human rights violations over the years. There is an on-going debate in the country on the right to life, torture, freedom of expression as well as freedoms of religion, assembly and association
2. One of the reasons that Turkey can't join EU is the population. Currently, Germany has the most



population in EU with 80 million of populations. But Turkey has 81~82 millions of populations and this is more than the population of Germany. However, most of EU people are Christian, while most of Turkish are Muslim. Turkey has 98% of Muslim and this means that around 80+ millions of people are Muslim. This is one of the biggest problems. Most of Europeans don't like Muslim, as Islam is misunderstood as terrorists. Thus, lots of anti-Islamic parties have got big powers in EU politics. Especially in Netherlands one of the anti-Islamic party is a part of ruling coalition. EU has its own executive body and it's multi-raced. Currently, Germany has the most population in EU, thus most of the members of EU parliament are German. However, if Turkey joins EU, most of the parliament members of EU will be Turkish. And most of them are Muslim. If then, they feel discomforts as Christian members are become as minority.

3. Another reason is the border. Currently, EU only has borders with Europe. However, if Turkey joins EU, EU will have borders with Middle-East countries such as Syria, Iran and etc. This is quite serious matter. You all may know that Middle-East always has war and demonstration. Lots of people are killed in this war. However, when Turkey joins EU, the wars will influence to EU. And another problem is ISIS, who says themselves that they're country but it's actually a kind of terrorist union. When you pass the borders between other countries,

you have to pay bills and need passport. However, when you pass the borders between EU countries, you don't need these things. You can simply pass the border. Like Baarle between Belgium and Netherlands. This means ISIS can be entered easily to Europe. Although ISIS currently doesn't have their power in Turkey, but if they conquer some parts of Turkey, this is the problem. Like in this case, if ISIS got some parts of Turkey, and Turkey is now in EU, ISIS can easily enter to Europe. This means they can easily enter until Portugal. If then the whole Europe will be fell into the terrorism.

4. The last problem is Northern Cyprus. This country is in the northern part of Cyprus and was made by Turkey. Cyprus was one, but around 1970s, Turkey conquered the northern part of Cyprus and Cyprus was separated. This action is considered as 'illegal' by the world and EU.

Evaluating our Assumptions

❖ Assumption 1 can be confirmed. Indeed, Turkey's potential accession to the European Union will be likely to provide the country with great opportunities in economic terms. Namely, the completion of the country's integration process with the EU would allow Turkey obtaining a far larger and easier access to the EU member states' markets which are currently inaccessible due to Turkey's position as a non-member of the Union. Due to this, the country doesn't have free



access to all markets, and is still subject to restrictions and limitations which are eliminated within the European Union. By gaining wider access to the European markets, Turkey would obviously become able to further deepen its cooperation with the European Union, thus building up closer partnership ties with the EU member states in terms of their mutually beneficial economic relations. Also, this would ease the inflow of investment to Turkey, as European investors would become more confident in the creditworthiness of the country being a member State of the European Union. However, it should be understood here that, together with the advantages for the Turkish economy, the country's integration with the EU would also impose considerable threats on its economic sector. Thus, the European manufacturers would gain far wider access to the Turkish market as well. As European corporations are much more powerful than the Turkish ones, and have larger financial resources, they would have much more effective levers to affect the competition on the Turkish domestic market through both price and non-price mechanisms. Therefore, this would pose under threat the Turkish local producers' effective market results, as they would have to face much more powerful competitors than before. Moreover, it is quite doubtful whether Turkey would be able to benefit so much from the wider

openness of the European markets. This is mainly preconditioned by the fact that Turkey's manufacturers' products are generally weaker in terms of their quality and competitiveness than the same products offered by EU member states' residents. Thus, in case of Turkey's accession to the EU, there would be a major threat that most Turkish companies would lose competition on the domestic market, at the same time being unable to establish themselves as popular brands on the markets of the EU member states.

❖ Assumption 2 can be confirmed. Indeed, Turkey is a bridge between the European Union and the Muslim world, and the country will be likely to pay a great role in the cooperation between the EU member states and the Muslim Asian and African countries, especially in case of Turkey's accession to the European Union. Turkey is an interesting example of an Islamic country which is completely secular and deprived of all signs of Islamism which is prosecuted, Turkish society is highly liberal and democratic, and the religion doesn't interfere in the field of public affairs. This is particularly important for building up close partnership ties with the European Union, and the European society doesn't accept any kind of discrimination, especially when speaking of religion and the practice of use of religion is state management is not welcomed in the Union. At the same time, in the Islamic world, cooperation between countries



with the population sharing Islam tends to be much wider and much more effective than with countries where other religions are prevailing. This is a key factor of Turkey's successful relations with Northern African Arab states. At the same time, Turkey's geographical location between Europe and Asia allows the country effectively cooperating with the Asian states. Thanks to its unique expertise, Turkey would be able to profit much from its ties with both the Islamic world and Asian countries in the process of its integration with the European Union. This is predefined by the fact that the EU currently seeks greater economic expansion, and sees the Asian and North African markets as prospective growth areas which can be effectively filled by European companies. Turkey's involvement in those processes would allow not only further strengthening ties with all parties, but also gaining significant financial dividends.

- ❖ Assumption 3 can be neither confirmed nor rejected. On the one hand, there is indeed a strong relationship between the level of a country's economic development and the inflow of investment to it. On the other hand, it can definitely be stated that the level of foreign direct investment to Turkey would increase in case of its completion of the European integration process. However, this would be caused by a number of different reasons, in the first turn this would be achieved through the ease of investors' access to the

Turkish market, and their higher confidence in the successful results of their business in Turkey. However, it may be achieved even without economic growth. At the same time, the correlation between the two indicators above, namely economic development and FDI, is not so obvious in order to say that Turkey's accession to the European Union would provide the country with greater foreign direct investment thanks to its economic growth within the EU.

EU-Turkey Relations; Reasons for Optimism

A major obstacle on the way of Turkey's completion of its integration process with the European Union is the country's support of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is a separatist formation declaring the goal to secede from the sovereign ruling of Cyprus and enter Turkey as its autonomous territory. The self-proclaimed state has as of today been recognized only by Turkey, and it faces heavy opposition of the European Union member states. As Cyprus is a member state of the EU, its antagonistic conflict with Turkey over the territory of Northern Cyprus makes it impossible for Turkey to join the EU. Cyprus blocks all Turkey's intentions to join the EU, and therefore the prospects of integration currently seem to be vague for the Turkish State.

Turkey's prospective completion of the European integration process may potentially provide the country with great economic and



security benefits. Thus, by joining the European Union, Turkey would gain free access to the European market of goods and services, and the local manufacturers could benefit from this situation by offering quality goods at prices lower than the European companies. At the same time, the level of unemployment in Turkey could be potentially reduced through migration of Turkish workers to Europe in search for better working conditions. Finally, it is worth understanding that Turkey's accession to the European Union would provide the country with a far higher level of national security thanks to the participation in collective defence and security mechanisms implemented within the EU. However, the threats represented by Turkey's accession to the European Union shouldn't be underestimated. Thanks to a deal between Turkey and the EU on the management of irregular migration, illegal and perilous crossings over the Aegean have dwindled down from 7,000 a day to double digits at most, and migrant deaths crossing that sea have been almost completely prevented. Accelerated funding to Syrian refugees in Turkey and the implementation of the Voluntary Humanitarian Readmission Scheme will increase the EU's credibility, as well as help share Turkey's heavy burden. To be sure, Turkey will join the EU only after fully meeting membership criteria and when both sides agree to move forward with accession. But doing so will require the EU to commit to genuine engagement, through constructive criticism and honest

dialogue — despite the rise of populism, the growth of the extreme right, and the distractions of Brexit and weakening transatlantic ties. Turkey is working to overcome the trauma of last year's attempted coup, while hosting some 3.3 million refugees and fighting multiple terrorist organizations. And yet, Ankara is not asking for privileged treatment. It only expects to be treated on an equal footing with all the other candidates and for the EU to be a credible anchor. Turkey's accession to the EU might be the most challenging of all processes, past and prospective. But it will be the most beneficial and most meaningful. This is why at this critical juncture, a constructive dialogue about accession is more important than ever. The country's local manufacturers are weaker than their European competitors, and accession to the EU may lead to closure of many Turkish companies, and thus deterioration of the market conjuncture. Also, cancellation of the national currency in favour of Turkey would deprive Turkey of important economic regulation mechanisms. Finally, Turkey would thus lose its sovereign political levers as part of the national powers would be delegated to the single centre in the European Union.

Further progress of Turkey's integration process with the EU will be predefined by many external factors, and as of today, it is hard to forecast whether this process will in the long run be successful. If Turkey successfully completes the aforementioned requirements, its chances for getting EU membership will significantly grow. In case the country is finally able to get the



official membership status, its development may follow different vectors, as it has already been stated earlier in this paper. I believe that, overall, Turkey will get significant benefits from its official membership in the European Union. However, on the first stages after the completion of the integration process, the country will be likely to face some major difficulties connected with the differences in its economic development as compared with the EU. Here, it is first of all worth noting that Turkey will need to substantially update its legislative base for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the European Union, and complying with the European standards and regulations in all fields.

The change in the legislation of EU will bring challenges to the economic subjects incorporated in Turkey, as they will have to adapt to the new conditions of doing business and the requirements imposed on them. Another major difficulty will be the inflow of European goods which are generally of a higher quality. In my opinion, many Turkish manufacturers will be unable to withstand the competition of major European corporations, and therefore will be eliminated from the market. However, at the same time, companies which will be able to revamp their production processes and market practices will significantly raise their level of competitiveness as compared with the situation existing now. This will increase their market performance, and they will even be able to expand to the European

market, provided that they are able to meet the demand of customers with some particular key advantages. After the initial stage of membership in the European Union, namely upon completion of the adaptation process, the Turkish economy will be likely to gain unprecedented opportunities for its subsequent development. Namely, as the conditions of doing business in the country will correspond to the ones existing in the European Union, and the rules applied will be the same as in the EU, European investors will be interested in investing in the Turkish economy for the purpose of developing their business. Thus, Turkey will be able to get a major boost of its national economy through the increased inflow of foreign direct investment.

The increased cooperation with the European Union will be likely to provide Turkey with additional vacancies, and thus reduced level of unemployment, through the intensified activities of foreign corporations and the enlargement of the Turkish domestic market. Also, if the country enters the Eurozone, its foreign exchange risks will be significantly diminished, thus contributing to the overall stable situation of the Turkish economy.

Another major advantage for Turkey, in case of the country's accession to the European Union, will be the increased energy security through the energy supply diversification programs currently implemented in the EU. The implementation of such programs in Turkey will be likely to positively impact the level of Turkey's



economic independence and stability. A not less important prospective benefit Turkey will gain, if it joins the European Union, is the country's participation in the European collective security mechanisms and systems. It will allow significantly increasing the level of Turkey's national security, and even help further pro-mote the country's cooperation with its allies within NATO.

However, if the time is right and Turkey will be accepted to the European Union, it will have to give up a part of its sovereign powers. Additionally, the country will inevitably fall under the great dependence on the single EU centre, which will significantly reduce its possibility to manoeuvre in the international arena in both economic and political terms. This may become an important obstacle on the way of the country's integration with the EU, as the availability of such sovereign powers raises the level of the state's independence, which would otherwise be diminished.

Conclusion

This paper evaluated the divergent trends in Turkey's quest to become a member of the European Union. It was discovered that there are indeed great prospects in having Turkey has a member of the EU. Some of these Prospects were identified to include the fact that; the accession to the EU provides Turkey with access to new markets, and is aimed to build a strong economic relationship between Turkey and the EU in the

long run, and that it will also boost the economic growth and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of Turkey's economy. In spite of these, the study discovered that a lot of fears still linger especially owing to the fact that Turkey at the moment is predominantly a Muslim country hence posing a threat to the overall peace and security of members of the EU. This study recommends that a vibrant commission be set up to evaluate the pros as against of cons of having Turkey become a member of the EU with the aim of ensuring that the right decision that will benefit all the members is adopted.

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